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Contents

Notes from the Editors

In this issue of the *Southeast Journal of Educational Administration*, one of the common themes was the use of feedback for improvement; whether using feedback from students to improve leadership preparation programs, or using feedback from teachers to help principals improve their practices for instructional leadership, addressing the needs of stakeholders is a vital lesson for leaders at any level. We wish to thank all of the peer reviewers who took the time to evaluate and provide feedback for all submitted manuscripts for this issue.

Lou Sabina and Christopher Colwell addressed standards and charisma, and the connection to leadership standards. They reviewed eight attributes of charismatic leaders and analyzed if each facet was addressed sufficently in the leadership standards for all 50 states. Fewer than half of the standards contained elements of competence, energy, influence, and confidence. Their findings are applicable to aspiring leaders, educational leadership faculty members, and policy makers and various levels.

Laura Boilini focused on the voices of students and how the feedback of aspiring leaders can be used for program improvement. Primarily focusing on the 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards and students' self-reflections to identify strengths and areas for growth, she identified interrelatedness and dissonance between groups of students at distinct points in a leadership preparation program. While the primary focus was using feedback from students for program improvement, aspiring leaders can benefit, as well.

Kathleen Campbell studied the perceptions of principals and teachers pertaining to the needs of new teacher in Louisiana. Researchers have documented substantial attrition rates among teachers for many years, which negatively affects student achievement. Therefore, she surveyed teachers and principals to determine their perceptions pertaining to requisite support, which will help teachers remain in the field of education. Implications are provided for current school leaders, educational leadership faculty, and senior-level school leaders.

Daniel Novey examined successful strategies used by school leaders from rural schools in eastern North Carolina. Successful principals were identified by superintendents and the skills and strategies were compared to results from the Wallace Foundation and Vanderbilt University. In addition, he discussed how service leadership projects were beneficial in preparing aspiring school leaders.

Examining survey responses from teachers in three states using the Shinn/Jones questionnaire, John Jones and Misty Henry reviewed the perceptions of teachers toward their principals' effectiveness as an instructional leader. They provided specific recommendations based on the results, and strongly contended that principals need to be in classrooms to support teaching and learning. The implications can be used by current school leaders, principal supervisors, and educational leadership faculty members.

As a hallmark of an effective leader, one must always seek to improve. The authors have provided a research-based focus on improvement, especially by using feedback from stakeholders. We hope each article serves to begin a discussion for improvement, which will lead to greater student achievement at all levels. As intended by the editorial review board, the *Southeast Journal of Educational Administration* serves to provide a forum for professors, graduates students, and educational leadership practitioners to exchange scholarly ideas and foster practical research.

Sincerely,

Dana M. Griggs Christopher M. Parfitt
Editors, *Southeast Journal of Educational Administration*

Charisma and Educational Leadership Standards: A Possible Missing Link for High-Impact School Administrators

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Abstract

Responsibilities for school administrators have evolved over the last 20 years. Today's principal now fills a multitude of roles, but most importantly is the "face" of the building they are charged to lead. More than ever, today's principal has to be approachable, competent, and dedicated to their position. A trait that might indicate success to accomplish the daunting and diverse tasks of today's principal is charisma. Through this paper, we examined eight attributes specific to charismatic leaders: (a) Emotion, (b) Trust, (b) Competence, (d) Influence, (e) Energy, (f) Confidence, (g) Mission/Vision, and (h) Integrity/Ethics, and analyze whether or not the standards for school administrators in each of the 50 states addresses any of these attributes in their state-approved standards. Implications for policymakers and training providers to incorporate charismatic attributes into their standards and practices are suggested to help current and future administrators to highlight potential high-impact leadership traits to add to their evolving roles.

Keywords: Charisma, principal preparation, principal standards, school reform

Charisma and Educational Leadership Standards

Schools, school districts, and public education in general are under more scrutiny today than in years past. Perceptions of what makes an effective school leader in today's educational environment have changed due to growing pressures. As education follows trends in business and management, even educational leadership and school administration can find itself impacted by current trends in business. A potential trend to consider is the impact that charisma has on leadership. Now more than ever, principals are responsible for greater community outreach, stakeholder management, and maintaining a presence both digitally and face-to-face. The saying that the principal is the "face of the school" has evolved from the role of symbolic figurehead to that of a 24/7 instructional leader. Because of this continuing evolution, an argument could be made that the role of a principal is better served by a charismatic extrovert than an isolated introvert. If this is the case, then aligning charisma and elements of charismatic leadership with school leadership standards taught in principal preparation programs becomes an important consideration in developing the most effective school leaders destined to lead schools to success both today and in the future.

The purpose of our paper is not to argue for charisma as an indicator of an effective school principal, but to decipher whether our 50 states and the District of Columbia have considered charisma as a potential indicator for their leadership. We will discuss the changing roles and responsibilities of school administrators, examine the eight elements of charismatic leadership which can be integrated into school administration programs, and offer suggestions for inclusion of charismatic attributes in future iterations of state standards and also in school administrator preparation programs.

Changing Roles and Responsibilities of School Principals and Administration

A litany of research exists discussing the roles and responsibilities of school principals. Work from Ediger (2014), Hallinger and Heck (1996), Lortie (2009), Murphy (1994) Rousmaniere (2007), Spillane (2009), and Tirozzi (2001), have been consistently cited in educational leadership discussing how the role of the principal has evolved into its current iteration with multiple layers and responsibilities. Those responsibilities include instructional leadership, management, college and career readiness, community outreach, assisting with mental health concerns, leading and developing school-wide professional development, and now, branding and social media development (Gleason & Von Gillem, 2018). All these studies have one consistent message; that the role of the principal is not getting easier, and that responsibility after responsibility is being added onto the individuals willing to serve as school leaders.

These changes should be reflective in job postings, content taught by training providers, and in the standards set by each state's Department of Education. However, this may not necessarily be the case, or agencies may be delayed in updating job responsibilities and preferred candidate characteristics as the role continues to evolve. A recent study from Richardson, Watts, Hollis, and McLeod (2016) used the U.S. REAP database from October 2011 to October 2012 to assess job postings for school principal openings throughout the United States. After analyzing 279 postings, they found "that the principalship is primarily seen as a fairly interchangeable role with similar qualifications and responsibilities across diverse settings" (Richardson et al., 2016,

p. 85). Additionally, they found that "the same needs and phrases dominated these advertisements: instructional leader, strong communication skills, data-driven, evaluating educational programs and personnel, complying with federal and state accountability mandates, and so on" (p. 85). While this study is limited to a small selection of job postings, the findings reflect a concern among training providers as to whether or not the skills that tomorrow's school leaders need are being taught today. In a large-scale study from The Wallace Foundation (Mendes, 2016), researchers found five themes across university preparation programs:

- District leaders are largely dissatisfied with the quality of preparation programs, and many universities believe that their programs have room for improvement. (Mendes, 2016, p. 6)
- Strong university-district partnerships are essential to high-quality preparation but are far from universal. (p. 8)
- The course of study at preparation programs does not always reflect principals' real jobs. (p. 9)
- Some university policies and practices can hinder change. (p. 12)
- States have authority to play a role in improving principal preparation, but many are not using this power as effectively as they could. (p. 14)

The lack of both customization and currency of job advertisements paired with ambiguity among training providers leads to the question of whether an additional element, the element of charisma, could be used to recruit highly effective school leaders.

Standards and Charisma

The word charisma originates from the Greek word *charis* meaning charm (Maclachlan, 1996). Weber (1947) described the charismatic leader as an individual who is seen by followers as possessing unique qualities related to the ability to lead a group through turbulent times, through rapid and significant societal or institutional changes. As a result, charismatic leaders are much more likely to emerge during turbulent times or in times of crisis (Colwell, 2020).

Today, charismatic leaders are seen to possess certain traits and characteristics that are part of a skill set that can be developed (Grabo et al., 2017). In short, the skills that make a leader charismatic can be taught (Avolio et al., 2009). Central to the attributes that make a leader charismatic are how the leader uses eight specific attributes to connect with followers in a powerful way. These attributes are: Emotion, Trust, Competence, Influence, Energy, Confidence, Mission/Vision, and Integrity/Ethics (Colwell, 2020).

(1) The Charismatic Principal and Emotion

Avolio and Yammarino (2013) described the charismatic leader as someone with a great ability to make emotional connections with followers around a common cause. Antonakis et al. (2011) saw charismatic leaders building a strong foundation of common emotional and ideological beliefs shared between the leader and the follower. In a study examining the relationship between emerging leaders and charisma, Middleton (2005) found a direct correlation between the rise of the charismatic leaders and the emotional intelligence of the leader. This use of emotion and symbolism can be used by leaders to develop a sense of community around a common language (Cohen, 2015).

Charismatic leaders recognize the powerful role that an emotional connection to the work provides. Charismatic leaders all have the capacity to develop this emotional connection between the leader, followers, and the work itself. The power of an emotional connection between leaders and followers takes the relationship past a focus on leadership as just the result of position power (Turner, 2014).

(2) The Charismatic Principal and Trust

Zenger and Folkman (2002) have identified interpersonal skill development as one of the critical factors for successful high impact leadership. For leaders to be successful, it is the set of skills that makes up interpersonal relationships that matters most. A critical component of successful interpersonal interactions is trust. Trust in the leader and the leader's mission unites leaders and followers around what Covey referred to as a belief in the "big yes," in which leaders target initiatives that fit within their mission and vision (Covey, 1989).

In short, the ability of leaders to build relationships around a strong foundation of trust is a necessary prerequisite for school leaders to succeed in the increasingly complex world of 21st-century schools in which the responsibilities and job roles for school principals have grown exponentially (Rousmaniere, 2013). The more followers trust their leaders, the more committed they become to following the leader's words and deeds (Stutje, 2012).

(3) The Charismatic Principal and Competence

Leadership competence is often thought of in terms of expert power in a chosen field coupled with the ability to manage and lead groups of stakeholders on a common mission. Competence is seen primarily as a set of intellectual skills and expertise in one's chosen field. As leader competence rises, leadership ability to influence and build trust between leaders and followers also rises. (Colwell, 2020).

The more competent that stakeholders perceive the leader to be, the more committed the follower becomes to the leader's message and style (Castelnova et al., 2017). Stakeholders' views on leadership effectiveness, as well as the follower's commitment to the leader are tied directly to the perceptions of the leader's ability to demonstrate high levels of competence (Antonakis et al., 2011).

(4) The Charismatic Principal and Influence

For all leaders, but particularly for the charismatic leader, the ability to influence is a critically important leadership attribute (Pink, 2013). Rousmaniere (2013) has also identified influence as a key leadership skill necessary for success in the complex world of modern school leadership. Charismatic leaders all possess the capabilities to exert a great deal of influence on followers both within and outside the organization.

Leaders who can influence the direction of the organization and those who make up the organization are often viewed as transformational leaders. The charismatic leader is also a transformational leader who impacts the organization by their ability to influence, through their

actions, as well as how they spend their time, energy, and articulate their vision, to followers in ways that resonate and build trust in the followers' belief that the vision can be accomplished. This belief that the work itself is both possible and meaningful is a critical component for worker contentment (Aziri, 2011).

(5) The Charismatic Principal and Energy

While there is a great number of researcher who indicates that physical features such as height, perceived attractiveness, and gender, play a role in the attention that certain leaders receive, it is primarily the charismatic leader's ability and willingness to expend an inordinate amount of energy to attract the attention of followers to the leader and the leader's cause, which signals to followers that a charismatic leader is emerging (Colwell, 2020). The energy of the charismatic leader serves as a motivator for those who follow the leader. A motivated team is a team that is willing to commit the effort necessary to accomplish difficult tasks (Stamov-Rossnagel, 2017).

This energy and passion for the work is used by the charismatic leader to convey the urgency of the challenge or opportunity being faced, as well as the ability to articulate a path forward (Awemleh & Gardner, 1999). When the leader demonstrates the ability to generate and maintain the great deal of energy needed to attract and keep the attention of followers, the leader is more likely to have those followers commit to the same level of energy and support for the leader and the leader's mission (Colwell, 2020).

(6) The Charismatic Principal and Confidence

Leaders need to have a strong sense of belief in themselves and their own ability to meet the demands and responsibilities of leadership. Why should anyone follow a leader who does not believe in their own ability? To be skilled in management, technical expertise, and people skills, leaders also need to be able to develop and believe in their own self-efficacy is not enough. Self-efficacy is the leader's belief in their ability in all levels of leadership responsibility over all of the events that will impact each day's work (Bandura, 1993).

The ability to believe in oneself is critical to success at all levels of the organization. Leaders with high levels of confidence set high goals for themselves, are persistent in their work, and do not give up when faced with setbacks or adversity. Leaders who believe in their mission but not in themselves will not succeed. Charismatic leaders have a large sense of self-confidence about their ability to accomplish the mission. The charismatic leader has a belief in their ability to reach previously unattainable goals.

Researchers suggests job burnout is as much a function of attitude as it is of time on the job (Katz, 2017). There is a causal link between leadership confidence and burnout. In short, the more a leader is truly confident that they understand the job and how to do it well, the more the individual feels they have the expertise to accomplish the job, the less job-related anxiety the leader will face (Colwell, 2020).

(7) The Charismatic Principal and Mission

Another critical leadership signal possessed by charismatic leaders regards the ability of the leader to articulate a collective purpose around a shared mission (Grabo et al., 2017). Charismatic leaders all have a strong commitment to the organization's mission. This focus on the mission is a critical leadership orientation. To be consistently high performing and motivated, followers need much more than a leader to follow, they need a reason to follow. What motivates people to strive for greatness, to stretch their capacity, to commit to work that is difficult, is the belief that there is a value in the mission (Colwell, 2018).

In short, it is the purpose of the work that brings value to the team. Without purpose, all work becomes routine. Belief in the value of how one is spending time, what they are committing their energy to, is a powerful motivator of human behavior. A sense of purpose, and the ability to communicate that purpose in a powerful and relentless way, is an attribute that all charismatic leaders share (Zenger & Folkman, 2002). Charismatic leaders articulate a common set of values, a common purpose, and a shared mission for a better future (Grabo et al., 2017).

(8) The Charismatic Principal and Ethics/Integrity

Perhaps no other leadership standard, is more commonly recognized in both the literature on leadership and by those serving in the field as leaders, as the standard of integrity (Colwell, 2020). Quinn (2004) identified the leadership attribute of integrity as the single most important leadership competency. The ability for the leader to be seen as an individual with the highest level of integrity and ethics is a prerequisite for leadership effectiveness (Hesselbein & Shinseki, 2004).

Fogleman (2001) identified leaders who display the highest levels of integrity as possessing sincerity, consistency, substance, and commitment. Ethical leaders are consistent in their commitment to a set of core values. The consistent application of these attributes, are linked to the formation of trust, and are closely linked to charismatic attributes such as mission driven, confidence, and competence (Colwell, 2020).

Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned literature, the following research questions emerged.

1. Are states addressing any of the eight characteristics of charismatic leadership in their state standards?
   A. If so, which characteristics are the most prevalent?
   B. If not, which standards are completely omitted?
2. Does the existing framework of state standards allow (or encourage) charisma to be addressed as a criterion for school leaders?
3. How can training providers in states that include elements of charismatic leadership in their state standards utilize charisma to better prepare school leaders for the challenges of tomorrow?

A document analysis across all 50 states and the District of Columbia was conducted to answer these questions and further advance the literature on today's model of school leadership in conjunction with charismatic leadership currently prevalent across management literature.

State Standards and School Leadership

Much like teacher education, there is not a national model for standards for school principals or administrators, allowing each state's policy makers the autonomy and flexibility to craft their own standards around leadership traits and characteristics that are specific to the needs of each state.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) worked in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to design and develop universal standards for school leaders. The new standards, Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), were developed in October 2015, and have since been adopted by eight states, including Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont. Additionally, three states, including Illinois, North Dakota, Rhode Island, use the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which were the previous iteration of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. Two states, Michigan and Wyoming, use the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards from 2011. 37 states and the District of Columbia use their own unique leadership standards for school principals, which can be used for licensure competencies, principal evaluation, certification standards, and continuing education for school leaders. Table 1 lists each state and the type of standards used.

Of importance to note, in this paper we do not address the brand new National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELP), for both building and district-level preparation, which were adopted in August 2018 (NAESP, 2018). This omission was a deliberate action on our part, as the NELP standards do not have to be fully in place (as required by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP]) until Spring 2021 (CAEP, 2019). This limitation is addressed in our *Implications for Practice and Future Studies* section at the conclusion of the paper.

Table 1
Educational Leadership Standards Stratified by State

2015 PSEL Standards	2011 ELCC Standards	2008 ISLLC Standards	Unique Standards
Arizona	Michigan	Illinois	Alabama
Arkansas	Wyoming	North Dakota	Alaska
Delaware		Rhode Island	California
Idaho			Colorado
Maryland			Connecticut
New Jersey			District of Columbia
New York			Florida
Vermont			Georgia
			Hawaii
			Indiana
			Iowa
			Kansas
			Kentucky
			Louisiana
			Maine
			Massachusetts
			Minnesota
			Mississippi
			Missouri
			Montana
			Nebraska
			Nevada
			New Hampshire
			New Mexico
			North Carolina
			Ohio
			Oklahoma
			Oregon
			Pennsylvania
			South Carolina
			South Dakota
			Tennessee
			Texas
			Utah
			Virginia
			Washington
			West Virginia
			Wisconsin

As there are only three consortium standards (used by 13 of the states) and 38 states with their own, unique standards, in this study we examined 41 total sets of standards (n = 41), which can be examined using the identified indicators for charisma.

Methodology

Between March and June 2019, each set of state standards (including the PSEL, ISLCC, and ELCC standards) were retrieved from each respective Department of Education website and uploaded to *Dedoose*, a qualitative coding software used to identify commonalities in terminology and trends in written text. These standards were cross-referenced with the 50-state comparison from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) from April 2018 (ECS, 2018), which listed the most current standards as provided by each respective state institution. In a few cases, the actual Departments of Education listed outdated documents, whereas the database from ECS was more accurate and current to our needs. Basic document analysis (Bowen, 2009) was used to seek commonality among standards and look for indicators that reflect potential connections to charisma.

The search process employed for this study was a direct binary (are these standards included, yes or no) search in each set of standards (Table 1) included in the study. The included words in the search were the past, present, and future tenses, and derivatives of the following 10 terms associated with the eight elements of charisma: (1) emotion, (2) trust, (3) competence, (4) influence, (5) energy, (6) confidence, (7a) mission, (7b) vision, (8a) integrity, and (8b) ethics. After the binary search was performed, further analysis was done to determine whether the terms actually represented the intended meaning in the standards. Two examples of this analysis were the terms "emotion" and "confident." For example, for "emotion," emotion references the emotional connections made with colleagues, not social-emotional learning, which commonly appeared across educational leadership standards. The same could be said for the term "confident," which was included in reference to protecting confidential information, and not confidence in the ability to lead.

