Professional Development Needs and Experiences of Secondary Principals in Southwestern Pennsylvania

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2008

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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April 24, 2008

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Studies

**Professional Development Needs and Experiences of Secondary Principals in
Southwestern Pennsylvania**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2008

This study examined the professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in southwestern Pennsylvania. Professional development for principals has become critical as school leaders have been challenged by the need to create a school culture that helps prepare students for a global society and concurrently meets the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001). School leaders need to experience relevant, sustained, job-embedded, instructionally focused professional development in order to successfully lead their schools and students into the 21st century. The purpose of this study was to determine the professional development needs of secondary principals, what their preferred delivery method was for this professional development, what types of professional development initiatives they have participated in throughout the region, and if these all align and support one another. A questionnaire based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, the Balanced Leadership Study responsibilities (Waters, et al., 2003), and the Pennsylvania administrative standards was designed and used to investigate the secondary principals' perspectives in relation to these needs and preferences for learning.

Based on the findings of this study, the top five professional development needs of secondary principals in the southwestern Pennsylvania region include analyzing data, communicating effectively, using research and "best practices", building team commitment, developing information and data collection strategies. Coaching was the overall preferred

delivery method for professional development for the secondary principals surveyed, followed by the method of mentoring. Many of the initiatives across the region were viewed as providing effective professional development in areas of need identified in the survey. Additionally, many principals recognized the importance of having professional development experiences that allow for professional reflection and collaboration with other administrators, as well as those that were focused on best instructional practices to improve student achievement.

The findings of this study can be used to help providers of professional development design learning experiences for principals that address their stated needs through their preferred delivery method. It also offers Pennsylvania's Department of Education a secondary principal's perspective on some of the initiatives across the region. In light of current legislation that addresses principal professional development, the findings may offer some insight into how these initiatives can help support the current Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) legislation.

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PREFACE

So many people have affected my journey of learning and growth throughout this endeavor. Family, friends, professors, colleagues, and co-workers have all played an important part in my pursuit of a doctorate in education. One never knows why certain people enter our lives…whether if it is for a moment or a lifetime, there is always a reason. I feel very blessed to have these people in my life, and hope they realize what type of influence they have had on me. While some people remain more present in my daily life than others, each person has played an important part in my growth as a person and as an educator.

First, I'd like to thank my husband, Chris, and my daughters, Sydney and Lauren, for supporting and loving me through this process. Without your patience and understanding, I could have never achieved this dream. I hope that one day my girls will truly understand that with hard work, persistence and passion, anything is possible. I'd also like to thank my mom and dad for planting the educational seed that started with their motivational "pep talks" since I was about 8 years old. My sister, also a tremendous influence and support in my life, can attest to this. This degree is a proof that high expectations and limited TV can pay off!

I'd like to extend my sincere and deep gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Cynthia Tananis. Her belief in me has never wavered. She has demonstrated what it means to be a true mentor, someone who initially guided me and then stepped along side of me and walked with me to the

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Education in the United States is under severe scrutiny. As the federal government continues to ramp up accountability through high-stakes, mandated testing, educators are becoming increasingly frustrated with the repercussions of educational policy (Sirontik, 2004). This frustration has trickled down from lawmakers to boards of education, superintendents, principals, and teachers. Not only have policies changed, but also these changes have impacted the expectations of principals. Because school leadership has the potential to influence student achievement (Waters et al., 2003; Elmore, 2000), it is important to understand all of the factors that have influenced and changed the principalship, as well as opportunities that exist to help develop effective school leaders. This research study focuses on secondary school principal professional development opportunities available in the 10 county region as defined by the Education Policy and Issues Center located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and whether these opportunities are effectively meeting the needs of principals for 21st century schools.

1.1   PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTER 1

This chapter presents an overview of why principal professional development is significant to educational leaders in the 21st century, a description of why the study is important to me as an

educational leader, and details related to the study, including the intent of the study, research questions, and limitations of the study.