Findings

When reviewing the leadership standards used for identifying future leaders and placing those leaders into specific schools, there is a great deal of consistency in some of the standards identified by state licensing programs, yet there is also a great deal of variation among states regarding specific standards with some standards regarded in the literature as impactful for successful leadership rarely addressed by state licensing boards. State standards focused on the area of interpersonal skills necessary to be an effective leader vary and are inconsistent. There is an emerging emphasis on the leader as someone who not only possesses managerial technical skills but is also seen as an interpersonal expert (Colwell, 2018; Zenger & Folkman, 2002). States which did not include each of the eight standards related to charisma and charismatic leadership are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
States which do not address the 8 Socialized Charismatic Attribute Standards in their Adopted Educational Leadership Standards

Socialized Charismatic Attribute	States Which Do Not Address the Standard
Standard #1 – Emotion Addressed by 25 States	Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Standard #2 – Trust Addressed by 32 States	Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
Standard #3 – Competence Addressed by 24 States	California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia
Standard #4 – Influence Addressed by 21 States	Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
Standard #5 – Energy Addressed by 5 States	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Standard #6 – Confidence Addressed by 0 States	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
Standard #7 – Mission/Vision Addressed by 49 States	Alaska
Standard #8 – Integrity/Ethics Addressed by 46 States	Colorado, Minnesota, Nevada, Washington

Analysis of these data revealed no correlation between geographic regions of the country and the likelihood that any one charismatic standard was addressed. For example, only five states address the socialized charismatic attribute of *Energy*. Those states, however, are spread throughout the country, in the west (California and Utah), the south (Louisiana and North Carolina), and the northeast (Maine).

For those few states that cover only one or two of the charismatic attributes, a similar pattern emerges with no connection between the location of the state and the fact that the states do not recognize these attributes as significant in the licensing process for school leaders. Of the three states that only address one standard, *Mission/Vision*, those states can be found in the west (Colorado), the Midwest (Minnesota), and the southwest (Colorado). There are four states that only address two standards; in the west (South Dakota), in the Midwest (Missouri) and in the east (Pennsylvania). These states only address the standards of *Mission/Vision* and *Integrity/Ethics*. Also in the west (Washington), addresses only the standards of *Mission/Vision* and *Emotion*.

The range in the number of socialized charismatic attributes addressed in state standards also has a great deal of variability. (See Table 3 for a ranking of the charismatic standards addressed from most often assessed to least)

Table 3
U.S. State Rankings of Socialized Charismatic Standards for Licensure

Socialized Charismatic Attribute	Attribute Ranking
Mission/Vision	1st (49 States)
Integrity/Ethics	2nd (46 States)
Trust	3rd (32 States)
Emotion	4th (25 States)
Competence	5th (24 States)
Influence	6th (21 States)
Energy	7th (5 States)
Confidence	8th (0 States)

The two charismatic attributes most often assessed by state departments of education are *Mission,* addressed in 49 states and *Integrity*, addressed in 46 states. On the other end of the spectrum, not a single state addresses the charismatic attribute of *Confidence*, and, as mentioned earlier, only five states address the standard of *Energy*. Four charismatic attributes can be found in the middle of the state standard spectrum with approximately half of the states in the nation addressing the standard and half omitting the standard. Again, there is no geographic correlation between the states that do address any standard and the states that do address particular standards. The charismatic attribute of *Trust* is covered in 32 state standards. The attribute of *Emotion* is covered in 25 states although it should be noted that typically this standard examines the degree to which the educator understands the emotions of others and does not focus on the role of emotion in impacting the ability of the educator to be a successful leader. The attribute of *Competence* is covered in 24 states and finally, the attribute of *Influence* is covered in 21 states.

An examination of the individual states to determine which states are most aligned with socialized charismatic attributes and which states are least aligned with these same attributes shows that Louisiana, Maine, and Utah address the most charismatic standards with all three states addressing every standard but *Confidence.* Six states, address all but two of the charismatic attributes. Connecticut, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, and Montana cover all of the standards with the exception of *Energy* and *Confidence*. North Carolina covers all of the standards with the exception of *Competence* and *Confidence*.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are three states that only cover one standard and omit the remaining standards. Those states are Colorado, Minnesota, and Nevada all of whom only cover the charismatic standard of *Mission*. Four states cover only two charismatic standards. Those states are Missouri, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota who only cover the standards of *Mission* and *Integrity*, and the state of Washington that only covers the standards of *Emotion* and *Mission*.

What are the implications for the role of socialized charismatic leadership and followership when the attributes of *Confidence* (zero states) *Energy* (five states) and *Influence* (21 states) are not addressed across most of the country?

Can Charisma Standards Be Integrated into Principal Standards?

State boards of education and other education leadership policy makers have clearly established a set of standards and working definitions regarding the attributes that make a successful 21st-century school leader. The research is also clear, however, that specific attributes of the charismatic leader, as mentioned above, are missing from those standards.

Few would argue that high-impact education leaders need to possess and demonstrate confidence, energy, and influence. Why then, are so many states silent on these standards? Perhaps it is assumed that these leadership attributes are a given, a pre-requisite for entry into the field. Perhaps it is the crowded nature of the existing standards and assessment protocols for the development of leaders that pushes these charismatic standards to the side.

Fortunately, charismatic standards do not exist in isolation, as separate discrete leadership traits. As a result, these standards do not need to be incorporated into principal training and assessment as separate content. The good news for those working to train school leaders or provide professional development for current school leaders is that the standards associated with charisma exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship. As one standard is developed by the leader, it becomes easier, not harder, for the remaining standards to be achieved (Colwell, 2020).

There is a kind of charismatic momentum that occurs once leaders are able to develop and focus on a charismatic standard. As a result, when the charismatic standards not currently addressed in state standards (confidence, influence, energy, for example) are incorporated into existing principal standards, they are more likely to be easily understood and infused into educational leadership behavior because the charismatic standards that are currently being incorporated in leadership training do exist.

All of these attributes are learnable and as a result, can be developed. For policy makers developing principal standards, the standards associated with charismatic leadership can be easily incorporated when the standards are taught and assessed not as a series of individual behaviors but one overarching and interdependent set of behaviors (Colwell, 2020). Adding the missing standards associated with successful charismatic attributes is not as time consuming or impactful on the leadership training curriculum as first might be perceived.

Can School Leadership Training Providers Implement the Elements of Charisma into Their Preparation Programs or Continuing Professional Development?

If it is expected or desired that both our current and future school administrators display charismatic attributes, then the onus is placed on school leadership training providers and professional organizations to help grow and develop those attributes. This can be done through integration of (a) Emotion, (b) Trust, (c) Competence, (d) Influence, (e) Energy, (f) Confidence, (g) Mission/Vision, and (h) Integrity/Ethics into existing coursework leading to administrator certification or continuing education programs. Three courses that are commonly taught in educational leadership programs include Leadership and Supervision, School Law and or Finance, and Data-Driven Assessment. We offer the following suggestions for inclusion of charismatic attributes in these courses, as a sample of how charisma can be holistically integrated into principal preparation programs.

Instructional Leadership and Supervision

The majority of principal programs require standalone courses in leadership, or courses in instructional leadership and supervision which address teacher evaluation. Charisma can easily be integrated in these classes, as *trust* is extremely important in the relationship between principal and teacher. Additionally, one of the most important responsibilities that an instructional leader has is to *influence* teacher behavior. We could easily see these attributes through hands-on projects such as pre-and-post observation of teachers, and reflective leadership profile papers in which candidates discuss the attributes they believe qualify them as effective school leaders.

School Law/School Finance

Commonly taught as either standalone courses or coupled together, both school law and school finance offer opportunities for the eight charismatic attributes to be developed. *Trust* is a critical component for both school law and school finance. Many times, school principals are faced with challenging decisions regarding their school budget, and building trust with faculty and staff is critical when tough conversations about staffing and expenditures occur. Additionally, the very nature of school finance and law require decisions to be made with *integrity and ethics* in mind. These two attributes should be included in any lecture or case study where sensitive financial and legal issues are discussed, and instructors should make it a point to address why future school principals must operate with these charismatic attributes at the forefront of their financial and legal decisions.

Data-Driven Assessment

Courses in data-driven assessment may be the courses least likely to include the attributes of charismatic leaders. No charismatic attributes can be used to justify data that may show a school's success or failures, but the quality of the leader and charismatic attributes may be effective in helping future school leaders to communicate data to their faculty and staff. Data-driven assessment courses can include presentations in which *emotion* and *trust* are used to report school data. *Competence* in understanding and interpreting data can easily be addressed,

as well as using data to *influence* student learning. Reporting data requires *confidence* in the results, and tying data for school improvement to the *mission and vision* of the school. We suggest presentations for data-driven assessment courses, where candidates are required to provide a profile of their school, with these six charismatic attributes as part of a candidate's evaluation. Assessment courses will prepare leaders to not only interpret data, but effectively communicate it as well, and inspire faculty and staff to act on implications from school performance data.

Implications for Practice and Future Studies

This study is meant to open and inform discussion of how charisma is perceived in educational leadership theory and practice and offer suggestions as to how charismatic attributes can be incorporated into both training and policy. Our findings show there are opportunities for more training and development on four of the elements of charisma, competence, energy, influence, and confidence, as each of those four elements were addressed by less than half of the state standards. Principal training programs and professional development programs could also benefit from inclusion of charismatic attributes. If we are to believe that charisma can be taught and developed in leaders, considerations can be made to integrate charismatic attributes in both school administrator preparation programs and professional development opportunities.

There are a multitude of opportunities for further study on the topic of charismatic leadership. Semi-structured interviews with leaders of successful schools can be conducted to determine which, if any, elements of charismatic leadership are displayed in their practice. Principal preparation programs that consider charisma as a part of their standards could be examined, with consideration to job placement post-program, and longitudinal success when in an administrative role. A final option could be to examine existing syllabi from educational administration programs and address where charismatic attributes are addressed in course objectives, program objectives, or student assignments.

While only briefly mentioned in this paper, it is important to consider the impact that the NELP standards for principals may have on principal preparation programs and also for practicing school administrators. Our paper addresses the standards for all principals who are currently in their positions, based on their established state standards, not individuals completing principal preparation programs. A further study could examine the differences in the NELP standards for aspiring school administrators in comparison to the established standards adopted by each state. As the NELP standards are not slated to be required for principal licensure until Spring 2021, time must be granted to allow principal licensure programs to adjust their standards and curriculum to meet those additional requirements (CAEP, 2019).

Leading our schools in a rapidly changing educational system requires outside-of-the-box thinking and new skills not previously stressed in state standards. We offer our paper as an argument that charisma and charismatic attributes could be integrated into both state standards and educational leadership programs as a way to develop and foster our next generation of school leaders.

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The Voices of Our Students: What We Can Learn from Aspiring Leaders

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Abstract

In 2011, Florida Principal Leadership Standards were released, building from professional educational leadership standards approved in 2005 and developed in a similar manner as the work of a collaborative statewide process involving a broad cross section of stakeholders and contemporary research (Florida Department of Education, 2011b). The "new" standards of 2011 addressed a gap of emphasis from the 2005 standards in the core and primary focus of "Standard 1: Student Learning Results," the only standard of 10 identified as having a rank order of being the number one focus and number one standard (Florida Department of Education, 2011a). The increased attention to the critical area of student achievement permeates the 2011 standards and proposes student learning as the primary focus of schools as a leadership function. In addition, the 2011 standards, which are designed to address an array of functions, are aligned to evaluation documents for school leaders and serve to guide students in educational leadership programs as they complete their master's degrees and pass the required Florida Educational Leadership Exam. Through this study, I aimed to consider the viewpoints of aspiring leaders of schools, graduate students enrolled in a master's degree program of educational leadership in an introductory course and a capstone course and to hear their voices through narrative expressions of self-reflection and analysis in terms of the 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards. There is considerable knowledge that can be learned from listening to graduate students who seek educational leadership degrees and Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) noted the direct effect self-efficacy beliefs can lead to in terms of action, such as persistence. Graduate students were asked to identify their strengths and growth areas as they related to standards and to share their thoughts about the importance of the standards' themes. The notation of emerging themes of interrelatedness and dissonance derived from a review of this work can provide insight to professors of educational leadership for course and program improvement and can most importantly guide instructors in assisting graduate students so that they are confident and prepared to assume leadership roles in Florida institutions of learning.

Keywords: Leadership standards, self-reflection, self-assessment, professional growth

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The Voices of Our Students

The objective of the research was to review graduate-student reflections on the topic of the 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) from a self-assessment perspective and to gain, by doing so, a deeper understanding of graduate students' self-identified strength and growth areas at two points during their graduate program. I aimed to learn new knowledge from graduate students' expressions, and to understand better graduate students' perceptions of their own educational leadership growth journeys as aligned to professional standards. A common practice to obtain feedback from students is the use of a rating instrument and Medina, Smith, Kolluru, Sheaffer, and DiVall (2019) shared "[s]tudent ratings of instruction, also known as course evaluations, are the most common way students provide feedback about faculty teaching and course design and delivery…" (p. 753). The purpose of this study was to move beyond the usual practice of obtaining student feedback through end-of-course surveys and other generic approaches to an analysis with greater meaning using reflections graduate students shared through their coursework as aligned to the 2011 FPLS.

Key to the purpose of the study was the use of the findings for both course and program improvement at a local level and to offer insight to others in the field of educational leadership who share this same quest. Obtaining student feedback, in a variety of forms, is essential to fostering a sense of relevance within the educational leadership curriculum as Hattie and Timperley (2007) noted, "[f]eedback has no effect in a vacuum: to be powerful in its effect, there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed" (p. 82). Hortsch (2019) proffered that "[w]hen educators develop and introduce new learning approaches or resources, they usually have specific didactic goals in mind that they want to achieve. However, these goals may not always match the needs of their students" (p. 572). Instructors have an imperative to listen to their students though a variety of methods and sources to impact student potential and student growth as connected to expressed needs and goals.

The 2011 FPLS serve as guide in this process for this study and through this work I sought insight and information. Seeking voice through emerging themes resulted in the notation of strengths, growth areas, and ideas from graduate students as aligned to the standards, by the two distinct groups, the EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership (i.e., beginning program) students, and the EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership students, (i.e., ending program). I sought to analyze student work to ascertain similar areas and areas of difference as expressed by both of the two distinct groups, which is shared in the form of interrelatedness and dissonance.

In this work I sought insight to guide course and program improvement to meet the needs of beginning program students and students in their final term. The researcher sought to understand what students brought to the program in terms of strengths and growth areas, and what they were satisfied and concerned about as they were concluding the program. This information was sought to guide me in course and program improvement and offer insight to others in the field of educational leadership. The guiding research questions based upon professional standards included:

1. What are strength areas as aligned to the standards that students express in EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and in EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership?
2. What are growth areas aligned to the standards for which students are seeking improvement in EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership?
3. What are personal observations, experiences, and views of each standard as expressed by students in EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership?
4. What are interrelated areas for EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and EDA Practicum in Educational Leadership students as shared in their reflections in both strengths and growths?
5. What are areas of difference of strengths and growth as shared by both groups in EDA 6061 Introduction Educational Leadership and EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership?
6. What can instructors of educational leadership programs do with the observations and themes noted by graduate students in EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership to enhance courses, improve our program, and meet the needs of graduate students in educational leadership programs, aspiring leaders?

Review of the Literature

The breadth of literature on the importance of having effective leaders in our schools is extensive and includes a new vision of educational leadership that is increasingly complex, a role that is encompassed within standards to align to a student-centered focus of achievement of measurable and equitable outcomes, as part of what some researchers deem "..the accountability era" (Fink, 2010; Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2011b; Sorenson, 2005; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015). A contemporary purview of leadership focuses primarily on student learning with a distributive approach (Earley & Weindling, 2004). The Florida Principal Leadership Standards have been refocused in 2011 with a stronger emphasis not only on student learning, but also in key areas of instructional leadership to include faculty and staff development, the leadership development of teacher leaders and emerging leaders within the organization, and an intentional recognition of the importance of creating a school culture that includes opportunities for all students' success through equity and building capacity within a democratic and global society, one that recognizes Florida's diversity (FLDOE, 2011a). The paramount focus of the revised 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards from 2005 Florida Principal Leadership Standards was the shifting of the view of job requirements of a school principal to a much broader lens of leadership, and the new standards also addressed the critical gap noted as " Student Learning as a Priority," a theme that permeates the 2011 standards and serves as an overarching tenet that is embedded within areas of impact, such as system collaboration, engagement of students, closing achievement gaps and establishing high expectations for all students (FLDOE, 2011a). The core change of the 2011 FPLS as expressed in Standard 1 *Student Learning Results* is recognized as being significant in its order within the 10 standards and its position is discussed as purposeful by design as "…intentionally listed as the first standard to reflect the significance of student learning. The order of the

remaining 2011 standards is based upon grouping related issues and does not imply relative importance" (FLDOE, 2011a, p. 2).

Shortly after the 2011 release date of the FPLS, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), formerly known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards were revised by the NPBEA in 2015 with similar substantive changes, such as an increased notation of ethics, equity, and culturally responsive schooling as separate areas for leadership attention (Murphy, Seashore-Louis, & Smylie, 2017). Murphy et al. (2017) shared that "…an extraordinary amount of research" informed the standards, which were built upon the foundation of the 2008 ISLLC standards, and that the standards offer "…more detailed guidance related to leadership for curriculum, instruction, and assessment," but also that there is "…more attention to the need for school leaders to create a community of care and support for students; they (the standards) fully describe school leaders' responsibility to develop professional capacities of teachers and staff, and they (the standards) stress the value of engaging families and community members in student learning" (pp. 21-22). Furthermore, Murphy (2015) postulated that the work of the revision of the PSEL maintained the architecture of "…leadership for learning," while recognizing that growth in the standards was needed in the areas of "…core technology, leadership of the school culture, and leadership of diverse communities," along with a strengthening of social justice (p. 720). A concern for the previous FPLS in this area was noted by Black and Karanxha as "…significant concern dealt with the complete lack of attention to issues of equity, marginalization, and social justice" (2013, p. 41). The 2011 FPLS emphasized within Standard Five classroom practices that "validate and value similarities and differences…within a school environment that is focused on learning with …actionable and observable descriptors," as linked to diversity, equity, and cultural issues that "impact student learning" (FLDOE, 2011a, p. 5).

While the 2011 FPLS are presented as "…core expectations for effective school administrators," and are "based upon contemporary research on multi-dimensional school leadership, and represent skills and knowledge bases needed in effective schools" (FLDOE, 2011a, p. 2), similarly the 2015 PSEL are described as "..a compass that guides the direction of practices," and "…communicate expectation to practitioners, supporting institutions, professional associations, policy makers and the public about the work, qualities and values of effective school leaders" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 4). Also, like the 2011 FPLS, the 2015 PSEL, have been "…recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century" with a future-oriented perspective (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2).