1.2   WHY IS THE STUDY OF PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANT?

While the role of the principal has become more complex to meet the needs of a growing and diverse society, it has also been influenced by the accountability measures put in place by the federal government, advances in technology, competition among K-12 educational alternatives, and an overall sense of public dissatisfaction with current education outcomes (Usdan et al., 2000). School leaders are challenged by the need to create a school culture that helps prepare students for a global society and concurrently meets the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001).   Not only has NCLB created a climate of anxiety in schools, it has primarily targeted a school's success or failure directly on the school leaders in charge of individual schools. This level of accountability has increased the pressure on school leaders tremendously and has many educators and educational organizations struggling to find a solution.   Several organizations are responding to this increased pressure by devoting increased time and resources to research and discussion related to ways to "reinvent the principalship" to meet the needs of schools in the 21st century (Usdan et al., 2000). Many of these same educators and organizations offer recommendations and suggestions of best practices that can help leaders create school cultures that focus on improving student achievement.

According to the task force of the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), there are two areas that members agreed upon as priorities for the principalship. First, the principalship must be leadership for learning. Second, the principalship as it currently is constructed – a middle management position overloaded with responsibilities for basic building operations – fails to meet this fundamental priority, instead allowing schools to drift without any clear vision of leadership for learning or providing principals with the skills needed to meet the challenge (Usdan et al., 2000, p. 1).

When principals are able to conduct tasks like identifying effective methods of teaching, having conversations with teachers about effective strategies and productive methods of instruction, and comparing achievement rates of their students by examining the data, there is evidence that this behavior has a direct impact on student achievement (Waters et al., 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium administrative standards also outline specific skills that principals must have, including extensive problem solving skills, the ability to build learning communities, and skills needed to handle conflict and criticism (CCSSO, 2006). Although the skills and qualities a principal should have may be clear in the standards and other research studies, "most educational administrators have little or no opportunity to receive meaningful training in these areas…They are rarely taught the analytical skills required for diagnosing a program's strengths and weaknesses, understanding data, and making trade-offs among competing programs" (Murphy & Schiller, 1992, p. 38). While principals may need ongoing training throughout their career, how they get that training is inconsistent and often times disassociated from the core needs of their district (Nicholson, 2005).

In light of the changing role of the principal, many professional development opportunities for principals exist, whether they are offered through a university, a local educational agency, on-line, or within a school district. While some principals may be masters of budgeting for a high school, others have a firm grasp on how to use data to make instructionally sound decisions. Therefore, the needs should dictate a personal professional development plan that is differentiated for the individual. These individual needs tend to determine what professional development opportunities the principal seeks out and how they go about learning certain skills and strategies becomes the roadmap for their own professional development plan. Depending on the chosen opportunities, they may or may not align with the needs of the principal's school district and building. When left up to the individual, the choices for professional development can potentially create a gap that does not support a focus on student performance.

1.2.1   What Brought Me to This Study?

As I have progressed from a career in teaching to one in administration, I have continued to see a missing link in the organization and implementation of professional learning. As a teacher, I had many opportunities for professional development and grew into a better teacher because of them. These opportunities included university coursework, one-day workshops, conferences, participation in study groups, and practical experience. My most enlightening learning experiences happened when I worked with others, through practice and dialogue, to come to an understanding about a specific topic. As I moved into administration as a county coordinator of gifted education, I provided professional development for superintendents and principals on issues related to gifted education, identification, and state law. Rarely did I offer long term,

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comprehensive professional development on these issues. Instead, I delivered the basics to those who attended the required monthly meetings.

In my next administrative position as a coordinator of gifted education for a city school district, I was involved in helping classroom teachers learn how to move away from "teaching to the middle" and more toward differentiating instruction. As I created professional development plans and frequently trained teachers on the strategies necessary for differentiated instruction, I continued to notice the need for the principals to understand differentiated instruction just as much as teachers. Occasionally, principals would stop in as I facilitated professional development for teachers but rarely would they stay for the whole time or participate in discussion or activities with teachers.