In their descriptive analysis of the 2015 PSEL, Murphy et al. (2017) have created a new conceptual framework they deem Positive School Leadership (PSL) to "… bring the new standards to life" (p. 23). Six key areas of leadership the researchers consider as a method of "…translating the work" of the standards to leadership practice which include "..a stronger professional calling; a stronger moral framework; a focus on character and virtue; a focus on the interest of others; personalized relationship; and empowerment and community building" are addressed in the PSEL (Murphy et al., 2017, p. 24). Supporting literature is prolific in the belief that school leaders' roles and the translation of standards into practice have evolved over time. Gordon, Taylor-Backor, and Croteau (2017) most pointedly considered the recommended

capacities for educational leaders as shifting in focus. Gordon et al. (2017) provided a compelling analysis of the standards in context through two distinct decades. The reorganization of standards by the researchers resulted in the construction of four "Standards Pyramids," which delineate categories of educational capacities as recognized in the literature and which include the broadest area of, for the first pyramid (1976–1985), "Technical Management" (Gordon, et al., 2017, p. 192). The areas moving up within this pyramid diagram in sequence include: "Behavioral & Social Sciences, Law, Politics & Governance, School Improvement, Instructional Leadership," (Gordon et al., 2017, p. 192). Moving forward to their most current model the shift is significant and the capacity categories different. In the fourth model for 2006–2015, Gordon et al. (2017) created what they term "the authors' pyramid" and begin with the largest area of the Standards Pyramid to include "Democratic Community," followed upwards in the diagram in a lesser attention progression to "School Improvement; Instructional Leadership; Social Justice; School-Community Collaboration; Professional-Ethical; Law, Politics, Policy, & Governance; and then finally, Technical Management" (p. 203).

Professional standards serve to clarify and define the work of individuals in a variety of professions. In the case of educational leaders, the work in standards has been reimagined "… with an emphasis on students and student learning" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2). The 2011 FPLS represented a shift from job requirements to leadership capacities with a much greater developed roadmap of expectations that are both broad in topic and specific in expectations as aligned to complex leadership roles and responsibilities emphasizing high-impact leadership behaviors. The standards though are not just for the preparation of school leaders, although this has been deemed a primary focus (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2). Murphy postured that "…the standards (ISLLC) were never intended to be limited to or primarily focused on the preparation of school administrators" and suggests that in the design of standards professional development attention was given to an "…an array of leverage points that could influence the definition and practice of school administration (2015, p. 721). In terms of the use of educational leadership standards to guide students, practitioners, and institutions, educational leadership researchers agree that leadership matters, that leadership impacts student achievement, and they support the idea that attention should be given to preparation programs to "…provide systematically generated evidence about principal preparation program' impact on the education field's bottom line, improving student achievement" (Donmoyer, Yennie-Donmoyer, & Galloway, 2012, p. 8).

Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2009) expressed the importance of two purposes in the preparation of graduate students enrolled in educational leadership programs to lead student learning on a broad scale as: the production of leaders and the idea that this preparation is a development process, which "…prepares individuals for new responsibilities and career opportunities" (p. 195). But, Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2009) noted that research in the area of educational leadership program participants is "…sparse," and "…overlooked" (p. 195). Listening to students has been noted as a key opportunity to connect and Korthagen addressed the importance of teacher-student contact as including an attention to "...the teacher's point of view implies full awareness and being present to his or her own and the student's thinking, feeling, and wanting and acting upon it in a way that shows the students are being seen, understood, and accepted in their thinking, feeling and wanting" (2014, p. 30.) As instructional leaders within educational leadership programs the responsibility to listen is imperative so that faculty members remain cognizant of the students' own observations of purpose within the

courses taught and the concepts studied. With this in mind, educational leadership instructors listen to their students and observe in their discussions and assignments what students are saying about the standards, diving deeper as instructors of aspiring leaders so that they gain the insight and gauge the feelings, needs, wants, and the goals of our future school leaders from a standards-based lens.

Methodology

The study included the review of 22 students' reflective analyses during 2017–2018 in EDA 6061, *Introduction to Educational Leadership*, School Leadership concentration, and eight students' reflective analyses in EDA 6945 *Practicum in Educational Leadership*, School Leadership concentration. The setting for the study was a public, urban university in Florida with an average enrollment of 75 students in the Master's Degree Program for Educational Leadership. The Master's Degree Program for Educational Leadership, School Leadership concentration is a 39-hour-credit degree, which students typically complete within a two-year period through both on-line and face-to-face class opportunities. The institution ranked 42 out of 148 southern regional universities in 2019, a *U.S. News* Best College rankings based upon several areas, such as retention and graduation rates, social mobility, class size and faculty salaries, student excellence, standardized tests, and peer assessments, among other factors and has a graduate rate of enrollment of 2054.

EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership is a beginning course in the master's program and is a prerequisite for EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership. EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership is a capstone course that students complete at the end or very near the end of their program. EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership is a course that typically has a higher enrollment than EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership. The research encompassed the review of two separate, but similar course assignments embedded within each course: EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, Assignment #1, and EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, Assignment #1, Part II, A. The assignment descriptions for both courses are included:

EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership

Assignment #1: Self-Reflection and Written Assessment of Leadership Competencies. Part I: Review the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards along with the sample performance indicators. Part II: Develop a reflection paper based upon your review. Structure your paper to list each area, address the strength, area of improvement and personal observation for each area. Conclude with a brief summary of your own plan for growth. List each standard followed by a brief self-assessment:

(a) Strength/s you believe you have regarding the standard;
(b) Area/s that need most improvement; and
(c) Your personal observations, experiences, and view of the importance of this standard in educational leadership. For example, how important, in your view, is this standard to being an effective leader in education? Give examples of your own leadership experiences or others you have observed to demonstrate your points/beliefs.

EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership

Assignment #1, Part II, A: Educational Leadership Standards-My Personal/Professional Strengths, Growth Areas, Documents, and Plans. Using the current revised Florida Principal Leadership Standards asses your characteristics as an aspiring educational leader by providing artifacts and reflections on each standard and document and describe your competency level. List each of the 10 standards and then include strengths, growth areas, and your plan to improve in this area or continue the growth strategies you have begun. Think in terms of areas in which you feel you are strong/confident and areas in which you feel less secure and need to grow as you self-reflect. Select experiences/projects/assignments you have already completed or those you plan to capture highlights of your educational leadership program thus far in your career and list these as appropriate. Since this is a self-reflection exercise, you may have more to note for one area than another and that is certainly expected and acceptable.

I followed Creswell's (2003) suggested steps of "Read through all the data…obtain a general sense of the information to reflect overall meaning" and engage in questioning: "What general ideas are the participants saying? What is the tone of the ideas?" (p. 191). In addition, the coding processes of Tesch (1990) served to guide me in the "…clustering together of similar topics," and "…abbreviating topics as codes and writing codes next to the appropriate segments of the text" as the narrative reflections were coded by statements that indicated strengths, growth areas, and ideas, the latter, which often encompassed observations and action plan statements (p. 145). I used textual analysis and coded the students' self-refection analyses of the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards which consisted of 22 reflections from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership students and eight reflections from students in EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, I captured ideas in the margins of each paper as part of a "lean coding" function, which included assigning only a few broad codes in the initial review (Creswell, 2015, p. 243). Observations were coded within the work in terms of S-strength area, and G-growth area, and I for ideas, experiences, and thoughts as noted for each of ten standards. Tesch (1990) also recommended that in working with qualitative data that the researcher seeks "…the most descriptive wording for your topics," and that the work includes a "…grouping of the topics that relate to each other" (p. 145). I utilized these processes as referenced by Tesch (1990) in determining the emerging themes as noted by both groups in the study through the coding strategies discussed earlier, which are shared in the findings of the study. Coding included a closer reading of the work, breaking the data into manageable parts through the process of a more robust notation of each strength, growth, and ideas of the 10 standards in each reflection paper as part of two cohesive lists representing the two separate courses utilizing a qualitative coding method recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1992). I reviewed the two lists of strengths, growth areas, and ideas to synthesize the findings, and identified emerging themes followed by a clustering of leadership functions of the two separate lists into one overall representation recognizing interrelated findings, dissonance, and ideas inclusive of action plans, experiences, and beliefs (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 2015). Miles and Huberman (1994) discussed the importance of noting recurring patterns and themes to pull together separate pieces of data before the process of "clustering" and this process was undertaken in the notation of strengths and growth, and idea areas as shared in the cluster areas of: Community Leadership, Leadership Perspective and Experiences, and Leadership Supervision included in the final summary of findings (p. 247).

Findings

The findings are divided into tables and are presented in narrative form identifying emerging themes for each of the 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards denoting self-analyses reflections as expressed by graduate students in EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership and in EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership groups in the study through the coding strategies. The study was designed so that the information learned through the analysis of emerging themes would offer insight for me to apply to course and program improvement, particularly in looking at the similarities and differences in consideration of varying students' needs. The data are from two separate sections of each course collected during the years of 2017 and 2018 and includes 22 students from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, and eight students from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership. The goal of including these two distinct student groups relates to my desire not only to hear the voices of both groups, but to identify similar and differing information as expressed by beginning program students in the introductory course and the ending program students in terms of continuing needs. The findings are shared in two separate formats, with the first section denoted for each of the 10 standards, as aligned to Research Questions #1-3. This review is followed by a narrative summary by cluster areas of Community Leadership, Leadership Perspective and Experiences, and Leadership Supervision representing the interrelated and dissonance themes and belief statements for both student groups and relates to Research Questions #4-5. Finally, a narrative summary is shared with additional research questions posed to address Research Question #6.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 1

Analysis for themes for FPLS 1 are shown in Table 1. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 2.

Table 1
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 1: Student Learning Results

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students overall identified this more as a strength area than a growth area and provided ample positive statements about their abilities in this core area of the standards, referencing most frequently a confidence due to their familiarity with using school data from a classroom perspective. Comments such as: "I strive for this daily. I can reference state standards when creating plans for group instruction. I am very organized. I understand learning targets and can work towards them. I have managed to hit the 80% mark with my students. I understand how data works" (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018)	A high level of confidence was noted in the comments from this group of students not only in classroom data but with a shift in their discussion to the experience of school-wide leadership in this standard. Comments were robust such as: "I am knowledgeable in data analysis for school wide decisions. Coursework has prepared me for this standard, especially Practicum and School Assessment and Accountability. Analyzing data is a strength of mine. I have experience in working with data school-wide" (Assignments from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).

Table 1 (continued)
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 1: Student Learning Results

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Growth	The common growth area mentioned for this standard was scale as students expressed concern for managing data school-wide. Another area of concern was working with staff on communication of data. Being acquainted with all grade level standards were expressed by several students as a growth area.	An area of growth for several students included relationship concerns with faculty and they shared comments about topics such as dealing with teachers with negative attitudes, supervising and providing teachers with feedback, having tough conversations about data, being nervous about data for all subjects, and understanding Florida School Assessment data.
Ideas	Students expressed ideas of leadership actions in terms of having data chats to review student scores, study sessions on the use of data for the entire faculty, holding separate meetings for each subject within a school to dive deeper into data by discipline, and providing a more structured and less intimidating environment around the use of school-wide data. An observation included that role models in this area was noted as a positive and many students commented that they have or have had successful modeling in leadership in their schools with the use of data.	This group noted experiences as positives for this standard such as working on the school improvement team and designing lessons for the school team through Professional Learning Communities. One student mentioned a book she was reading on how to speak to employees to increase performance. This group also emphasized the importance of strong role models in leading school data.

Table 2
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 1: Student Learning Results

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Comfortable with classroom level use of data and understand the importance of data overall as aligned to standards of teaching and learning. • Roles models in schools are key to observe in developing their own skills in using and communicating about data on a school-wide level. • Conversations about data that are negative in nature with faculty is a challenging area.	• A recall of preparation in this area inclusive of specific courses and school-based wide lens experiences serving on teams noted by Practicum students.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 2

Analysis for themes for FPLS 2 are shown in Table 3. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 4.

Table 3
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 2: Student Learning as a Priority

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students expressed confidence in prioritizing, focusing attention on students and understanding how to use data to inform instruction. Comments were aligned to, for the most part, a classroom perspective. Comments included: "I do a great job of prioritizing and celebrating students' successes and creating an environment focused on student learning. I focus my attention on students. I build a system and a routine. I focus my attention on what is relevant. I demonstrate this standard through actions and questions such as: Are students engaged? Are students mastering learning standards?" (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Students indicated feeling strong with this standard and many commented with action statements such as "I have come a long way in my confidence as a leader. As an educational leader I will remain passionate in my conviction that every person has value and all students can learn" (Assignments from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership).
Growth	Students expressed concerns about enabling staff and faculty to work as a team on student learning. Providing feedback was a common concern expressed by this group and maintaining a sense of relevance on a large scale. Comments of concern for this standard included: "How do I create buy-in for teachers? How do I meet their needs (of all students)? How do I develop a roadmap of how implementation should take place as I don't want to rock the boat?" (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	A common concern or growth area as expressed by this group dealt with experience in all content areas and grade levels and a need to focus on curriculum planning schoolwide.
Ideas	This group expressed ample ideas of how to address this growth area inclusive of developing a bell to bell engagement, providing opportunities for peer teaching, establishing a growth mindset, supporting teachers in their efforts to support student learning, working with stakeholders to achieve a shared vision and plan, creating the opportunity for real-time chats, and creating a culture that is trustworthy, respectful, and engaging.	This group mentioned frequently that role models are key in this standard.

Table 4
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 2: Student Learning as a Priority

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• A shared theme of this standard for both groups was the use of statements that exuded confidence. But, concurrently both groups also expressed concern about school-wide knowledge and knowing all subjects and disciplines well within the whole-school environment.	• For this standard the Introductory group expressed more questions within their growth narratives but also more ideas for how they would lead this standard. Practicum students referred frequently about their participation on school teams.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 3

Analysis for themes for FPLS 3 are shown in Table 5. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 6.

Table 5
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 3: Instructional Plan Implementation

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students commented frequently on their work in collaborating with others in cross-curricular goals, using data to drive instruction, and curriculum mapping. Comments were verbose in terms of current classroom actions "I designed a curriculum map. I am well versed in data and standards. I spend a great deal of time assessing student performance, and working with other teachers. I enjoy data and use it to drive instruction. I collaborate with other teachers towards cross-curricular goals and have experience training teachers. I feel strong in my ability to recognize the relationship among standards, instruction, and student performance" (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	This group noted experienced based strengths such as leading Professional Development and curriculum mapping, working with district level administrators on assessment, and leading training in collaboration and technology.

Table 5 (continued)
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 3: Instructional Plan Implementation

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Growth	Students were expansive in their descriptions of growth areas for this standard. Comments included "How do I share my knowledge with others? How do I find time to create opportunities to communicate with teachers? I need to understand that not all teachers love planning and analyzing data as much as I do. I need to expand my collaboration to learn to work with teachers of different levels. I struggle with meeting students' needs and finding a plan that incorporates all aspects of growth" (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Writing specs for assessments and seeking more experience in all content areas. A lack of school-wide planning was noted, and large-scale scope of reference.
Ideas	Role modeling is key. Use data as the start of action. Allow staff and faculty to use many resources. Monitor and offer feedback.	Experiences and leadership opportunities were mentioned frequently by this group as why they felt strong in this standard. Experiences they would recommend and have participated in were noted as: "I led Professional Development in instructional planning. I have worked with district level administrators on assessment. I have extensive experience in collaboration training and technology training. I have been part of a healthy professional learning community" (Assignments from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership).

Table 6
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 3: Instructional Plan Implementation

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Strong in understanding data • Collaboration experiences at the school level on teams	• Concerned about translating their knowledge to a large school wide scope mentioned more frequently by EDA 6061 students

Standard 4: EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership

Analysis for themes for FPLS 4 are shown in Table 7. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 8.

Table 7
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 4: Faculty Development

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Strengths were noted as experience-based involving participation on school teams, serving as mentors, and helping others find value as team members. Only one student of twenty-two mentioned experience in interviewing prospective teachers.	Participating in the Practicum experience was noted as a strength. Teacher leadership opportunities and using data to drive Professional Development were mentioned as strengths
Growth	Most mentioned that this would be a significant growth standard for them due to lack of experience. Many mentioned no experience at all in the area of recruitment.	Knowledge of recruitment and retention of teachers and dealing with difficult people who do not see a reason to change
Ideas	Shadowing a school leader was suggested and one student mentioned the importance of establishing coaching cycles, providing feedback, and being visible as key to this standard.	

Table 8
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 4: Faculty Development

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• A lack of experience in recruitment.	• Notation of retention concerns mentioned more frequently by Practicum, EDA 6945 students.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 5

Analysis for themes for FPLS 5 are shown in Table 9. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 10.

Table 9
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 5: Learning Environment

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students noted classroom culture aspects as being paramount with a strength noted in their ability to provide a safe comfortable learning zone and positively impact their own classroom culture. Comments were bold and expressive and included "My skill is in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and recognizing cultural gaps. I believe all students should have an equal opportunity with all cultures accepted. My classroom culture is designed so that students can succeed and I would carry that with me as a leader (Assignments from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018)	A strong understanding of data that includes addressing gaps schoolwide. Confident in their abilities to lead differentiation in instruction and in using data
Growth	Students sought growth in how to be more knowledgeable about culture and wanted to be able to monitor and provide feedback of effectiveness for culturally diverse practices.	Helping teachers recognize developmental differences and use data from the assessment process.
Ideas	Implement a positive behavior monitoring system. Teacher leadership experiences and experiences on teams were noted by this group as actions that can lead to growth.	

Table 10
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 5: Learning Environment

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Feel passionate about addressing gaps for all students • Express conviction to providing equal opportunities for all students • Express concern to provide training/feedback for developmental and cultural needs • Believe that differentiation is essential	• Practicum students expressed more action statements beginning with "I can…" and "I will…."

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 6

Analysis for themes for FPLS 6 are shown in Table 11. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 12.

Table 11
Comparison of Strengths and Growth for FPLS 6: Decision Making

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Ability to problem-solve. Comments included "I am a problem-solver and I give priority to my students. I organize information quickly. I understand the vision, mission, and improvement priorities" (Assignment from EDA 6061 Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Statements began with "I" followed by use, am, can, believe. Students spoke frequently of the importance of "… distributive decision making as key…inclusion in decision making… shared decision making" (Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018). Comments included: "I used data -based decision making. I am focused and can make decisions. I am a decisive person and good at analyzing different perspectives. I believe in inclusion in decisions. I believe in shared decision making "(Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018)
Growth	Students expressed concerns about sharing decisions, over thinking and second-guessing. One student mentioned that "…this is the toughest one for me" and shared her concerns about keeping students first and making the "tough" decisions (Assignment from EDA 6061 Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Students were concerned with learning how to better use data to drive decisions and "…how to use the facts" (Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018)

Table 12
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 6: Decision Making

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Belief in importance of shared decision making • Concerned about using data to drive decisions	• Practicum students' statements frequently began with "I" followed by action statements related to their ability to make decisions.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 7

Analysis for themes for FPLS 7 are shown in Table 13. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 14.

Table 13
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 7: Leadership Development

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students expressed their strengths as experience-based, with teams and colleagues, in teacher leadership activities, and as an enjoyment in the development of others.	This group primarily looked to actions, their own and others, and the opportunity to observe role models to discuss this standard. A comment on role models included "This separates the elite from the effective school leader. I've had a good role model, a principal with a keen eye. I hope to demonstrate a similarly nuanced eye for talent" (Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018). Comments revolved from current work and future work they would undertake and included "I plan to get to know my teachers better through conferencing and recognizing those who have good leadership qualities" (Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).
Growth	Concerned with a lack of experience in this area. Several students mentioned the importance of trust as key to this standard. A frequent comment was "No experience yet" and "I need more experience" (Assignment from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Students expressed growth areas in terms of action plans to include conferencing with teachers, writing affirmative notes, planning activities for teacher, and demonstrating support
Ideas	Comments included "I would enjoy supporting and developing leaders within my teachers. I know the importance of building relationships. I do enjoy watching people grow and celebrating their accomplishments. As a leader I would encourage my teachers to take on leadership roles. I have a passion for developing others. My strength in this area is the knowledge of teacher inquiry and how to guide teachers" (Assignment from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	

Table 14
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 7: Leadership Development

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Building relationships and trust are key to this standard	• Practicum students identified several strategies for this standard such as conferencing • Introduction to Educational Leadership students felt they lacked experience in this standard

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 8

Analysis for themes for FPLS 8 are shown in Table 15. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 16.