This lack of involvement and understanding of differentiated instruction eventually began to take its toll on my efforts to help develop teachers' capacity. Without the principal knowing what to look for, what to reinforce, and how to help move teachers toward a differentiated classroom, and without their support in understanding the importance of letting teachers take risks in this endeavor, my efforts only impacted those teachers who either wanted to understand the process or those with whom I had developed a more extended solid relationship. Unfortunately, the ongoing, job-embedded professional development I offered for teachers over the course of the year did not equate to a significant change in pedagogical practices among all of those teachers. Had the principals taken a more active role in ensuring that the teachers tried different strategies on a regular basis and embedded them in their daily planning and instruction, my efforts and those of the teachers may have been more lasting. Besides the differing principals' observation and evaluation techniques, it became obvious that their understanding of what differentiated instruction looked like in the classroom was lacking. Therefore, my

assumption that they would be able to help move their teachers forward while I was not in the building was flawed.

As I entered the principalship, other issues began to emerge about principal professional development. I struggled to find the time to get out of the building for professional development opportunities. Not only would work accumulate on my desk while I was gone, but it also meant more work for my colleagues in terms of student discipline, meetings, and more. Being out of the building continues to be a difficult task to manage and justify.

Another issue that began to emerge occurred while I was attending the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, a two-year professional development academy with meetings once a month. As I attended each month's session, I continued to build my skills around differentiated supervision, looking at examples of student work as evidence for observation and evaluation, and understanding what best practices looked like in the classroom. However, as I was gaining skills in these specific areas, my colleagues were not. I believe the likelihood of focusing our efforts to raise student achievement would increase if the four of us experienced professional development, such as the Principals Academy, together and were able to discuss instructional pedagogy and develop a common language and skill set around how we observe and evaluate teachers and student work. While this professional development opportunity was powerful for me as a new principal, the lack of a professional learning community among the administrators with whom I work has resulted in a challenging professional dynamic and moderate disconnect between us.

Experiences like this have continued to feed my interest in studying professional development for practicing principals. Even though the standards for principal certification in Pennsylvania bring common expectations for principal candidates, the experiences that we all

bring to the position differ widely. Because several studies have indicated that the principal of a building has the potential to move student achievement forward, each team of building administrators is challenged with knowing how to accomplish this feat. A focus on principal professional development is one of the tools necessary to help principals make school improvement efforts work. Because the position has such potential for improving student achievement, it has continued to peak my interest. This has led me to an exploration of the literature on the role of the principal and how it has changed over the years, how policies have created a need for more training pertaining to leadership, change theory, capacity building, and instructional pedagogy, and how different organizations have responded to that need.

1.2.2   Intent of the Study

The literature offers clear examples of what effective adult professional development should include.   There are also many examples of professional development opportunities that are available to practicing principals. However, there is little current research addressing what principals think they need to best address the changing nature of schooling and their role as principals. In light of high school reform moving to the top of the educational policy agenda, there is also a strong push for changing the way we organize and structure high schools in this country (Quint, 2006). Secondary principals are now charged with following recommendations such as creating personalized and orderly learning environments, assisting students who enter high school with poor academic skills, improving instructional content and practice, preparing students for the world beyond high school, promoting math and science education and stimulating change (Quint, 2006; Gates, 2005; Jerald, 2006).   When considering what skills secondary principals will need to address the several high school reform recommendations made

by organizations like the National Association for Secondary School Principals, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, MDRC, a non-profit, non-partisan social policy research organization, Education Sector, and the National Governors Association, relevant professional development opportunities to help secondary principals become even more critical. Given the current focus on high school reform, this study explores the emerging needs of secondary principals, current professional development practices for secondary principals, and how these needs and practices align. Based on the finding of this study, there are recommendations for policies and practices that can assist in providing school districts, intermediate units, universities, and other professional development providers in their development of more coherent professional development for principals in the western Pennsylvania region.

1.2.3 Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What professional development needs do secondary principals identify in order to be more effective as school leaders?

2. What professional development opportunities are secondary principals participating in across the region?

3. How closely do secondary principal professional development opportunities offered in the region align with the recommended practices found in the literature and what secondary principals indicate they need to be more effective leaders?

1.2.4   Glossary of terms

Several terms are used throughout this research study that are important to understand. Brief definitions are provided in this glossary to aid the reader in their understanding and interpretation of the study.

Secondary Schools – For the purpose of this study, the majority of secondary school principals work in high schools, grade 9 -12, while a few are junior high schools, grades 7-8. The secondary school principals surveyed in this study were identified as secondary principals by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Emotional Intelligence – Daniel Goleman, the author of the book Emotional Intelligence (1995), defines emotional intelligence as traits or abilities that people have, such as the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope (p. 34).

Soft Skills – This term is similar to the definition of emotional intelligence. It refers to the skills that people have in order to build relationships with others, handle conflict appropriately, and empathize with others, communicate clearly, and accept criticism and learn from it.

Best Practice – Best practices can be defined as teaching practices and leadership practices. Best teaching practices are research based and include effective teaching practices that engage students in meaningful, standards-based learning. They also include practices such as clearly stated learning goals, clear expectations for good student work, and using differentiated instruction to meet a variety of learning levels, learning styles, and interests. Best leadership practices include skills like the ability to create effective teamwork through collegiality and

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relationship building, setting measurable goals, and analyzing performance data to make instructionally sound decisions (Schmoker, 2006).

1.2.5   Limitations of the Study

The number of principals surveyed limits the study. While the primary group of secondary principals is from counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, principals in different regions might have different opinions and stories to share, hence generalization beyond the region is limited. Additionally, the southwest Pennsylvania region has a fairly stable and somewhat declining population. Many principals who work in the area were born and raised here. Further, many have been academically prepared (as teachers and principals) within the region. This may further contribute a regional bias to findings of this study.

Another limitation of the study may be around the assumption that principals differ in their need for professional development. Some principals may have more of an ability to think about their own needs as a learner, while others may be more limited in their ability to determine what they need to have in order to be more effective. The level of reflection and ability to reflect deeply by those responding to the survey may impact the validity of the data.

An additional limitation to the study may be related to the researcher's participation in some of the initiatives within the study. As mentioned in Chapter One, the researcher has participated in the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, as well as the Educational Leadership Initiative and the Tri-State School Study Council. While the data offer an unbiased picture about the results of the findings, it is important for readers to know about the researcher's participation in the professional development experiences.

Finally, there are limitations to the survey instrument. As Mertens (2005) warns, "Surveys rely on individual's self-reports of their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. Thus the validity of the information is contingent on the honesty of the respondent" (p. 167). While wording of the questions is critical for collecting accurate data, interpretation by the respondent may vary widely. Another limitation related to the survey is how it is distributed. Again, Mertens (2005) cautions that "the disadvantages of mail surveys is that they are generally associated with lower response rates than phone and personal interviews, and the surveyor does not have an opportunity to probe for more in-depth answers or to determine if the respondent understood the questions appropriately" (p. 172). Because the survey used was mailed through the United States Postal system and electronically through e-mail accounts, the researcher followed up with phone calls and e-mails encouraging the principals to respond to the survey. The survey was mailed in December 2007, which tends to be a busy time in secondary schools. However, 82 out of 170 principals did participate in the survey, providing the researcher with solid data that addressed the survey questions about professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in the region.

1.2.6   Organization of Chapters

Subsequent chapters of this dissertation address a review of the literature, the findings of the study, and implications of the study. The review of the literature (chapter two) focuses on how schools have changed due to policy, how those changes have influenced the role of the principal, and the types of professional development recommended for principals. Chapter three follows with a discussion of the research methods and procedures used in the study including the research population, data collection via survey, and follow-up procedures. Chapter four

discusses the findings of the study and includes comparisons between data sets. Chapter five concludes the dissertation with implications of the findings, as well as recommendations for further research.

2.0   REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATIONAL REFORM TRENDS: THE ROAD TO ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to understand the complex nature of the principalship, it is important to understand how American education has changed over the years. The image of public schools and schooling usually conjure up visions of a teacher at the front of the room, students sitting in desks, posters and calendars covering the walls, and books stacked on shelves. Teachers deliver the content, while students receive it. Teachers acting as solo practitioners, "operating in isolation from one another under conditions of work that severely limit their exposure to other adults doing the same work" (Elmore, 2002, p. 4). This description of what schools have looked like across our history tends to be very similar for many and this familiarity contributes to the difficulty of changing the traditions of school systems. While many forces have changed within the school setting, what hasn't changed is the struggle to find a balance between all of the competing forces related to schooling (Fenske, 1997). These forces include changes in society, funding sources, teaching methods, content, procedures to complete tasks, priorities and more. Although change may be difficult, it is the one constant force in our lives. Therefore, in times of turmoil, people value the familiar, which gives the notion of 'status quo' special momentum (Sizer, 1984). This

momentum works to keep schools and schooling fairly status quo, which has added to the challenges of all levels of educators.