Table 15
Comparison of Strengths and Growth for FPLS 8: School Management

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	A classroom focus was recognized as derived from their current experiences with time management, classroom management and being organized. Running an efficient classroom was noted.	Students mentioned projects in courses that have helped them feel prepared for this standard which included a curriculum alignment project, a field-based legal project, an instructional leadership platform project, and a multiple-experience based assignment in technology. Ability in time management was also considered a strength for this standard.
Growth	Students were very concerned about budget and how to do and manage a budget for a school. They also spoke of the area of delegating to others as being a growth area in the overall management of a school.	Students expressed concern in juggling the weight of many responsibilities, and how to deal with people, coping with the inability or indifference to deadlines. Saying no to those they supervise was also a concern.

Table 16
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 8: School Management

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Time management and organization are recognized as strengths	• Introduction to Educational Leadership students are very concerned about managing a school budget • Practicum students are concerned more than Intro students with having difficult conversations with those they supervise

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 9

Analysis for themes for FPLS 9 are shown in Table 17. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 18.

Table 17
Comparison of Strengths, Growth, and Ideas for FPLS 9: Communication

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students expressed strengths in listening, time management, communication with parents, and an ability to listen respectfully. Students mentioned that transparency is key and being timely and open and shared "This is my biggest strength. I have the ability to communicate respectfully and listen. I am timely in my communication via calendar reminders and weekly agendas. I value communication. I use clear and consistent communication" (Assignment from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).	Students spoke of the importance of building trust and being good listeners and expressed their strengths in action statements such as "I am good at seeing different perspectives. I feel confident in finding ways to communicate. I will listen and have an open door. I plan to have weekly newsletters, morning announcements, weekly phone calls, and write personal notes" (Assignment from EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018).
Growth	Communicating with the community and reaching out to stakeholders was expressed often by students as a growth area for this standard. Staying composed was noted.	Students expressed a concern about communicating with the community.
Ideas		Students spoke of the importance of being visible and listening as a leader often in their comments as being critical to successful communication for school leaders. Their ideas were frequently expressed in the form of plans for action.

Table 18
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 9: Communication

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Working with the community in communication is deemed a challenge area. • Listening as a leader is paramount.	• Practicum students mentioned building trust as key to successful communication. • Introduction to Educational Leadership students shared several classroom-based examples.

Florida Principal Leadership Standard 10

Analysis for themes for FPLS 10 are shown in Table 19. General observations of interrelatedness and dissonance between the EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students are shown in Table 20.

Table 19
Comparison of Strengths and Growth for FPLS 10: Professional and Ethical Behavior

	Themes by Course	
Category	EDA 6061	EDA 6945
Strengths	Students viewed themselves as positive role models for others, making healthy choices and continuously seeking improvement. Students noted that they admit when they make mistakes and feel this is important within this standard. An attention to high standards was also noted. Comments included "I am constantly striving to do the right thing. A code of moral ethics is my way of life. We must adhere to the highest standards of ethics. Ethical integrity is key in leadership" (Assignment from EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership, 2017 & 2018)	Students mentioned the Law and Ethics course of their program as providing information about ethical and legal issues in leadership. Students mentioned the importance of maintaining composure and admitting fault. Students felt it was important to exemplify a sense of follow through.
Growth	Expressions of concern included that admitting error can be difficult and that at times students felt they were too transparent. Students were concerned with remaining resilient knowing they cannot make everyone happy and must accept discontent	Students mentioned having difficult conversations as a growth area

Table 20
General Observations of Interrelatedness and Dissonance for FPLS 10: Professional and Ethical Behavior

Interrelatedness of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students	Dissonance of EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students
• Admitting fault is necessary to ethical leadership • Dealing with difficult conversations, not making everyone happy is a growth area • Role models	• None noted

Emerging Themes by Cluster from the Overall Review of the FPLS

A closer review of the coded data of the interrelatedness and dissonance of strengths and growth areas and shared beliefs for EDA 6061 and EDA 6945 students is presented by cluster

areas of Community Leadership, Leadership Perspective and Experiences, and Leadership Supervision. Miles and Huberman (1994) proffered "Clustering is a tactic that can be applied at many levels to qualitative data….in all instances we are trying to understand a phenomenon better by grouping and then conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns or characteristics" (p. 249). In this regard the findings of the study have been noted in the previous section by grouping similar statements and the narrative summary that follows by cluster areas serves to bring a sense of cohesion for overall meaning.

Community leadership.

Students in both groups of the study expressed a lack of experience in community leadership and their statements referenced a need area in their professional growth as "Working with and communicating with the community." Working with the school community to include all stakeholders is an important leadership function and Sampson and Horsford (2017) identified 11 specific recommendations for educational leaders that included "…creating opportunities for community advocates to help…and embracing community participation and strategic transparency" within their top five strategies (p. 736). Sampson and Horsford (2017) proposed that community involvement needs to advance an equity agenda and suggest that community participants take an active role in school and district functions such as "…serve on districtwide committees, observe schools, review district wide data and discuss their observations and perspectives" (p. 736). Both student groups also recognized this importance of Community Leadership as referenced by Sampson and Horsford (2017) and shared belief statements that included the community in leadership actions, such as collaboration and understanding a sense of culture as being vital to effective school leadership functions.

Leadership perspective and experiences.

Students in both groups referenced several statements that align to experiences they lacked, teacher leadership opportunities that provided experiences, and issues that involved a shift in perspective related to being able to move from a classroom to whole-school lens. The lack of experience was noted to a greater extent by introductory students and they shared a concern about managing a school budget. Both groups shared strength areas of time management and expressed confidence in the use of classroom data as aligned to overall standards of teaching and learning. A sense of changing perspective, shifting the lens from the classroom to the whole school environment permeated many of the comments, primarily as growth areas and noted more so by the introductory students. Moving to the use of data and understanding all grade-level content standards on a school-wide level was noted by both groups in the study as a growth area. Some of the "need to shift perspective" comments included lacking experience in recruitment, mentioned more frequently by Introduction students and "need experience in retention of teachers" by Practicum students. While defining teacher leadership can be challenging, Crippen and Willows (2019) noted a sense of thoughtfulness on the part of teacher leaders in schools and ideas voiced that are district oriented and include the ability to "…inspire, encourage, and empower their colleagues" (p. 172). Practicum students, unlike introductory students shared more examples in the study which included teacher leadership activities as expressed with positive action statements that began often with "I can, I will, I plan to." Belief statements expressed by both groups in terms of perspective included a notation at the school level that

collaboration and shared decision-making are paramount, leaders need to understand how to address gaps for all students, and schools need strong leaders as role models.

Leadership supervision.

In the area of supervisory responsibilities, both groups of students expressed concern with having difficult conversations with faculty and staff and providing feedback to faculty and staff as significant growth areas in their professional development. The responsibilities of leadership supervision are extensive and Kars and Inandi shared that "…leadership is a process that implies complicated relations between a leader and followers" (2018). Communication is a key area of effective leadership and Farrell (2015) shared that "Difficult conversations are part of the ongoing dialogue within an organization" (p. 303). Farrell (2015) noted too that "Difficult conversations provide an opportunity to increase morale, develop collaboration, and foster a positive workplace" which aligns to several belief statements as shared by both groups (p. 303). As such belief statements about leadership supervision were ample by both study groups and included a reference to the importance of leaders being able to build relationships as embodied in leadership actions such as leaders need to listen as part of communication, leaders need to build trust, and differentiation is essential in working with faculty and staff. As related to the standard on ethics, students from both study groups mentioned that admitting fault is a necessary component for effective leadership.

Conclusions and Discussion

In his historical review of the role of American principals Hallinger (1992) stated, quite boldly "By virtue of their position in the organizational hierarchy, principals find themselves at the intersection where forces seeking the maintenance of traditional values meet those that press for change" (p. 42). His view is especially relevant in considering the voices of aspiring leaders who by nature of their graduate work find themselves at a precipice of professional development and growth, broadening their classroom perspectives to one of a whole-school lens encompassing a myriad of leadership roles and expectations. I sought to listen to educational leadership graduate students through an analysis of their own reflections of their professional attributes rendered in terms of strengths, growths, ideas, and beliefs/action plans, as aligned to professional standards, in particular the 2011 FPLS. The review was undertaken to discover information that would guide educational leadership professors in their work with aspiring leaders for course and program improvement, and critically to bring meaning to experiences through course and program design for graduate students so that they are prepared to connect tradition with change, embodying a cadre of leadership roles within their work and keeping students first and foremost their intentional focus. Guillame and Vitucci (2015) encouraged such work and state that there is a "…notion of faculty as a catalyst in the learning process..," and share that (university) faculty should "…involve students in a meaning process that influences the ways in which they experience learning" (p. 5). The themes that emerged from the study can serve as a source of inquiry and guide to course and program improvement for instructors in the field of educational leadership. Why do students feel as they do about the standards and their own development? What can educational leadership professors do collectively to address the shared goal of preparing aspiring school leaders to be effective, and open to change, utilizing the framework of the standards as our guide? How can educational leadership professors use these

findings, narrative reflections of our students' voices, to enhance course design and ensure that assignments are relevant and meaningful in current school environments? I provided insight but to a greater extent the critical need for inquiry, the need for educational leadership professors to remain engaged with the action of listening to our graduate students, whether this in in class discussions, or presented through the students' narratives, their reflections and ideas.

Through the findings, I revealed that EDA 6061 Introduction to Educational Leadership students had more concerns than students in the EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership course, but students in the capstone course, EDA 6945 Practicum in Educational Leadership students also expressed continuing growth challenges. Introduction students viewed the standards from a classroom perspective, while the Practicum students' comments moved to a broader school landscape. The areas of community outreach and the use of data to drive both decisions and instruction schoolwide were shared as common growth areas, along with dealing with difficult conversations. The Practicum students used more statements of action within their narratives and shared more specific strategies to address their own growth. The emerging themes, inclusive of the interrelatedness and the areas of dissonance provide insight into further questions for me and for those involved in the teaching of educational leadership courses. Some of these questions include:

1. How can faculty provide or increase in courses greater opportunities for students to engage in the practice of difficult discussions?
2. How can faculty provide or increase opportunities for students to enhance an awareness of community engagement and communication strategies?
3. How can faculty provide or enhance opportunities to include data assessment on a school-wide basis?
4. How can faculty build through a review of this analysis from introduction students a body of knowledge of what they identify as strengths coming into our program and use this information in course assignment design?
5. How can faculty increase in our work with our graduate students a cultural awareness knowledge core so that they feel prepared to lead in this key area?

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations for this study include the small sample size and one university scope. Relatedness to other educational leadership programs is also a factor of possible limitation, especially in terms of curriculum design of course assignments relative to interrelatedness findings of the study and those expressed as growth areas. The qualitative nature of the review was conducted by one instructor for one setting, which also limits the extensive consideration of emerging themes and ideas as expressed by the graduate students. Further dialog on the study findings is needed at the one university level by all professors of educational leadership. Building from this one university dialog, discussion could then be moved to a broader scale such as discussed at the Florida Association of Professional Educational Leadership meetings for systemic growth and change for graduate students engaged in educational leadership programs across the state of Florida. In addition, continued review of student work as derived from reflective narratives on the topic of the FPLS is needed to continue the engagement of faculty to a relevant lens of what aspiring school leaders need to be prepared and successful.

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School Principals' and Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of New Teacher Needs

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Abstract

One principal leadership role is to help new teachers become successful veteran teachers. Unfortunately, for the last several decades, new teachers have increasingly been exiting the teaching profession. Nearly one third of new teachers leave by the end of their third year, and nearly half by the end of their fifth year (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014). Such an exodus (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019) of teachers creates an unstable learning environment, which is detrimental to student achievement. I surveyed teachers and principals regarding new teacher needs. The purpose of the present study is not only to determine what teachers and principals perceive to be the professional needs of new teachers but also to compare the perceptions of teachers and principals. Hopefully, the knowledge gained from the study will help school principals provide new teachers with the support and guidance they need to remain in the teaching profession.

Keywords: New teachers, retention, principals, principal preparation

Statement of the Problem

For the past several decades, new teachers have been leaving the profession at an alarming rate (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2012), as much as one-third of new teachers by the end of their third year and nearly half by the end of their fifth year (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014). This mass teacher exodus is costly to the school system and negatively affects both the stability of the school and student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). As the instructional leader of the school, the principal must not only stop or significantly reduce teacher attrition but also help new teachers become successful veteran teachers (Watkins, 2005). The purpose of the present study is to investigate what educators—teachers and principals—perceive to be the support that new teachers require to remain in the profession.

Brief Review of the Literature

Because so many new teachers leave the field of teaching after only a few years, researchers have attempted to determine the reasons for their departure (Bolich, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fredricks, 2001; Ingersoll et al., 2014; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Robertson, Hancock, & Allen, 2006). In a study conducted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Bolich (2001) discovered that two important factors accounting for new teachers' exiting the profession are "the amount of support and guidance they receive and the assignments they are given" (p. 5). Other factors included inadequate teacher preparation as well as poor salaries and benefits. Fredricks (2001) investigated the situation and found the obvious reasons of poor salaries and poor working conditions to cause new teachers to leave; however, as indicated by many leavers, the real reason for their exit was the lack of support from the administration. Darling-Hammond (2003) found that the top reasons were dissatisfaction with salaries, working conditions, teacher preparation, and the lack of mentoring support provided. Ingersoll (2003) blamed the teacher shortage on the "revolving door" of teachers entering and leaving the profession and, like Darling-Hammond, found job dissatisfaction to be the main factor in new teachers' decisions to leave. Dissatisfaction factors identified were low salary, lack of administrative support, student behavior, poor student motivation, and lack of teacher voice in decision-making. Other reasons for leaving included a better job offer, a different career, or to improve career opportunities.

Robertson et al. (2006) asserted from their findings that behavior management, paperwork, time management, and lack of parental support were the factors that caused many to leave. The lack of parental alliance came as a shock to many new teachers, who expected parents to cooperate with their requests for appropriate classroom behavior and completion of academic assignments rather than the resistance in the form of excuses and accusations that they received. Podolsky et al. (2016) revealed that new teachers' decision to leave or to stay was based on salaries, inadequate preparation and high entry costs, hiring and personnel management, induction and support for new teachers, and working conditions. The working conditions which induced them to leave consisted of factors such as the school leadership, professional collaboration, shared decision-making, accountability systems, and teaching resources (p. 1). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) found dissatisfaction was cited as the main reason for leaving; dissatisfaction factors included dissatisfaction with testing and accountability

pressures (25%), lack of administrative support (21%), dissatisfaction with the teaching career (21%), and dissatisfaction with working conditions (19%).

In a comprehensive study of the trends of attrition among various characteristics and preparation of new teachers, Ingersoll et al. (2014) contended that those teachers who received the traditional teacher preparation degree were less likely to leave than were those who pursued an alternative preparation track. They also found that new teachers in private schools were twice as likely to leave than were new teachers in public schools. Not surprisingly, new teachers who completed more courses in educational methods and strategies were less likely to leave than were those new teachers who had completed fewer courses in teaching methods.

Feiman-Nemser (2003) maintained that "New teachers need at least three to four years to become competent and a few more to become proficient. We shouldn't give them the same responsibilities as veteran teachers" (p. 27). The recommendations were to provide new teachers with the resources, support, and guidance to ensure that they remain in the profession. Research indicates that induction plans for new teachers may help accomplish that (Bolich, 2001; Breaux & Wong, 2002; California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Podolsky et al., 2016; Wong, 2002). In a meta-analysis of 15 studies over the previous 25 years, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that new teacher induction programs positively impacted teacher retention, teacher instructional practices, and student achievement. In another review of the research regarding new teacher induction, Martin (2012) maintained that induction, a bridge between student teaching and classroom teaching, is a critical element in developing and retaining new teachers. Podolsky et al. (2016) found that strong induction programs will retain new teachers, accelerate their development, and increase student achievement. The findings showed that successful induction programs included "mentoring, coaching, and feedback from experienced teachers in the same subject area or grade level as the novice teacher; the opportunity for novice teachers to observe expert teachers; orientation sessions, retreats, and seminars for novice teachers; and reduced workloads and extra classroom assistance for novice teachers" (p. 6).

While there is variation among the studies in terms of identification of the components needed in comprehensive induction programs for new teachers, many studies include orientation, mentoring, and professional development (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Martin, 2012; Sargent, 2003; Watkins, 2005). In the present study, I explored the question of new teacher needs through an open-ended survey based on those three induction components of orientation, mentoring, and professional development.

Methodology

After securing Institutional Review Board approval, I received consent from the superintendent of a large public-school district in south Louisiana. Next, I emailed the principals in all 32 schools and requested that the principal and the faculty complete an online survey regarding the needs of new teachers as well as several demographic questions regarding name of school, position, gender, and number of years' experience.

Sample Population

The school district is relatively large for Louisiana, with 20,000 students, and is spread geographically to include urban, suburban, and rural areas. The racial makeup of the school district is 63.8% white, 29.3% black, 3.8% Hispanic, 0.8% Asian, 1.8% mixed, and 0.5% other. Respondents consisted of 106 educators, including 94 teachers (4+ years' experience), 23 new teachers (0.5-3 years' experience), 5 school principals, 1 assistant principal, 1 administrative assistant, 2 curriculum coaches, and 3 paraprofessionals. Respondents hailed from 10 schools: 2 elementary, 4 PK-8, 2 middle, and 2 high schools. There were 91 females and 15 males who completed the survey, and the years' experience ranged from 0.5-60 years.

Although the number of teachers who participated in the survey was ample, an obvious limitation was the small number of administrators (principals and assistant principals) who participated. A possible reason for the lack of adequate representation of administrators might be the timing of the survey—late March to late April—a time when standardized tests were being administered to the students. While the teachers may have had the time to complete the survey, the administrators may have been too busy with other administrative tasks that could only have been completed at that time. However, because the administrators' opinions were deemed important, I decided to include their responses.

Survey

The open-ended survey regarding the needs of new teachers was based on the literature. Respondents were asked what the needs of new teachers were in the areas of orientation, mentoring, and professional development. In the survey, respondents were further asked, which types of culture or environments were preferable for new teachers and what structures were most beneficial for new teachers. (See Appendix for the survey.)

Method of Analysis

After a thorough exploration of the literature on effective induction programs for beginning teachers, I used content analysis and *a priori* or template coding to create a semi-open-ended survey with the labels of orientation, mentoring, and professional development as the major themes. "Content analysis is dependent on creating labels (codes) that can be applied to data in order to develop data into meaningful categories to be analyzed and interpreted" (Blair, 2015, p. 16). Template or *a priori* coding is a tool for classifying data into an organized framework (Blair, 2015). Open coding is a "method of generating a participant-generated theory from the data" (p. 17), whereas in template or *a priori* coding, "the codes used are defined by the researcher, which involves using *a priori* codes drawn from research, reading or theory" (p. 19). The application of content analysis and *a priori* coding in this instance was used for the purpose of constructing an organized survey based on the literature. The analyses entailed a combination of *a priori* and open coding.