Starting with the 1950s, many countries adapted to the changes happening across the world. Several countries refocused and recreated themselves in order to increase their economic and political position in a world that was becoming more competitive. In 1957, when Russia launched Sputnik, the United States reacted by pouring money, time and research into math and science education in hopes of recapturing its pride. President Dwight Eisenhower, in his call for a national response to Sputnik, said "there is a compelling national need for federal action now to help meet emergency needs in American education" (Boyer, 1983, p. 2). Other countries were becoming more globally competitive which threatened the United States' economic security.

In the 1960s, the focus was equality in education for children of all races. The Civil Rights Act allowed the federal government to withhold federal funding for education if schools did not comply with desegregation laws (Horn, 2002). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provided school districts with federal funds to improve education for all children and to address the cycle of poverty. Among other things, this act led to the founding of Head Start, a federal program that focused on providing early education to children of poverty. The ESEA has continued to exist since 1965, emerging as different names, such as Goals or America 2000 and the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), but with the same premise in mind – all students can learn and should be provided the opportunity to learn.

Research continued to effect school policy and discussions around educational reform in the 1960s as is evident in reports such as the Coleman Report and Man: A Course of Study (MACOS). The Coleman Report addressed how poverty affects student achievement, while the MACOS report emphasized critical thinking within the science curriculum, which drew much

negative attention from conservatives and religious fundamentalists (Horn, 2002). With the focus on equity in education, desegregation, and a national test that was viewed as the "nation's report card", the United States Federal government had increased its involvement in education, as well as its interest in accountability measures.

In the 1970s, more attention was paid to the reform of curriculum and instruction, including small group learning, mastery learning, and open classrooms (Horn, 2002). Inequality in education continued to be a focus of the federal government as was seen in the addition of Title IX to the Civil Rights Act, which gave the federal government the power to withhold money to schools districts if they were found to be discriminating against women. Other critical initiatives included the establishment of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that is still in existence today, as well as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, and the creation of the Department of Education and the Office of Education Research and Improvement. Again, the U.S. government was adding resources and measures that would work to hold school districts more accountable for the education of its children.

2.1.1   The Impetus for Schools and Businesses to Collaborate

As the competitive market grew internationally through these decades, the United States government, with pressure from corporations, continued to reflect upon what was happening within the public education system. In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan emphasized the importance of education when he discussed the importance of schools and universities to American families (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). By assessing our educational system and making recommendations for ways to improve it, President Reagan continued to address a need for educational reform. In 1983, the National Commission on

Excellence in Education wrote a report titled *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Within *A Nation At Risk* (1983), there were several recommendations made, including one related to standards and expectations that read:

> We recommend that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission. This will help students do their best educationally with challenging materials in an environment that supports learning and authentic accomplishment (p. 27).

By emphasizing the need for standardization and rigor within the curriculum, the Commission stated that our country's students were not achieving at high enough levels and that the continued success of our country was at risk. The report clearly spoke to our education system as not being rigorous enough to create students who could compete in the new global market.

After the report was released, there was enormous reaction from prominent educators and business leaders. Leaders in both fields worked to provide analytic responses and suggest strategies to help improve education in this country. Because the education system molded the future workers of the United States, business organizations, such as the Committee for Economic Development, the National Alliance for Business, the Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Conference Board, became involved in policy development, political support, and financial assistance in order to support improving education (Lund & Wild, 1993). Ironically, although *A Nation At Risk* did not call for the business leaders in the U.S. to help reform the field of education, it was the financial security created by good workers and a good economy that drove business leaders to get involved. During this time, the business community reacted quickly to the warnings about the dangers to the nation's economic competitiveness and became deeply involved with schools (Lund & Wild, 1993). This involvement in education led

to the integration of business models and the development of a more deliberate, comprehensive accountability system for the world of education.

Benchmarking, while a more business oriented term, was intended to make accountability more pragmatic and useful to the K-12 public education system in terms of setting expectations for achievement. Among the recommendations from *A Nation at Risk* (1983), as analyzed by Lund & Wild (1993), was to use the concept of benchmarking where state and local standardized tests would be given at major transition points from one level of schooling to another. Also noted in this report was the need for principals and superintendents to play an important leadership role in developing schools and community support for the proposed reforms. Educational leaders were being asked to help lead schools toward high levels of achievement and a more rigorous curriculum (Lund & Wild, 1993). The Commission stressed the difference between leadership skills involving persuasion, setting goals, and developing community consensus and those more traditionally considered managerial and supervisory skills. Not only was this report crucial to the beginning of "the standards movement" and the focus on accountability, it also brought about a renewed emphasis on the importance of school leaders as part of the accountability structure within schools.

As the standards movement began to unfold, some educators did not agree with the emphasis placed only on standards. They saw a need for a more complete renovation. According to the Carnegie Forum's *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986)

> Much of the rhetoric of the recent education reform movement has been couched in the language of decline, suggesting that standards have slipped, the education system has grown lax and needs to return to some earlier performance standard to succeed. Our view is very different. We do not believe the educational system needs repairing; we believe it must be rebuilt to match the drastic change needed in our economy if we are to prepare our children for productive lives in the 21st century. (p. 14)

Some people saw the standards as being detrimental to the relationship between teachers and students. Others saw this movement as too top-down and bureaucratic (Murphy, 1991). This debate about whether or not our schools are "broken" versus being overwhelmed continues to be an issue within the field of education today.

2.1.2 Educational Reform Continues

Because of this difference of opinion and because school reformers did not see a great transformation and improvement in school performance, another wave of reform began and was more focused at the local level with attention to a concern for the increasing achievement gap as the nation became preoccupied with the new standards of excellence that *A Nation At Risk* (1983) provided. As the nation became more politically polarized, so did its schools. The chance of receiving a thorough and meaningful K-12 education came down to where a family could afford to live. This polarization of equity in education continued to increase the achievement gap among socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups. Although the law stated that school districts could not segregate children based on race, religion or ethnicity, the social structure of the country, as evidenced by the geographic location of wealth and poverty, continues to create a great divide. Therefore, a family's location and the types of schools found within their neighborhoods play a large part in student achievement (Hoxby, 2001). As an extension and clarification to the findings in the earlier Coleman report, Hoxby (2001) discusses the "implications of evidence that families who sought high achievement consistently sought good schools as a mechanism for achieving their goals" (p. 95). Therefore, the polarization between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in the United States continued to be fed by where

people could afford to live and the academic achievement levels of the school districts found in those neighborhoods.

During the educational reform movement in the 1980s and 1990s, business leaders and their practices continued to infiltrate school systems and operations through operational strategies like W.E. Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) and site-based management teams. These strategies began to emerge in schools in order to help address the ongoing changes needed to educate America's young people and prepare them for success in the workforce (Horn, 2002). As businesses increased their involvement in educational reform, CEOs led superintendents and board members toward business models with an emphasis on accountability. In 1986, the Rochester, N.Y. school system was joined by company executives from Eastman Kodak, Xerox, Wegman Food Markets, and Bausch & Lomb, in order to study the problems within the school district (Lund & Wild, 1993). In response to the collaboration with businesses in Rochester, the president of the Rochester Teacher Association viewed the shared learning about effective management, downsizing, Total Quality Management, shared decision making, decentralized authority and employee involvement as achievements for the school district (Lund & Wild, 1993). Dorothy Luebke, director of Corporate Initiatives at Eastman Kodak, noted that while business people are not educators and most do not presume to 'fix the problems', one particular strength to businesses getting involved in education reform is that they understand the process of translating and transferring high quality principles to an educational arena (Lund & Wild, 1993). These partnerships between schools and businesses emerged throughout the country, each affecting school reform in ways that focused on how to measure quality teaching, quality curriculum, and quality leadership.