There were also several sub-categories or sub-themes under each of these three main labels or categories, and they were mentioned as examples in the survey questions; however, the participants were free to suggest any factor(s) that they believed pertained to each particular

major label in their responses. For example, one survey question asked: “What are the needs of new teachers today regarding school orientation? (e.g., support, basic school procedures and policies, class organization, location of resources, etc.).”

Each of the main questions regarding orientation, mentoring, and professional development were succeeded by a question regarding how those needs were or were not being met. Using open coding, I grouped responses together into thematic categories. The final questions on the survey asked which types of culture or environments were preferable for new teachers and what structures were most beneficial for new teachers. Again, *a priori* coding was used to indicate the categories of collaborative, respectful, trusting, relationship-oriented, high expectations, collegial, competitive, and authoritative, and open coding was used to classify any responses other than those categories. Similarly, I used *a priori* coding to frame the final survey question regarding which structures were most beneficial to new teachers and used open coding to classify any responses that fell outside of the categories of common planning time, PLCs, block scheduling, early release/late take-in, and year-round schooling.

In summary, I used both *a priori* coding and open coding to classify the data. Using *a priori* coding, I arranged each response under one of the sub-categories that were deemed the best fit; an additional subcategory entitled "other" was reserved for those responses that did not align with the original sub-categories. I used open coding to classify conceptually similar (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) responses. Sometimes the "other" sub-category had many responses that were grouped together as a theme that became a new sub-category. I added up the number of responses under each subcategory and reported it as a raw number and then as a percentage of the number of respondents who indicated that subcategory. After coding, the results were displayed as descriptive statistics in tables comparing the responses of all educators, new teachers, and administrators.

Results

Orientation

The literature review consistently indicated that a major reason for new teachers’ decision to leave the profession was lack of administrative support (Bolich, 2001; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fredricks, 2001 Ingersoll, 2003; Podolsky et al., 2016). Although administrative support was indicated by all three groups as one of the needs of new teachers, it was not a top priority. Instead, support ranked third among all educators, fourth among new teachers with 0-3 years’ experience, and second among administrators. There were several unexpected findings in the present study. The first was that, although knowledge of school/district policies and procedures were ranked first by all educators and by new teachers and fourth by administrators, that need was not even mentioned in the literature review. The second unexpected finding was that classroom management consistently ranked high among all three groups (first among administrators and second among all educators and new teachers). Classroom management, otherwise known as management of student behavior, was mentioned as a new teacher need in the literature review by only a few researchers (Ingersoll, 2003; Podolsky et al., 2016; Robertson et al., 2006) (See Table 1.).

Table 1
Orientation Needs of New Teachers

All Educators (n = 106)	New Teachers (n = 23)	Administrators (n = 6)
Procedures, policies (52)	Procedures, policies (13)	Class Management (4)
Class Management (47)	Class Management (12)	Support (2)
Support (30)	Resource location (7)	Resource location (1)
Resource location (20)	Support (0)	Procedures, policies (0)
Other – various	Other – various	Other – various
	Planning, Parent relations	Curriculum, PD, noncertified

One of the new teachers expressed the following need: "Training and better explanation of all involved paperwork (minor referrals, office referrals)." An elementary principal noted:

> Classroom management is the number one struggle for most new teachers. It is even worse if they are not a certified teacher. They also need tremendous support with curriculum. New teachers need support in every aspect of school. I am hoping the new mentoring program will make their transition to teaching easier.

Mentoring

In the area of mentoring, the top need as reported by all three groups was instructional coaching. This is not surprising considering that Podolsky et al. (2016) maintained that strong induction programs included coaching, and studies from the literature review indicated one main reason for teacher attrition was inadequate preparation (Bolich, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2003). Also, traditionally prepared teachers who took more courses in educational methods were less likely to leave (Ingersoll et al., 2014). While knowledge of routines and professional growth were ranked second and third by all three groups, they were not mentioned in the literature. Furthermore, classroom management was again cited as a top need by all educators and mentioned by new teachers (See Table 2.).

Table 2
Mentoring Needs of New Teachers

All Educators (n = 106)	New Teachers (n = 23)	Administrators (n = 6)
Instructional Coach (42)	Instructional Coach (9)	Instructional Coach (3)
Routines (36)	Routines (9)	Routines (2)
Professional Growth (16)	Professional Growth (5)	Professional Growth (0)
Coll Discussions (9)	Collegial Discussion (2)	Collegial Discussion (0)
Other (59)	Other:	Other – various
Behavior/class mgmt. (30)	Behavior/class mgmt. (6)	mentor all year, parents, class mgmt., time mgmt.

As one new teacher expressed her needs:

> I am a first year teacher. I would love to be more familiar with strategies to teach certain skills from a veteran standpoint. I also wonder about professional developments that I could attend that could gear my instruction to a student-led classroom using LearnZillion.

Professional Development

In the area of professional development, the top needs as reported by all three groups were observation and feedback, workshops, and one-on-one training, although each group had a different order of preference. This finding is consistent with the literature that cited inadequate teacher preparation as a reason for teacher attrition as indicated in the Mentoring section. Feedback from veteran teachers and the opportunity for new teachers to observe expert teachers was indicated in the literature (Podolsky et al., 2016). And yet again, classroom management was a relatively high need as reported by all educators (See Table 3.).

Table 3
Professional Development Needs of New Teachers

All Educators (n = 106)	New Teachers (n = 23)	Administrators (n = 6)
Observation/Fdbk (58)	Workshops (7)	One-on-one (3)
1-1 Training (44)	1-1 Training (6)	Workshops (2)
Workshops (22)	Observ /fdbk (4)	Observ/fdbk (2)
Other (52)	PLCs (4)	Other – various
Behavior/class mgmt. (15)	Other:	Parent/relation bldg. (3)
Online PD (11)	Peer collaboration (5)	Conferences (1)
PLCs (11)	Conferences (3)	Online PD (1)
Conferences (8)	Online PD (3)	PLCs (1)

As a first-year teacher expressed the need: “I think professional developments are not tailored to specific needs and are sometimes a waste of time and money. I do see the need for them but they are not being conducted in a meaningful way.”

Culture/Environment

Regarding the preferred culture/environment for new teachers, all three groups rated collaborative as the preferred culture. All educators and new teachers ranked respectful and trusting as the second highest and relation-oriented as the third highest, while administrators ranked relations-oriented as the second highest (See Table 4.).

Table 4
Preferred Culture/Environment for New Teachers

All Educators (n = 106)	New Teachers (n = 23)	Administrators (n = 6)
Collaborative (73)	Collaboration (18)	Collaborative (4)
Respectful/Trusting (45)	Respectful/Trusting (10)	Relationship-oriented (4)
Relationship Oriented (35)	Relationship-oriented (6)	
High Expectations (14)	High Expectations (4)	
Collegial (7)	Other: Solution-orient (2)	
Competitive (6)	Competitive (2)	
Authoritative (6)	Authoritative (1)	

A veteran teacher with 22 years' experience explained the need for collaboration: "Collaboration helps teachers function as a community versus an island. Nonjudgmental evaluations done to help you improve not to criticize are more beneficial to new teachers." On the other hand, a first-year teacher preferred competition: "I thrive off competitiveness, but I also enjoy and respond well to relationship-oriented, high expectations, and collaborative."

Structures

Regarding the most beneficial structures for new teachers, all three groups reported the most beneficial structures for new teachers were common planning and professional learning communities. The third choice among all educators and administrators was block scheduling, while new teachers reported early release/late take-in for professional meetings as their third choice. A small percentage suggested year-round schooling (See Table 5.).

Table 5
Preferred Structures for New Teachers

All Educators (n = 106)	New Teachers (n = 23)	Administrators (n = 6)
Common Planning (66)	Common Planning (12)	Common Planning (4)
PLCs (26)	PLCs (5)	PLCs (3)
Block Schedule (13)	Early Release/Late (5)	Block Schedule (2)
Early Release/Late (12)	Block Schedule (3)	Other:
Other – various	Other:	Fewer duties
Collaboration (7)	PD days (3)	Collaboration
Year round school (6)	Year round school (2)	

A veteran teacher with 10 years' experience recommended that at least one common planning time per week would help new teachers with built-in support from their peers.

Conclusions

As indicated in the findings, the need for assistance with classroom management was continuously evident throughout all three induction components of the survey. Regarding orientation all three groups agreed that classroom management of student behavior is one of the most important needs of new teachers. As one assistant principal explained to me in conversation one day, he tells his teachers that they have to teach the students what proper behavior is because they are not learning it at home. Without placing blame on any one group, the researcher recommends that the individual schools in conjunction with the school district gather the parents together to form a parent-school partnership so that communication, collaboration, and cooperation can be established. Establishing a solid relationship with the parents may help assuage some of the difficulties that new teachers face in controlling disruptive classroom behavior.

Regarding mentoring, all three groups regarded a mentor as an instructional coach and agreed that instructional coaching and routines were the most important mentoring needs of new teachers. Therefore, it is important that new teachers be assigned a mentor who teaches the same

subject or same grade level, who enjoys helping new teachers and is willing to provide the emotional and professional support that is needed.

For professional development, all three groups agreed that workshops, one-on-one training, and observation and feedback were the most important professional development needs of new teachers. One recommendation is that professional development not be one-size-fits-all but be tailored to the subject or grade level and address the most pressing needs of new teachers, especially classroom management.

Regarding culture and environment, all three groups agreed that collaboration and relationship-oriented were more preferred for new teachers, and regarding structures, all three groups agreed that common planning and professional learning communities were most beneficial for new teachers. A second recommendation is that schools establish a schedule in which common planning time is provided at least once per week and establish professional learning communities to meet once per week. Having two groups of veteran teachers as peer collaborators will help develop the new teacher professionally as well as provide the emotional support needed during the first few years of teaching.

Another recommendation is for principal preparation programs to include a course or a major artifact on developing an effective induction plan for new teachers so that the future principals will be ready to grow the new teachers on the faculty. State departments of education and school districts should invest in statewide/districtwide induction programs to develop new teachers into successful veteran teachers. If development and retention of new teachers is a goal of education, then administration at all levels—state, district, school—should provide the support and guidance that will help new teachers with confidence in their abilities and inspire them to remain in the profession.

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Appendix
Survey: Educators' Perceptions of the Needs of New Teachers

Please indicate your response to the following open-ended questions:

Orientation

1. What are the needs of new teachers today regarding school orientation? (For example, support, basic school procedures and policies, class organization, location of resources, etc.)

2. How are these needs being met by the administrator?

Mentoring

3. What are the needs of new teachers today regarding mentoring? (For example, routines, instructional coaching, professional growth, collegial discussion, etc.)

4. How are these needs being met by the mentor? (For example, competence, intensity, interpersonal skills, frequency of contact, knowledge/understanding.)

Professional Development

5. What are the needs of new teachers today regarding professional development? (For example, observation and feedback, workshops, conferences, one-on-one training, access to online professional development, professional learning community.)

6. How are these needs being met by the administrator?

Culture

7. What type of culture/environment best meets the needs of a new teacher? (For example, competitive, collaborative, collegial, respectful, trusting, relationship-oriented, high expectations, etc.)

8. What structures best meet the needs of new teachers? (For example, common planning time, professional learning communities, early release/late take-in for professional meetings, etc.)

9. How do Professional Learning Communities meet the needs of new teachers?

Other

10. What other things contribute toward making a new teacher a successful veteran teacher?

Focus Group

11. Are you willing to participate in a focus group regarding clarification of survey results?

A Harvest of Leadership Success Strategies Found in Rural Schools in Eastern North Carolina

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Abstract

Through this article, I describe the results of a study conducted to compile best practices from principals who were identified as "superstars" by their superintendents. Through the study, I sought to determine if the skills and strategies outlined by the Wallace Foundation's (2012, 2016) research focused on successful principals correlated with their practice in rural schools in eastern North Carolina. In the study, I examined the work of principals in the following categories: vision, climate, leadership, instruction, and management. I detailed the nuances that emerged from this study on how the principals approached the work related to the categories. I also examined the degree to which principals demonstrated expertise on the following leadership skills identified by Vanderbilt University (Porter et al., 2008): planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring. Through this article, I also detailed the study's limited findings on the principal preparation of the superstars focused on problems of practice embedded in service leadership projects.

Keywords: Effective principal leadership, vision, climate, instruction

A Harvest of Leadership Success Strategies Found in Rural Schools in Eastern North Carolina

Strong partnerships between superintendents and universities are successful in providing positive outcomes for their collaborative members, such as valuable feedback for the universities (Turley & Stevens, 2015), pooling resources for the superintendents (Lewis, 2014), providing innovative program implementation (Reardon & Leonard, 2018), and even community-school music instruction and events (Payne, 2016). In fact, some superintendent-university partnerships that focused on teacher effectiveness have won national awards for professional development (Culler, 2017, 2018).

In this article, I focus on a different superintendent-university partnership model, a model for helping the most vulnerable schools and students through a regional collaboration between a university principal preparation program and school superintendents in rural eastern North Carolina. Three collaborative approaches are: (a) the university interviews principals identified by superintendents as "superstars," whose work and strategies are most worthy of study and replication; (b) the superstar principals provide feedback on their preparation program that may improve the university's principal preparation program; and (c) principals provide feedback measuring the impact of service leadership projects (SLPs) implemented in their schools by interns from the principal preparation program. Specifically, in this article, I examine how school superintendents and the university can collaborate to improve instruction for the region's students.

First, by identifying the principals for the university to study and help other school leaders replicate, regional superintendents can provide a concerted regional effort to improve instruction for their most vulnerable schools and students, many of which are rural. Second, the faculty from the university leadership training program can provide the following two vital services: a repository/distribution system for harvested leadership strategies, and improved relevant coursework and projects in its principal preparation programs.

With respect to the first vital service, by compiling best practices from the superstar principals, the university faculty create a reservoir of success strategies that they can incorporate within the curriculum and, in particular, within the SLPs. In addition, the university faculty will provide regional professional development based on harvested practices to provide opportunities for current principals to stay "in step" with the most recent and relevant research for best practices.

With respect to the second vital service, the university's principal preparation program faculty provide relevant programs that utilize course work replete with SLPs that deal with problems of practice unique to regions struggling with the disruptive trends of a contracting economy and the poverty that follows. SLPs have an impact on preparing the principals-in-training with real school projects that help the principals-in-training grow; in addition, SLPs may have a positive impact on the schools in which they are conducted.

Through this article, I capture some of the success of the superintendent-university partnership. I summarize the successful practices of principals identified by their superintendents

whose strategies the university faculty will study, replicate, and disseminate. I also provide a snapshot of the university principal training program's ability to produce the kinds of leaders whom the superintendents need.

Harvesting Leadership Success Strategies

To provide support in the partnership model, the university compiles successful strategies to improve leadership, instruction, and student achievement. To build a repository/distribution system for harvested successful strategies, I initiated a study with Institutional Review Board approval called Harvesting Leadership Success Strategies in Eastern North Carolina Public Schools of Excellence.

Research Problem and Background Analysis

Through this study, I sought to answer the following questions:

- What strategies have principals whom superintendents identify as superstars employed that make a difference for students and staff in their schools?
- To what extent do principals whom superintendents identify as superstars attribute their effectiveness to their principal preparation programs?

There are two purposes of the study: (a) to document the leadership strategies implemented by the superstar principals in K-12 Schools in eastern North Carolina, and (b) to collect feedback to improve the university's principal preparation strategies.

To answer question one and address the first purpose, I interviewed 15 principals identified as superstars by their superintendents in eastern North Carolina. The research methods included asking superintendents to identify the principals whose efforts have had outstanding results, results that would make the superintendents consider the principals superstars. Next, I contacted the principals and sought their permission to join me in an interview to discover their success strategies. The interviews were conducted either face to face or through WebEx, both of which were recorded. The findings were gathered based on the best practices identified by Wallace Foundation research on successful principal leadership. Likewise, the findings included the principals' self-ratings of the leadership skills identified by scholars at Vanderbilt University. Finally, to answer the second question and purpose, focusing on principal preparation program evaluation, I examined the data for links between problems of practice and successful principal preparation.

Relevant Literature

The literature discussion that follows addressed the major themes of the study. The rural connection is primary to the setting and understanding of the results of the study. The importance of principal leadership and its connection to school and student success is central to the study's inception. The skills and strategies principals employ and the characteristics they possess are critical to the study. Finally, the connection between project-based learning and student success throughout the K-20 years—divided into two sections, K-12 and Principal Preparation Candidates—addresses the significance of the study's review of the university's implementation of SLPs.

The Rural Impact

North Carolina is an ideal state to study rural schools. According to the Public School Forum (2019), North Carolina is second to Texas in having the most rural students: 586,000, which comprises 39% of North Carolina's public school students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI] Financial & Business Services, 2018). This number exceeds the 24% average number of rural students in America (Preston & Barnes, 2017). Of its 100 counties, 80 are rural; within those 80 counties, 87 of the 115 public school districts are rural (Public School Forum, 2019).

Coladarci (2007) summarized the need for researchers to substantiate that their findings were truly characteristic of rural schools by providing support that their findings were caused by a rural effect. In an effort to underscore how important it is for researchers to contextualize rural studies, Coladarci included the following adage that often provides more context than he claimed some researchers included in their studies: "You know you're rural when the only time you lock the doors on your truck is when you go to church so that the neighbors can't leave bags of squash on the front seat" (p. 2). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2006) divided rural schools into three categories—fringe, distant, and remote—each of which depended upon their proximity to urbanized areas or clusters. The range and complexity of NCES's definitions identify rural schools as those as close as 2.5 miles to an urban cluster to those that are 25 miles or more from an urbanized area. The differences among the definitions of fringe, distant, and remote are many and varied. Rural schools identified as fringe are located equal to or less than 5 miles from an urban center; rural schools identified as distant are located more than five but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urban center; and rural schools identified as remote are located more than 25 miles from an urban center (NCES, 2006). Regardless, each school within that broad range was identified as rural. Will the same leadership strategies work in a fringe rural school that work in a remote rural school?

Preston and Barnes (2017) asked the same question. They listed three reasons for studying leadership in rural schools. First, the literature should, but does not always account for the location and its impact on the school and its leader (Preston & Barnes, 2017). In other words, Preston and Barnes (2017) were asking if a successful leadership strategy that works in an urban setting works equally as well in a rural setting. Their second reason was the large number—24%--of American students are identified as rural. For their third reason, they summarized several studies that indicated that students in rural schools do not always perform as well as students in urban schools (Alberta Government, 2012; Canadian Council on Learning, 2006; Hnatkovska & Lahiri, 2013; Lamb, Glover, & Walstab, 2014; NSW Government, 2013; OECD, 2013; Panizzon, 2012). Although Preston and Barnes relied on international studies to provide rationale for the tendency of rural students underperforming their urban counterparts, the Public School Forum (2019) made the case for the need to provide support for rural schools in North Carolina because the state's rural schools were performing poorly. North Carolina's reading scores for 4th-grade rural students are "the 18th lowest in the nation" (p. 7).

The Public School Forum (2019) further made the case that the rural reading scores were related to an inequity in funding both at the local level and the state level. The Public School Forum described the financial plight of North Carolina rural families: 734,000 have household

incomes below the federal poverty level; 62% of rural students qualify for free or reduced lunch compared to 46% for urban students. The funding inequity is embodied in the North Carolina school report card. The state assigns letter grades A to F based on student proficiency and growth performance on state assessments and other markers. According to North Carolina DPI 2017-18 Performance and Growth of North Carolina Public Schools Executive Summary (2018), a disproportionate percentage of schools that contained 41% or more Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) were labeled as C, D, and F schools. Conversely, the percentage of schools that contained 40% or fewer EDS were labeled as A, B, and C schools. Here is DPI's breakdown: A:0- 20 % EDS; B: 41% or more ED; C: 79% or more EDS; D: 95% or more EDS; F: 98% or more EDS (p. 11).

The Public School Forum (2019) also listed a disparity in funding between urban and rural districts for local teacher salary supplements and average local investment in public school per average daily membership (ADM). According to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Online Statistical Profile, which used 2017-2018 data, urban school districts received twice as much money as rural school districts for teacher salary supplements: $4,209 for urban school districts in county funding of teachers' pay supplements compared to $2,124 for teacher salary supplements in rural school districts. According to the Public School Forum's 2019 Local School Finance Study, in the school year 2016-2017, urban counties invested 28% more funding for each student ($2,101 per ADM) than did rural counties ($1,539 per ADM). To illustrate the disparity in funding support further, the Public School Forum's Local School Finance Study reported that the top 10 highest-spending North Carolina counties averaged $3,200 per student compared to the 10 lowest spending counties at $755 per student. Compounding the imbalance in funding between urban and rural counties, the State of North Carolina is ranked 39th in per-pupil spending. Assessing the overall financial health of its state, the Public School Forum concluded: "Our state has become 'two North Carolinas.' In one, people live in largely urban areas that are attractive to industries and job growth. The other is made up of largely rural communities generally in a state of economic decline" (p. 6).

Coladarci (2007) cautioned researchers to look carefully at the data to ascertain that the findings result from the effect of the schools' ruralness and not an effect that may occur in an urban school. For instance, with the impact of poverty and lower funding available for rural schools in North Carolina, is it a funding issue for rural schools or is it a leadership issue (Preston & Barnes, 2017; Public School Forum, 2019)? Coladarci (2007) provided advice from Herriott and Firestone (1983) who suggested that researchers make certain to ask the same question in several settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting. Herriott and Firestone's recommendation will "permit cross-site comparison without necessarily sacrificing within-site understanding" (as cited in Coladarci, 2007, p. 14). They also suggested that researchers add a comparison with a nonrural site to see if there is a difference: "By comparing one's qualitative findings across rural and non-rural sites, researchers can speak to the particular rural circumstances" (as cited in Coladarci, 2007, p. 5).

Effective Principal Characteristics

According to the Wallace Foundation (2012), successful principals emphasize the following in their schools: vision, climate, instruction, leadership in others, and managing

personnel, data and processes. Even more specifically, Porter et al. (2008) argued that effective principals focus on several dimensions of leadership as they execute their duties: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring.

Leadership Improves K-12 Schools

The literature rebounds from the work of Jacob, Goddard, Kim, Miller, and Goddard (2015), who hypothesized that student achievement would increase logically following an improvement in principal leadership and reduction in teacher turnover. The researchers found that despite implementing programs to improve principal leadership and reduce teacher turnover, as indicated in the data, there was no significant improvement in student achievement. Corcoran, Schwartz, and Weinstein (2012) provided mixed results linking student achievement to principal leadership. They indicated that principal leadership in low-performing schools improved English language arts scores but not math scores. Despite the findings of Jacob et al. (2015) and Corcoran et al. (2012), other researchers have connected principal leadership with student achievement (Crum & Sherman, 2008; Edmonds, 1979; Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Anderson, & Whalstrom, 2004; Lezotte, 1991).

Further, according to Rodriguez (2008), principal leadership lifted a high-poverty school from *Academically Low Performing* to *Academically Recognized* in one year. Likewise, Pyo (2013) found that principals' instructional leadership had a positive impact on high school students' achievement in math. In a different but still positive view of principal leadership, McGuigan and Hoy (2008) concluded that principals who controlled variables to promote academic optimism among students and teachers lead schools that demonstrate greater student achievement. More recently, in a study using 2015 PISA data focused on 15-year-old students, Wu, Gao, and Shen (2018) found principals' instructional leadership positively related to student achievement.

K-12 Students Succeed with Project-Based Learning

Many successful principals focus on instructional programs that include project-based learning as an instructional strategy because it is linked to student achievement. To support this premise, the literature encompasses process, education levels, degrees of student/candidate achievement, and subject matter. Overall, researchers provide much in the way of defining and implementing project-based learning in virtually all levels of instruction (Bashan, 2014; Coffey, n.d.). Initially, David (2008) indicated that the literature contained much discussion on the difficulty of implementing project-based learning effectively but provides little in the way of support for its impact on student achievement. Since David's assertion, Duke, Halverson, and Strachan (2016) found that project-based learning has produced significant student achievement in elementary literacy skills and social studies, specifically improving high school social studies' AP scores. Duke et al. (2016) also asserted that student achievement was significant for students in schools with high poverty, especially narrowing the poverty gap in literacy skills. They provided support for using project-based learning with students of low socioeconomic status who according to Weber, Radu, Mueller, Powell, and Maher, (2010) were the lowest performers on national standardized assessments and the most likely to drop out of high school. This glimpse

into the literature reveals the sturdy foundation upon which project-based curriculum is anchored.

Principal Preparation Candidates

Researchers asserted that project-based learning positively impacted learning (Hull, Kimmel, Robertson, & Mortimer, 2016; Lowenthal & Sosland, 2007; Seymour, 2013). Likewise, not only does project-based learning that may include SLPs benefit the principals-in-training, but SLPs provide a benefit for the schools in which they are conducted (Baker & Murray, 2011; Figueiredo-Brown, Ringler, & James, 2015; Grant, Malloy, Murphy, Foreman, & Robinson, 2010).

In the literature, authors provided robust testimony and support for the benefits that the candidates garner as they successfully complete their projects based on problems of practice, which are an integral part of the framework. Joseph, Stone, Grantham, Harmancioglu, and Ibrahim (2007) found that graduate and undergraduate business candidates who participated in community-based projects believed their projects better prepared them for their careers. In fact, several studies that examined different disciplines found positive benefits for candidates who participated: (a) physical therapy candidates who worked in communities with high poverty (Anderson, Taylor, & Gahimer, 2014); (b) agricultural candidates who worked together on a national poster contest (Bonczek, Snyder, & Ellis, 2007); (c) mental health workers who participated in pre-service social work in the community (Iachini & Wolfer, 2015), and (d) teachers in a learning-by-doing graduate course (Chen, 2017). In a certification program without previous significant studies, Jenkins and Sheehey (2009) found that graduate and undergraduate candidates pursuing special education teaching degrees learned best in courses that incorporated problems of practice. In their study of graduate candidates focusing their service in community libraries across the state of North Carolina, Becnel and Moeller (2017) found support for the candidates benefitting from SLPs delivered innovatively on-line.

Seymour (2013) found support for how well candidates learned team-building skills. More general benefits but no less important were identified by Lowenthal and Sosland (2007), who found that alumni indicated that non-traditional instruction such as SLPs led to stronger academic performance and more successful careers.

The authors of three studies provided support for the benefits of SLPs while candidates studied abroad. Hull et al. (2016) found that candidates who participated in projects while studying in China were engaged successfully with business, government, and non-government groups. Araujo, Arantes, Danza, Pinheiro, and Garbin (2016) found SLPs delivered in Brazil provided not only problem- and project-based learning but also “real-world” learning. Rajdev (2011) found a similar result but added the importance of cultural awareness that candidates learned while participating in an SLP in India.

Baker and Murray (2011) found that an afterschool SLP benefitted the undergraduate teaching candidates seeking a special education degree. Grant, et al. (2010) found that information systems graduates involved in SLPs arranged with a local business sharpened their skills.

In summary, through this review of the literature, I have focused on learning in rural settings, effective principal characteristics, the impact of leadership, the impact of SLPs on schools and principal preparation students. First, in the literature, researchers were cautioned to be careful not to claim that a success strategy as exclusive to a rural school when the strategy may work as well in a suburban or urban school. Also revealed in the literature were the reasons why North Carolina is an ideal state to study rural education. In addition, effective leadership characteristics and strategies lead to school success. Finally, project-based learning/SLP help students and the schools in which the projects are implemented. The "stage" for this study was set through the literature.

Study Objectives

This study was focused on the following objectives:

- To discover and compile successful leadership strategies implemented by principals identified as superstars by their superintendents.
- To share successful leadership strategies with superintendents and other principals in eastern North Carolina.
- To draw connections between principal preparation programs and successful principal practice.

Research Design and Methodology

The research design is a convergent, mixed-methods approach combining qualitative case study and quantitative survey measures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The participants included a main sample group and a subgroup. The qualitative aspect of the study used a multiple case-study strategy. If the maximum number of participants elected to participate, the cases in the study could have equaled as many as 29. The case-study approach best suited this aspect of the research project because I interviewed individuals with open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) provided guidance in the use of this qualitative strategy. My aim of this component of the study is to correlate leadership theory with practice as it pertains to continuing to improve principal preparation programs, especially those that utilize problems of practice as a vehicle for delivering instruction.

The quantitative aspect of the study is related to data extracted from the public release of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's 2018 Teacher Working Conditions Survey, which can be accessed at https://ncteachingconditions.org/index. With the survey results analyzed, I focused on aspects of the characteristics of leadership and leadership strategies corresponding to the principals participating in the study. In addition, there were two opportunities within the interviews for principals to quantify their perceptions of (a) how well their school climate serves their school and (b) their own mastery of executive leadership skills. Additionally, the convergent model as delineated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) allows for the existence of a subgroup of principals whose schools were supported by principal interns from the university that implemented SLPs in the principals' schools. In other words, if all 29 principals had agreed to participate, a subgroup populated by only those who had a university principal intern who implemented an SLP as part of their internship would participate in a survey of the principal's perception of the impact of the SLP. So, if 29 participated and 10 of them had

interns, 10 would be the number in the subgroup providing data from an online survey on the impact of the SLP. Please see Appendix B for the survey on the impact of SLPs.

Study Population

This population consisted of principals in K-12 public school systems in eastern North Carolina. Eastern North Carolina school systems are located in two regions called districts by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). The Northeast Region / District 1 includes school systems in the following counties: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Roanoke Rapids, Tyrrell, Washington, and Weldon. The Southeast Region / District 2 includes school systems in the following counties: Brunswick, Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, and Wayne. The study sample was intended to include at least one principal from each of the 29 counties.

Discussion

Current Study Limitations

Although I submitted my proposal to conduct a study involving human research for an expedited review and approval by the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) in June 2018, UMCIRB approval was not granted until late day July 24, 2018. Later, on September 13, 2018, Hurricane Florence struck Eastern North Carolina and devastated much of the school calendar for the southeast region and many of its schools. Almost one year later, on September 5, 2019, Hurricane Dorian struck eastern North Carolina. Dorian did not devastate the region as had Florence the year before. The hurricane did, however, disrupt school schedules and delayed some of the work. Nonetheless, I was able to conduct 15 of the 29 principal interviews. Although I had hoped to interview as many as possible, the 15 interviews have provided substantial data and surpassed the interview number of 12 suggested by Guest, Bunch, and Johnson (2006), who found that study saturation begins after six interviews and more than likely occurs by 12.

In keeping with the criteria for principal selection, these principals had been identified by the system superintendents as outstanding principals. In addition, I have summarized the respondents' ratings of how well they addressed the Wallace Foundation's (2012) areas of emphasis for successful schools and their leaders. I have also summarized the principals' self-ratings of the leadership skills identified by Porter et al. (2008).

Another limitation was the reliance on the principals to identify their schools as rural or urban schools. Without verifying the official designation, I am "taking their word" as informed on the definition of rural. Regarding rural, the study has not included an analysis of the data to determine if there are variations within the range of rural schools definitions. Another limitation of the study emerged from the absence of Master of School Administration (MSA) interns serving in the schools led by the principals whom I have interviewed. A questionnaire designed to record principals' perception of the effectiveness of SLPs hinged on the subset of principals who had MSA interns serve in their buildings. Of the 15 principals interviewed, only three had

supervised an intern. The three principals had completed the SLP Effectiveness Survey (see Appendix B). I also had no control over which principal preparation program the principals attended; therefore, only general ideas about best practices would emerge to help improve principal preparation programs, not just the university partnering with the regional superintendents. What follows, however, are highlights from a review of the 15 interviews and a summary of the survey on the effectiveness of the SLPs.

Vision

All but one of the principals orchestrated a shared vision for their schools. In fact, one principal was "baffled" by questions asked by interview teams about the candidate's vision for the school. Instead, like most of the principals interviewed, the principal strongly supported creating a shared vision, not his or her vision. Several principals created a deliberate process for engaging staff, students, and community in creating the school's vision. For example, one principal had representatives for the staff, students, and the community generate words on "sticky notes" that captured how they viewed or thought of their school. From the lists of key words, the group was able to fashion a vision. The vision often took the form of an easily remembered phrase: "Join the [school mascot] Club" or "Keep Charging for [key word]." For most principals, "together" best described Vision and its creation. Likewise, because of the carefully articulated vision and its prolific advertisement and resulting high visibility, staff and students could articulate it. One principal said, "Even younger brothers and sisters [who were not members of the school] knew what the vision was." In one school, the students recited the vision every day. In another, the principal re-focused the vision to include "all." This principal changed a breakfast with parents from "Pastries with Parents" to "Breakfast with the [school mascot]" and invited aunts, uncles, guardians, neighbors, anybody important to the child.

Climate

Creating a climate that produced a school in which every teacher wanted to work was the goal that came to fruition for these principals. Low teacher turnover and satisfied teachers as indicated consistently by the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey were characteristic of the schools. Likewise, there was a certain loyalty that existed between teachers and principals. One principal stated that several teachers moved from elementary to the middle school just to be with the principal. These teachers often joked that they would have to take a Praxis Test to join the principal at the high school.

Developing the climate was difficult work according to the principals. They wrote personal notes to staff members; principals made it a point to be omnipresent; they generated weekly "call outs" for parents, sent newsletters and created Facebook pages, and they were demanding in terms of expectations. One principal transformed staff meetings into learning forums with a five-minute video as a "bell ringer" for the staff. Another invited local businesses and churches to adopt their school. One principal provided hospitality rooms and tailgates for staff members who attended after-school student events. Another created competitions based on goal setting. In one example, students read 95 million words one year when they met their Accelerated Reading goals. Another principal underscored the need for a positive climate, "[w]e spend more time in school than we do with our families."

One principal in visiting a classroom noticed a student sleeping, called the student into the hall, determined that the student's health was not a concern, and stated the expectation for the student to rest up for class and focus on high expectations and not disrespect the process and the teacher. The next day the student was alert and paying attention. Word traveled around the school that sleeping in class was not acceptable. The new-to-the-building principal did not have to say a word to the teacher about not allowing students to sleep in class nor did the principal have to say a word to the rest of the staff. This new approach also changed the way returning assistant principals who previously ignored a sleeping student in a classroom, now replicated the principal's approach by intervening instead of ignoring the student. The climate of high expectations began to evolve, which was new to the school as was the principal.

Words and phrases embodied the positive climates, such as: "warm and fuzzy place, rolled up our sleeves, approachable, lots of home visits, changed culture by March, got everyone invested, greet everyone with a smile, and worked hard at it."

One of the facets of the Climate section of the questionnaire in which principals were asked to rank how their Climate served the school in various ways. Based on their perception of how they would rate their school's climate on several factors, principals provided a number from low to high (1 lowest to 10 highest). As provided in Table 1, the snapshot of how the principals viewed how well their Climate served their schools.

Table 1
Principals' Perceptions of How Their Climates Serve Their Schools

Climate Focus	Principal															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	AVG
Student and staff safety	7	7	10	10	10	9	10	8.5	10	10	9	7	8	9	8	8.8
Respect for school community	8	8	10	10	9	9	10	6	10	9.5	9	6	10	8	7	8.6
Warm professional environment	6	8.5	10	8	9	8	10	9	7.5	10	8	9	9	10	8	8.7
Inviting staff to participate in school functions	9	9	10	9	10	9	10	8	10	9	8	8	9	8	10	9.1
Engaging and involving students in school activities	8	8	10	8	10	8	9	6	10	10	9	9	7	9	8	8.6

As shown in Table 1, there was evidence that principals perceived that their climates were successfully serving their schools. Averages for each of the five categories were between 8.6 and 9.1. According to Principals 1, 2, 8, and 12, being new to the building with a great deal of work still to do had an impact on rating their climates lower in certain areas. They believed

their extra efforts to engage students, staff, and community further would address "student and staff safety," "warm professional environment," and "engaging students in involving students in school activities" and, as a result, improve the impact of school climate on those groups and in those focus areas. Principals 8 and 12 worried about engaging parents. Before rating this category as 6, Principal 8 toggled between a 5 or a 6. Principal 8 noted the problem connecting with parents and involving students the same way. The principal indicated that since it was located the farthest from the county seat, the school was considered as the "forgotten" school. The school was not special for any of the groups, hence the low rating in the final category as well. Principal 8 is working to change that for those groups but could not rate either category higher. For Principal 12, parents previously had not trusted the school. The principal recognized that teachers did not know "where their students lived." According to Principal 12, helping teachers learn who their students were and where they lived would help the school address the trust issue.

All principals rated the climate highest in the focus area of "inviting staff to participate in school functions" (9.1). Second highest was "student and staff safety" (8.8). Principal 1 rated the safety part of the climate focus low after reflecting on the mixed results from extraordinary school safety drills implemented following the tragic Parkland school shootings. Principal 1 was surprised by the degree to which students needed more intensive retraining to respond properly to armed intruder threats. Principal 1 was also confident that the further evolution of a positive school climate would create a warmer professional environment. The principal indicated that 6 was acceptable growth considering the low morale and absent professional environment that had existed. Each principal had detailed the efforts to improve school climate were considerable.

Principal 2 illustrated an example of engaging staff and students alike. The principal and leadership team implemented an after-school tutoring and mentoring program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Title I money provided transportation for high school students to stay an hour and a half after school when they could meet with their teachers for extra help. According to the principal, on average, 130 of the 850 high school students took advantage of the extra support teachers, who provided support without remuneration.

Leadership

The principals all agreed on sharing leadership. Allowing teachers to lead professional development was encouraged. All principals had teachers serve as department chairs, grade level leaders, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), members of the School Improvement Team, and the Principal's Advisory. One principal encouraged teachers to bring back and shepherd initiatives they discovered while attending conferences, visiting other schools, or completing research in graduate courses. One principal used the following mindset to share leadership: "It is not my school. It is our school. How can I make my APs [assistant principals] principals? How can I make teachers APs?" Another principal described the process this way: first, they become master teachers. Then the principal encourages them to lead initiatives.

Inviting staff, community members, and students onto interview teams was not an exception. One principal took students to job fairs to help recruit teachers. The students added a new dimension to the job fair and were an asset to the teacher recruiting process.

Students were also a major focus for two secondary principals who encouraged a great number of students to accept leadership roles, almost forcing them to step up by inviting students to planning sessions on how to improve the school. In one such session, the principal invited the top 5% academic students who were or could be leaders to plan for the new year. When the students gathered and were charged with planning school-wide events that were good for all, they wrote sticky notes with ideas of what to address. The principal asked them, "What your hopes and goals are for the community and for our student body?" The students recorded, "A feeling of equal opportunity, everyone being included, being able to talk freely." School spirit was also a popular response. Students wrote "more [school mascot] Pride," and "increasing a sense of involvement." The principal told them to "chew on" what they wrote down for two weeks and then reconvened the group. The principal reported that the students, like most typical high students, did not do much over the two weeks and were shocked when the principal directed them to come up with the initiatives and the plans to deliver them. According to the principal, the students were used to the adults in their lives doing things for them. The principal, on the other hand, forced them to lead and leave a legacy in the school and the community. The students planned a "Kindness Campaign" because "kids are not nice to each other." Students would write a note of kindness and give it to a student they did not know.

Another high school principal re-ignited the importance of student government. The principal worked closely with the student leaders to provide input on school changes. This principal encouraged the student government president to own the changes by having the president announce school-wide changes on the morning announcements including purchasing picnic tables for student lunches, which could now be used for the first time outdoors on the cafeteria patio.

Instruction

The principals also improved the data that indicate strong school growth and student achievement. Principals visited classrooms daily. One principal told me that they knew which teachers needed support after the first three days of walkthroughs in the new school year. That principal and team of APs competed to see how many classroom observations they could conduct. They combined for 10,000 the year before.

Principals created ways for their teachers to grow in data teams, on grade-level teams, and in a small secondary school on literacy teams that were comprised of teachers with a common planning period. The literacy team was led by a strong teacher whose students demonstrated exceptional academic growth on state assessments. Another principal helped teachers make their weaknesses strengths by (a) helping them identify the weakness and other teachers who would provide good instructional role models and (b) providing tons of administrative support where and when needed. The principals also had high expectations for students. In one school, students who needed extra help in a subject participated in a "working lunch" during which they learned and ate with their teacher. In a middle school, a principal required parents of students who were not succeeding to come to school and sign a contract indicating what the school, the student, and the parent would do to help their child succeed. One principal shared Education Value-Added Assessment System data with the students encouraging

them to improve every day. The principal used the analogy of physical education class, stating that not everyone will run a mile in 12 minutes. But if students ran consistently, eventually their times would improve. The same held true for math class. If the students came to class and practiced math skills daily, they would improve, and their test scores would prove it. According to the principal, students understood that others could run faster or get better grades on math tests, but now students were refocused on their own mile and math skills. This school's state letter grade went from a D to a B in two years.

All of the principals invested in professional learning communities (PLCs). One high school principal saw the need for PLCs as a way to improve instruction despite the school's possibility of high teacher turnover. With well-developed PLCs in place, existing team members could induct new teachers and provide support so that the team could function well, and the new member could have greater success. This principal focused on creating strong PLCs in the "tested areas" first and then PLCs in the non-tested subjects. As for the new teachers entering a PLC, the principal was proactive in the plan for inducting the new teacher as a member of the team and school staff. The principal said, "I'm a very type A personality. I'm an organizer. I'm a planner. There's a plan for everything."

Another approach that helped one principal improve instruction was focused on observation and conferencing procedure. First, the principal would conduct the observation and then require teachers to write their own self-reflection of how the class went. The teachers needed to provide the self-reflection within 48 hours of the observation before the principal shared their written observation. The principal commented that, otherwise, some teachers would use the principal's observation as their self-reflection. According to the principal, this procedure provided a more realistic picture of the class and teacher's abilities and helped to make the teachers more reflective. Use of the observation practice provided a way for the principal to coach the school's teachers and improve instruction and improve student achievement.

Management

Not surprising, the North Carolina Working Conditions Survey results all indicated high grades for the principals interviewed. Each principal recorded high percentages for administrative support in the upper 90th percentiles and teacher satisfaction with the school as being a great place to work in the upper 90th percentiles. One principal told the teachers that no principal would "love them more," nor would they find a principal who would "demand more" from them. Another principal's teachers shared a common planning time from 4 pm to 6 pm each Wednesday. Although this time was not a part of a teacher's typical working hours, it was an expectation that had evolved over time and became the way "we do things." New staff members fit right in because it was an expectation that provided results—high student achievement and teacher growth and satisfaction.

In one of the facets of the Management segment of the questionnaire, principals were asked to rank themselves based on their perception of how they would rate themselves from low to high (1 low to 10 highest) on the executive characteristics selected by a research team at Vanderbilt (Porter et al., 2008). The snapshot of how the principals viewed themselves is provided in Table 2.

Table 2.
Principals' Perceptions of Their Executive Characteristics

Executive Characteristics	Principal															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	AVG
Planning	10	10	5	8	8	10	10	8	10	10	8	7	9	8	10	8.7
Implementing	7	9.5	10	8	9	8	9	8	9.5	10	8	10	9	8	9	8.8
Supporting	8.5	10	10	10	10	9	10	8	8	10	9	9	9	9	9	9.2
Advocating	6	8.5	10	10	9	10	10	9	10	10	8	9	9	10	9	9.2
Communicating	9.5	9	10	7	9	10	10	6	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8.8
Monitoring	9	10	10	8	8.8	8	10	8	9	9	7.5	8	8	7	9	8.6

In Table 2, the overall principals' perceptions of Supporting and Advocating (9.2) were the most robust characteristics of the group with Implementing and Communicating (8.8) next. On the other hand, the lowest average for characteristics was Monitoring (8.6). Principals 11 and 14 rated themselves lower than others on Monitoring. Principal 11 said that they could do a better job following up on initiative but were extremely busy this year; Principal 14 delegated monitoring tasks to their team members, who were "wonderful."

Although Principals 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 15 indicated that Planning was a great strength, other principals did not rate themselves as highly, especially Principal 3 and 12. In fact, Principal 3 was unsure of how to rate Planning because of the reliance on a team effort for initiative production, and therefore finally settled on a 5. Principal 12 indicated that because of flexibility, they would allow team members to plan, as well. Principal 1 also stated that Implementing was not as necessary since other members of the team could do that. On the other hand, Principal 2 indicated that Planning was situational, indicating that as a new principal, a 5 would fit, but overall viewed their Planning ability as a 10. Planning would have been rated almost as robustly as Supporting and Advocating if Principal 2 had rated their planning a 10, which is how they saw their ability, instead of the 5 reported.

One story that illustrates the degree to which the principals I have interviewed have supported their schools portrays an extraordinary service. This principal was very concerned over a teacher, a single mother who had a life-threatening condition. The teacher was terrified about what was going to happen to her four-year-old son when the teacher was fighting for her life. Her home and her son's daycare were about 40 miles from the school. The principal said, "I'm going to take this [burden] from you. Your son can come live at my house. I've got four kids already, what's one more?" Even though the principal and the teacher were not "close," the principal said, "You trust me; obviously, you know that I'm going to take good care of him." So, the child came and lived with the principal and her family for eight weeks. The principal would take him to visit his mom on the weekends. The child just became part of the principal's family. Now he calls the principal his god[parent]. The principal said, "[w]e keep in touch. He's 12 now and that was when he was 4. I think being anything and everything that your people need within reason [is what we do]. You're only going to be able to [do] what you are capable of doing, being that support and understanding what your people need is what you're just meant to do not only as a principal but as a person."

Preparation

Most principals lamented that when they were earning their principal's license, their graduate programs did not include SLPs and were grounded to a greater extent in "philosophy and theory." For the three who earned their training focused on problems of practice and who utilized SLPs or a similar project-based tool, they indicated that they were prepared for the principalship and relied on their training and experiences from their MSA training. All of the principals advocated for more hands-on projects, more problems of practice, like the SLPs. Others indicated the need for addressing the following in principal preparation programs: data use, sources of data, equity training, school finance, purposeful parent involvement training, school law, networking, and maintaining passion. One principal stated that it was crucial for principal interns to be with principals for days and months not just an hour or two each day. No day is the same and if interns are not experiencing that on-the-job training, they are "missing a lot." One principal was grateful for their principal with whom they interned. "The principal gave me every possible experience to better prepare me."

One of the major components of the study that has yielded minimal results is the principal's perception of how effective the SLPs have been for the students and the schools in which they were implemented. Only three of the 15 principals interviewed had an MSA intern who implemented an SLP in their school. As indicated from the results from the Qualtrics Survey on the success of the SLPs, although miniscule, there was a positive impact for the school. Two principals agreed, one strongly, and one somewhat disagreed that the SLP had a significant positive impact on the school. Two principals agreed and one was not sure that the SLP had a significant positive impact on student achievement. One principal agreed that the SLP had a significant positive impact on teacher performance. Two others had no SLP focused on teacher performance. One principal strongly agreed that the SLP had a significant positive impact on teacher morale. Two others had no SLP focused on teacher morale. One principal strongly agreed that the SLP had a significant positive impact on school's community. Two others had no SLP focused on the school community. Finally, two principals agreed that the SLP had a significant positive impact on the school's parents. One other had no SLP focused on parents.

Conclusion

Through this article, I summarize data that addressed two questions:

- What strategies do principals whom superintendents identify as outstanding employ that make a difference for students and staff in their schools?
- To what extent do principals whom superintendents identify as outstanding attribute their effectiveness to their principal preparation programs?

To answer these questions, I interviewed 15 principals recording our conversations that lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. Their responses focused on strategies they utilized that addressed crucial areas identified by the Wallace Foundation (2012) for successful principals for the first question. As suggested in the data from the Wallace Foundation's key areas—vision, climate, leadership, instruction, and management—were areas in which principals employed successful strategies.

To answer the second question, I summarized responses from the 15 interviewed principals about their principal preparation utilizing problems of practice and project-based learning, such as SLPs. Several principals in their comments and recommendations advocated for additional hands-on projects, additional problems of practice, like the SLPs. I also addressed principals' perception of the impact of SLPs on their schools. Unfortunately, only three of the principals had interns who implemented SLPs in their schools. Although the three held positive attitudes toward the implemented SLPs, there were far too few respondents to generalize the results of that part of the study. Additional data are needed on the impact of the SLPs.

Overall, further input is needed from participants from the study to conclude that the university principal training program will continue to produce the kinds of leaders that the superintendents need. In addition, a careful analysis of the data and more study needs to be done to determine if the findings are unique to urban or rural schools and if the findings vary within the range of rural schools' proximity to urban centers or clusters.

Study Implications

Despite my study's focus on eastern North Carolina, the findings and their implications may not be exclusive to the region. As stated in the article, *North Carolina is second to Texas in the number of rural school students* (Public School Forum 2019), how different are North Carolina's eastern rural schools to the schools in the rest of the state or the other states who count rural students and schools as their own? The Wallace Foundation (2012) has listed the areas on which school leaders ought to focus. This study used those areas as springboards for harvesting the strategies of principals lauded as superstars by their superintendents. I believe that education leaders in other states and regions who seek to improve their schools, including rural schools, can find and apply the strategies contained in this article to improve their leaders and their schools. In addition, the perceptions of the superstar principals relative to the leadership skills (Porter et al., 2008) can guide leadership training, renewal, and growth.

Follow-Up Studies

A study is never quite completed even when it is finished. I realize that there is much work to done to complement the findings in this study. As a result, I recommend the following: First, because of the limited data on the impact of SLPs in the study, researchers should expand the reach of this study to include all schools in which the university's MSA students implemented an SLP on the impact it had on the school. Second, as had Coladarci (2007), researchers should take the advice from Herriott and Firestone (1983) and add a comparison with nonrural sites to determine if there is a difference between what I have found from these superstar principals and their urban or suburban counterparts. Next researchers should compare the progress that the new-to-the school superstars have made at their schools over time and if they had any new leadership strategies to add. Finally, researchers should continue the search for ways that universities and superintendents can work together to improve leadership programs and professional development for leaders in the schools.

Next Steps

I have applied for IRB approval of expanding the study to include all schools in which a university MSA student has implemented an SLP. Those data can have an impact on university professors' recommending a type of SLP for their MSA students to implement. I also intend to examine the data from this study to determine if there is any effect on the data based on the degree of "ruralness." In other words, is there a difference in a principal's perception of the strategies they employ and the leadership characteristics they believe work best among leaders in fringe, distant, and remote rural schools. Finally, my work will continue in this area of leadership, and I will strategically review my own recommendations to implement future studies. The "harvest may be over for now," but the work continues.

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Appendix A
Questions: Principal Excellence

These are the questions that I will ask you if you volunteer to a WebEx or a face-to-face recorded interview. These questions correlate to practices that successful principals have focused on (The Wallace Foundation, 2012; Porter et al., 2008).

Vision

1. What is your vision for your school?
2. How did you create your vision for the school?
3. How did you share it and with whom?
4. If I were to ask your staff what your vision for the school is, how many would be able to articulate it?

Climate

5. How have you created the climate that exists in your school?
6. How were others involved in creating the climate?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the greatest, what number would you assign to the degree to which the following are served well by the climate of this school:
    a. Student and staff safety;
    b. Respect for school community (students, staff, parents, community members);
    c. Warm professional environment;
    d. Inviting staff to participate in school functions;
    e. Engaging and involving students in school activities.

Leadership

8. How have you shared leadership with your staff?
9. How have you fostered staff leadership?
10. How have you fostered student leadership?

Instruction

11. How have you improved teaching and learning?
12. How often and for how long do you visit the classrooms?
13. How have you promoted a collaborative culture for instruction and student achievement?

Management

14. How do staff rate the quality of your support for them?
15. How do you use data to improve your school?

16. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, on the following executive characteristics:
    a. Planning
    b. Implementing
    c. Supporting
    d. Advocating
    e. Communicating
    f. Monitoring

Preparation

17. In your preparation for becoming a principal, how important was working on problems of practice?
18. What should principal preparation programs do to better prepare future leaders?
19. We have touched on practices and areas in which successful principals have excelled. Are there any areas that we have not addressed on which you have focused that you believe have helped you and your school be successful?

Interns

20. Have you had an XXXX Master of School Administration (MSA) principal intern or interns work with you while they implemented their Service Leadership Projects to satisfy course requirements for their principal certification?
21. If you have had an intern or interns and you have time, would you be willing to complete this survey electronically on a link I send you?

School Classification

22. Is your school rural or urban?

Appendix B
Study Questions: Effectiveness of XXXX Service Leadership Projects

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the word or phrase that best fits your opinion:

1. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on this school.
   Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

2. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on student achievement in this school.
   Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

3. Please check the appropriate item(s) listed as follows that were the basis for your conclusion on the significant impact on student achievement addressed in item 2:
   _____EOC and EOG data
   _____NC Finals
   _____Local Assessments
   _____Standardized Assessments/tests
   _____Other

4. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on teacher performance in this school.
   Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

5. Please check the appropriate item(s) listed as follows that describe how the XXXX MSA student provided support to impact teacher performance addressed in item 4:
   _____Mentoring
   _____Coaching
   _____Instruction provided for teachers as professional development
   _____Other
   _____No Service Leadership Project related to teacher performance

6. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on teacher morale in this school.
   Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

7. Please check the appropriate item(s) listed as follows that were the basis for your conclusion on the significant positive impact on teacher morale addressed in item 6:
   _____Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWCS)
   _____Internal local survey
   _____Other
   _____No Service Leadership Project related to teacher morale

8. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on this school's community.
   Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

9. Please check the appropriate item(s) listed as follows that were the basis for your conclusion on the significant positive impact on school community addressed in item 8:
   _____Community survey
   _____Other
   _____No Service Leadership Project related to community engagement

10. XXXX's MSA students have provided Service Leadership Projects that have had a significant positive impact on this school's parents.
    Disagree Somewhat Disagree Not Sure Agree Strongly Agree

11. Please check the appropriate item(s) listed as follows that were the basis for your conclusion on the significant impact on this school's parents addressed in item 10:
    _____Parent survey
    _____Other
    _____No Service Leadership Project related to parent engagement

Perceptions and Expectations of Teachers Regarding the Instructional Role of Principals: Recommendations for Improvement

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Abstract

Over the course of academic years of 2014-2019, research was conducted in public schools in three southern states. The *Shinn/Jones Supervisory Behavior Questionnaire* instrument was used by teachers to assess their principal's actual behavior as an instructional leader, as well as to indicate their preferences of the ideal behaviors for an instructional leader. Participants in this study included 3500 teachers and 300 principals from public schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. After results were analyzed, as revealed in the findings, teachers desired additional support from their principals, especially as it related to assisting them with skills that could improve their overall instructional performance. Teachers believed principals needed improvement in 15 of the 25 principal behaviors surveyed. Through the implications of these findings, we suggest that principals need to place greater emphasis on assisting teachers to a greater extent with instructional skills that lead to improved instruction, which could lead to greater depths of student achievement.

Keywords: Instructional leaders, improving instruction, supervisory skills, instructional support, assisting teachers, student achievement.

Perceptions and Expectations of Principals

The concept of instructional leadership has gradually emerged over the past few decades to mean different things to different people. Whitaker (2012) suggested that outstanding principals know that if they have great teachers, they have a great school. Therefore, if a school's instruction is not of top quality, the quality of the students who graduate or move to the next school will not be what they should be. Principals must emphasize and even insist that teachers provide quality instruction. Therefore, it is imperative that principals be able to help teachers improve their instruction. Zepeda (2017) tells us that never before has the field of instructional supervision faced such an urgent need to help teachers thrive in the classroom. As instructional leaders, one must be totally committed and involved in the instructional process. Yes, we said involved! It is sad to say, but in most situations, our experience tells us this is not the case. Principals must be the instructional leaders of schools, and after visiting with many teachers while doing this research, this is what they tell you they need, and if they are not instructional leaders, the school will suffer.

McCann, Jones, and Aronoff (2012) suggested that if principals want their schools to be high-achieving schools, they must work with teachers to set instructional goals, make sure the curriculum is standard based, assess instructional performance, and use data to make any necessary improvements. In leadership, balance is necessary; however, if the school is going to be a vibrant school in which teachers teach with passion and students achieve to higher levels, then the principal must lead with passion and must be passionate about those aspects that make teaching and learning come alive. (Jones & Henry, 2019) Most teachers with whom we have worked with want and expect this from their principals.

Purpose of the Study

Through this study, we sought to find the answer to two primary questions that relate to principals as instructional leaders. The first question is what do teachers perceive they need from their principals as instructional leaders to help them improve their instruction and the second question is my principal providing the assistance and help I need as a teacher and if not what do I need from them regarding improvement of my instruction?

Therefore, we gathered input from teachers about how their current principal helped them and about what they wanted from their principal related to instructional improvement. Data were gathered from 3500 teachers who assessed 300 school principals. These data were collected from the states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. The Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire (SJIBQ) was used to collect information from teachers regarding how they assessed their current principal (My Principal) compared to what they preferred (Ideal Principal). This instrument related directly to three aspects that are associated to principals working with teachers: (a) pre-conferencing with teachers, (b) techniques used during classroom observations, and (c) post-conferencing skills. Through our study, we verified that many principals spend minimal time in the classroom and therefore, are unable to observe teachers teaching, making it impossible to know what is taking place in the classroom. Many would suggest this means they are unable to help teachers succeed (e.g., Zepeda, 2012).

Many principals appear not able to find enough time to work with teachers and to assist them in instructional improvement. As previously stated, balance is extremely important as it relates to the administrative functions. However, they must be able to balance their work to incorporate all aspects associated with those of an instructional leader. As reflected in the literature, this function seems to be missing. Principals as instructional leaders are the key to seeing that student achievement is attained. Gall and Acheson (2010) supported this claim by indicating the principal's main responsibility is to serve as "another set of eyes," holding up the "mirror of practice" in which the teacher can examine specific classroom behaviors. However, few principals perform in this capacity. Indeed, as Michael Fullan (2008) asserted, "effective instructional leaders are distinctly in the minority."

Through informal discussions, many principals have told us they simply are not able to dedicate the amount of time they would like to in assisting teachers in instructional practices. From personal observation and after having hundreds of conversations with principals and teachers, we found that principals do spend relatively minimal time in the classroom and even less time working with teachers helping them improve their instructional skills. They seem to spend more time in arranging for someone who is external to the school to come and provide professional development than providing it themselves. This arrangement might work if those they brought in could stay on as professional developmental staff, and understood how to help teachers improve their instructional skills, but that is usually not the case. There are several schools across the nation and in other countries that have principals who engage themselves in the instructional process and spend considerable amounts of time in the classroom. At the same time, they continue to get the other work that is associated with the principalship completed in a timely manner. They see themselves as the instructional leader and spend considerable time working with teachers to improve the essence of instruction.

Federal legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 had as a premise that emphasized the administrator's role as the instructional leader. Understandably, the depth of knowledge a classroom teacher has regarding their content is not necessarily needed by the principal; however, principals do need to know good teaching when they observe it. Principals, as instructional leaders must be able to lead teachers to produce verifiable results in the classroom. As previously stated, principals do not need to be experts in all curricular areas, but they must be able to observe that lessons taught are aligned properly with appropriate standards and that teachers exhibit quality teaching techniques, so all students can learn and achieve to their fullest potential and understand and can apply higher-order thinking skills. Principals are extremely important to the instructional process, and no other position has the ability to improve schools better than the principal. In *Instructional Leadership: A Research Based Guide to Learning in Schools,* Wayne and Anita Hoy (2013) described that "good teaching matters, it is the *sine qua non* of schooling; in fact, good teaching is what instructional leadership is about: finding ways to improve teaching and learning". This assertion is bolstered by findings that emerge from research findings of successful schools. Queen Elizabeth High School in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada represents one of those schools in which the principal takes teaching and learning seriously, and we will address this school later in this research paper.

Sergiovanni (2015) said, it is clear when schools are functioning especially well and school achievement is high, much of the credit typically must go to the principal. Legislative leaders understood the importance, as well (U.S. Senate, 1972):

> In many ways, the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school…. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become…. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. (Sergiovanni, 2015, p. 139)

If this was thought to be true in 1972, it seems it would be true today. However, as suggested in the research, fewer school principals are willing "to take the helm of their school" and lead the way. This reality is indeed unfortunate. Principals, as instructional leaders are first and foremost responsible for promoting best teaching practices (Zepada, 2012). Principals must continually be engaging their faculty in discussions about quality instruction and reflective practices. We believe that quality instruction is the heart of learning. One can surmise that if instruction improves, so does student achievement. The two go together, as Whitaker (2012) suggested, there are only two ways to improve schools; hire better teachers or improve the teachers one has. Whitaker's comment makes sense, but most administrators spend much of their time searching for programs that will improve instruction and that supposedly will benefit student achievement. One can spend all year looking for programs that many believe will solve problems, and when the year is over, one will still have the same problems and not much will have been solved, and repeated the following year. Most of the time these programs will not achieve the improvement or the desired results. Everyone seems to be looking for a "silver bullet," and if there was such a panacea, then every school would be using it. One must ask, is there a "silver bullet" or that cure-all, that program or model that will bring about the positive results everyone seems to be seeking? Is there a program that will help every child achieve to his/her fullest potential? The obvious answer is a resounding no. But the question remains. Is there a "silver bullet?" As indicated in the research, yes, there is. The silver bullet is the teacher. Therefore, the principal's responsibility to see that each teacher under his/her guidance becomes the best that s/he can be. Our children are worth our best efforts. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2017) supported this claim about effective leadership in schools and they further stated, the principal's efforts in this area are mission critical. As Schmoker (2016) indicated, instruction itself has the largest influence on achievement, and he further stated that our best efforts, in many cases are insufficient, and teachers and administrators must make the necessary changes to see significant improvements.

As further suggested by researchers, teachers do indeed want to improve their instructional skills, and they do indeed desire assistance from their principal. After lengthy discussions with teachers who participated in this project it appears obvious that elementary school principals spend more time in the classroom than their secondary counterparts.

Researcher, Ronald Heck, verified this fact by stating, most high school principals spend less time than principals in elementary and middle schools "observing classroom practices, promoting discussions about instructional issues, and emphasizing the use of test results for

program improvement" (as cited in Cotton, 2003). According to Zepeda (2017), when a principal conducts a classroom observation, he or she has a "front row seat" to observe what occurs during the teaching process, and this front row seat she is addressing is crucial. Research conducted by O'Leary (2014) indicated if principals spend time in the classroom observing and working with teachers it is the most significant predictor of a school's success. According to Parker and Ziegler (2005), Queen Elizabeth High School in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada has implemented a program that allows the principal to spend half of the day in the classroom. The principal monitors and observes teaching and at the same time models effective teaching. Siccone (2012) stated the principal must have the proper skills if he or she is to be an instructional leader in the school. Principals who work with teachers to improve instruction should know how to model it, and those who are preparing principals to become instructional leaders must understand the preparation is crucial. In a study conducted by Zepeda and Ponticell (1998), they found that lack of understanding by those preparing school leaders was a problem. After personal conversations with Sally Zepeda, she and we believe the problem still exists today. Many in higher education do not seem to be interested in addressing this issue and therefore, the situation has stayed the same and principals are still not trained in the process of helping teachers improve instruction. We believe this because many university professors teaching in principal preparation programs have never practiced what they teach, which supports Zepeda's and Ponticell's findings.

Instructional leaders must be master teachers and be able to demonstrate great teaching. Edmonton Public Schools expects all principals to be in classrooms regularly and for them, that means daily. This school's system leaders showed that it can be done. While demonstrating that it can be done, they have also had positive results. For example, there have been improvements in student course completion, student behavior and conduct, and the number of suspensions has dropped dramatically and, yes, there have been greater levels of student achievement. Teachers report improved morale and greater support from the principal, and principals saw themselves as instructional leaders. Instructional leadership is a priority in their schools. Results from the Edmonton Public Schools clearly supports the comments made by Sullivan and Glanz (2013) when they said continual emphasis on student outcomes support supervision of instruction as an indispensable function that inspires good teaching and promotes student learning. Principals devote very little time in those activities with teachers that support instructional practices, which is also supported by the Wallace Foundation Report (Mendels, 2016) titled *Improving Principal Preparation Programs*. This report stipulates the course of study provided by preparation programs do not always reflect the principals' jobs. Zepeda (2013) further stated the focus of preparation programs must be on improving observations, assessing school culture and climate, addressing marginal teaching and supporting adult learning.

Still, many questions remain: what does effective instruction look like, can a principal have an impact on instructional improvement, how do teachers view the principal as an instructional leader, and do teachers desire help from their principal? Research in this area is extremely limited, but some studies are available that can be referenced. Blase and Blase (2000) conducted a study of 809 teachers using questionnaires to describe the characteristics of principals. Teachers defined the characteristics of effective leaders and they found that principals as instructional leaders give feedback from classroom observations, demonstrate teaching techniques in classrooms, focus on specific and concrete teaching behaviors; effective principals participate in staff development, encourage teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms even in

other schools, and encourage teachers to become peer coaches. One might say these authors suggested that if principals do these things, they must be in classrooms numerous times during the school year. However, as Michael Fullan (2015) asserted, "effective instructional leaders are distinctly in the minority." Even informal walk-through observations have proven to show some benefits. However, according to Glickman and Gordan (2014), the typical and infrequent "drop-in" visit by the principal a few times a year without continuous discussion, critiquing, and planning with teachers leads to the deadening and routinizing of practice and the diminishment of teaching as a profession. And yet, a principal must not just drop-in classrooms occasionally. Principals must dedicate time for any real significant difference to take place. This difference must focus on helping teachers get better at the essence of teaching.

Over the years, those in the field of education have seen that society seems to be placing greater demands on teachers and teaching; therefore, it is hoped this study will give teachers, principals, and preparation program providers significant information that is needed and necessary that supports what teachers claim they need from their principals to support teaching and learning.

Methods

This research consists of a five-year study with data collected from 3500 teachers from the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. In this study, we explored what teachers said they needed from principals to help them improve instructionally. Data were gathered from teachers denoting the actual behaviors of principals as compared to the ideal behavior of principals. The survey instrument consisted of 25 items denoting supervisory behavior that directly contrasts teachers' "Ideal" principal and "My" principal. Items one through eight consisted of pre-observation conference techniques. Items nine through 17 denoted techniques used in classroom observations and items 18 through 25 demonstrated techniques used during post-observation conferences. As shown in Figure 1, the following survey was used in this research.

Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire (SJIBQ)

Please read each of the following descriptions of classroom supervisory activities and techniques. In the left margin circle the response which most nearly describes the extent to which you believe the ideal principal would use this technique. In the right margin please circle the response which most nearly describes the extent to which your present principal uses the technique.

The following are definitions of the responses:

1 = NEVER (at no time, under no conditions)
2 = SELDOM (in few instances, rarely, infrequently)
3 = SOMETIMES (occasionally, once in a while)
4 = USUALLY (commonly or ordinarily used)
5 = OFTEN (many times)

Figure 1. Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire

Ideal Principal	Instructional Behavior	My Principal
1 2 3 4 5	1. Meets with me prior to formal observation of my class.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2. Prior to a visit, finds out what my lesson plan objectives are and what strategies I plan to use during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3. Prior to a visit, finds out what I expect students to be doing during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	4. Prior to a visit, finds out any concern I have and any problems I feel I am having.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	5. Prior to a visit, involves me in deciding what s/he will observe and the type of data s/he will collect during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6. Prior to a visit, helps me translate my concerns into specific teaching behaviors that can be observed.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	7. Prior to a visit, suggests a variety of observational techniques that s/he could use during a visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8. Suggests methods that I can use to gather my own data about my teaching without help from others.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	9. Makes verbatim notes of selected parts of what I say and what students say during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	10. Writes down my questions during the visit for later analysis.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	11. Writes students' responses to my questions for later analysis.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	12. Makes a chart to show patterns and amount of student response in class discussions.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	13. Makes charts to show physical movements of me and/or my students during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	14. Makes verbatim notes of selected parts of what I say and what students say during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	15. Observes and makes notes about the behavior of a specific child if I have identified that child as a "problem" student.	1 2 3 4 5

Figure 1 (continued). Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire

1 2 3 4 5	16. Records his/her subjective feelings about whether the class is good or bad.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	17. Meets with me after each visit to discuss what s/he observed.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	18. Relates my perceptions of the class to the objective observational data that s/he collected during the visit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	19. Asks me questions during the conference that help me to clarify my opinions and feelings.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	20. Encourages me to consider alternative teaching techniques and explanations of classroom events.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	21. Listens more than s/he talks in a conference.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	22. Encourages me to make inferences and to express my feelings and opinions about observational data that s/he collected.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	23. Acknowledges what I say and shows me that s/he understands what I am saying.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	24. Gives praise and encouragement for specific growth in my teaching skill that s/he has observed.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	25. Recommends resources such as books and training programs that deal with areas that have been observed.	1 2 3 4 5

Figure 1 (continued). Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire

Results

Cronbach's Item Analysis was used to determine reliability of the instrument. Reliability coefficients on the order of .95 were reported. Through the findings from this study, we revealed that teachers desire more help from their principals, especially as it relates to instructional assistance. Teachers believed their principals needed improvement in 15 of the 25 principal behaviors, with five additional behaviors approaching the significant level. For this study, score totals were compared for each of the two categories. These values were compared to determine a "Delta m." The "Delta m" values were then averaged. Any item with an individual score equal to or greater than the average "Delta m" value (1.03) was determined as significant. The description and values are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive of Shinn/Jones Instructional Behavior Questionnaire (SJIBQ)

Item #	Average	Average	Delta "m"
1	4.13	3.16	**.97**
2	3.97	2.95	1.02
3	3.98	2.65	**1.33**
4	4.14	2.76	**1.38**
5	4.07	2.72	**1.35**
6	3.87	2.36	**1.51**
7	3.66	2.33	**1.33**
8	3.91	2.28	**1.63**
9	3.81	2.89	.92
10	3.75	2.77	**1.42**
11	3.91	2.35	**1.56**
12	3.93	2.51	**1.42**
13	4.34	2.81	**1.53**
14	3.20	1.94	1.26
15	2.92	1.73	1.19
16	3.51	2.53	.98
17	3.17	2.79	.38
18	4.15	2.69	**1.46**
19	4.31	2.90	**1.41**
20	4.22	2.70	**1.52**
21	3.97	2.63	**1.34**
22	3.85	2.48	**1.37**
23	3.85	2.53	**1.32**
24	4.21	3.06	1.15
25	3.99	2.87	1.12

Note. Statistically significant "Delta m" values are shown in bold print

Significant Findings

Teachers believed their principals as instructional leaders, must demonstrate significant improvement in many areas. According to the teachers who participated in this research project, they are desiring assistance and help in these 15 instructional leadership skills. Therefore, it seems imperative that principals who aspire to be instructional leaders, must develop those skills that would enable them to be that dynamic leader who has a positive impact on teaching and learning. The areas that teachers believed they needed instructional assistance and support from principals include:

Significant Pre-conference Items:

- Behavior 3 - Prior to a visit, finds out what I expect students to be doing during the visit
- Behavior 4 - Prior to a visit, finds out any concerns I have and any problems I feel I am having
- Behavior 5 - Prior to a visit, involves me in deciding what s/he will observe and the type of data s/he will collect during the visit
- Behavior 6 - Prior to a visit, helps me translate my concerns into specific teaching behaviors that can be observed
- Behavior 7 - Prior to a visit, suggests a variety of observational techniques that s/he could use during a visit
- Behavior 8 - Suggests methods that I can use to gather my own data about my teaching without help from others

Significant Observation Items:

- Behavior 10 - Writes down my questions during the visit for later analysis
- Behavior 11 - Writes students' responses to my questions for later analysis
- Behavior 12 - Makes a chart to show patterns and amount of student response in class discussions
- Behavior 13 - Makes charts to show physical movements of me and or my students during the visit

Significant Post-Observation Items:

- Behavior 18 - Relates my perceptions of the class to the objective observational data which s/he collected during the visit
- Behavior 19 - Asks me questions during the conference that help me to clarify my opinions and feelings
- Behavior 20 - Encourages me to consider alternative teaching techniques and explanations of classroom events
- Behavior 21 - Listens more than s/he talks in a conference
- Behavior 23 - Acknowledges what I say and shows me that s/he understands what I am saying

As indicated by these results, teachers desired their principal to be proficient in all areas associated with those of an instructional leader who works to support and improve instruction. Even though some may consider this assumption to be unrealistic, we suggest it is tenable. As suggested by the evidence, teachers believe their principal should be able to collect and use data. Further, we suggest that teachers want principals to be instructional leaders who are able to assist them to a greater extent with instructional expertise.

Based on this study, it is our belief the principal as an instructional leader, should set the tone for quality instruction. If teachers and principals can work together to improve instruction, then student achievement would be enhanced. They should work in consort with each other, even to the extent of designing better observational tools that might generate better data for both to

observe. We believe if this occurs, it would allow teachers and principals the opportunity to work together to improve the overall quality of instruction and our children receive the benefits.

Discussion and Recommendations

We suggest those teachers surveyed in these three states believed their principals should provide more assistance relating to instructional improvement. Therefore, from this research, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Regarding items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, teachers are saying that principals should spend a greater amount of time working to improve their pre-conferencing skills because much can be learned that supports teaching and learning in the classroom. These six behaviors are aligned with the four goals defined by Sullivan and Glanz (2013). Their pre-conferencing goals are:
    - To identify the teacher's interests and concerns in an appropriate manner (directive, informational, collaborative, or self-directed).
    - To clarify that the primary purpose of the observation is to improve teaching and learning.
    - To reduce stress and make the teacher feel comfortable about the process.
    - To choose an observation tool and schedule the visit and post-conference.

2. Through our findings, we support the belief that principals should be in classrooms to support teaching and learning. This finding is supported by research conducted by NASSP and NAESP (2013) in *Leadership Matters*. The authors of their report said principals should guide schools to better teaching and learning and suggests this is accomplished by being in classrooms working to help teachers improve the essence of instruction.

3. University preparation program faculty should consider including additional course work and field experiences that relate specifically to what is required of principals as instructional leaders and how they can improve their skills when working with teachers to improve instruction. This recommendation is supported by the Wallace Foundation Report (Mendels, 2016), which stated the course of study of preparation programs does not always reflect a principal's real job and their support of teaching and learning.

4. District school leaders should consider the results of this research and insist that school principals model the process that Edmondson Public Schools used, because it was used to achieve positive results and is further supported by this research. Parker and Ziegler (2005) described this school as on the cutting edge of what instructional leadership should be and look like in a school. Principals are in classrooms regularly assisting teachers and even demonstrating what quality teaching in classrooms. Teaching has improved and student achievement has increased greatly because of the combined work of the principals and teachers.

Jenkins (2009) clarified the concept of instructional leadership by saying instructional leadership is the notion that learning should be given top priority while everything else evolves

around the enhancement of learning. He further stated that instructional leaders need to know what is happening in the classroom. Without the knowledge of what is taking place in the classroom, principals are also unable to appreciate and understand the problems teachers and students encounter. Nolan and Hoover (2011) stated that trust is the cornerstone in the foundation for effective in-class supervision. Through the results of this research, we would support and affirm that instructional leaders must be in classrooms working closely with teachers in developing those essential skills that we know provide positive results and enhance teaching and learning. Working closely would also help build that trust that Nolan and Hoover say is crucial.

Whitaker (1997) identified four skills that she says are essential for instructional leadership. They are, effective instructional leaders need to be resource providers, effective instructional leaders need to be instructional resources, effective instructional leaders need to be good communicators, and effective instructional leaders need to create a visible presence. Our research validates completely and supports these comments. If a person chooses to be an instructional leader, then these skills must be learned, but more so, they must be practiced.

In summary, it seems imperative that we revisit what instructional leadership is all about and that must start with those who are in positions of training these individuals. Revisiting instructional leadership requires us to redefine and focus on the role of the principal as instructional leader and to remove multiple barriers that keep them from working with teachers to enhance and improve instruction. About the training and focus, Zepeda (2013) said our efforts must focus on improving observations, assessing school culture and climate, addressing marginal teaching, and supporting adult learning. Hoerr (2015) further stated curiosity about what's happening in classrooms is important and principals must be good questioners. We believe that teachers can grow through the questions that are asked about the content being taught, and through the findings of this research, we support these claims. Therefore, principals can do better, and must not fail, because without excellence in the classroom, children and teachers will suffer, but first, excellence must come from those who are in positions to help teachers get better at the essence of instruction. The principal must understand, it starts with me.

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