With the combination of schools and businesses working together to improve education, there was hope for more economic growth, social stability, and an increased chance for individuals to excel financially (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). However, the magnitude of change that businesses and schools wanted to see really did not come to fruition. Grand changes in schools failed to emerge as business organizations and CEOs continued to hire young adults who were still in need of additional training. While businesses measured success by the product they created, transferring that concept over to children was more difficult. Many educators came to realize that the impact of standards-based performance and accountability had weakened progressive teaching practices while hardening traditional teaching patterns (Cuban, 2003). Although approaches to quality education continued, so did changes in society and these changes continued to keep the creation of the "perfect school" just out of reach.

Albert Shanker, former president of the American Federation of Teachers, commented that the process that schools and businesses went through by having to sort out similarities and differences between the two organizations and between the ideas of how change works versus how change really works was valuable. In The Conference Board's report *Ten Years After a Nation at Risk* (Lund & Wild, 1993), he stated

> Business has been indispensable in that process, and that process was indispensable in getting us to where we are now – understanding that unless we figure out what we want students to know and be able to do as a result of their education and re-configuring our 'non-system' of education accordingly, we'll never move school performance and student achievement forward. (p. 28)

This statement was an invitation for the country to set common educational standards so that educators and students became clear as to what students needed to know and be able to do as they moved through the K-12 education system.

2.1.3   Focus on Accountability Explodes in the 1990s

The focus on educational outcomes and accountability exploded throughout the 1990s. There was a renewed emphasis on the importance of education for our country's success. Throughout the 1990s, many states had begun to put educational standards and testing into place. However, this endeavor of setting standards and holding students accountable for meeting them was quickly challenged by educational interest groups who were opposed to the very idea of standards and accountability (Evers, 2001).

Regardless of this polarization among the country's education interest groups and educators, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including the Goals 2000, encouraged systemic and systematic school reform in order to meet the national goals. The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* formalized national goals for education and the development of content standards guided by national professional organizations, like the National Council of Teachers of English, and new assessment systems. Although school districts and states struggled to develop standards and assessments in each major discipline, by 1998 there were 47 states that had developed academic standards for each of the major disciplines (Webb, 2003). The standards movement was reborn and continues to challenge educators and administrators across the country.

In 2001, Congress passed President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that public schools are currently grappling with today. According to The Education Trust (2003), the NCLB requirements were a response to reports that our schools were not keeping pace with other developed nations in relation to the escalating skill requirements of the knowledge economy. This legislation states that by the 2005-2006 school year, all students in grades 3 – 8 will be tested every year in math and reading, the tests must be aligned to the state

curriculum and academic achievement standards, and the schools must make "adequate yearly progress". If schools do not reach "adequate yearly progress" for two years in a row then they are put on the warning or "needs improvement" list and face possible restructuring by the state. If the schools do not meet adequate yearly progress for two years in a row, parents can transfer their child to a higher performing school or can receive money to receive supplemental education services at the school's expense (The Education Trust, 2003, p. 2). NCLB also requires that all students, including those with special education needs, meet "proficient" levels on approved state tests by the year 2014. While NCLB's intention is to close the achievement gap, the optimism and expectations fueling this legislation overwhelms some educators. The idea that all students need to be proficient in reading and math by 2014 will take the effort of all stakeholders, including schools, communities, businesses, and the federal, state and local governments.

Many educators and researchers do not believe that state assessments alone can offer the solution to the problems of our educational system. Judging potential based on a test score is not necessarily a fair assessment of ability (Scheffler, 1985; Sirotnik, 2004). Many researchers have indicated a deep concern about what will happen when burdensome accountability schemes get superimposed on schooling practices (Sirotnik, 2004). Passing state assessments does not guarantee success for students, just as passing teacher certification tests does not guarantee a good teacher. Creating a more balanced approach to accountability and assessment, such as using student work portfolios, a variety of standardized test scores, curriculum-based assessments, student presentations and more to determine students' levels of understanding may be more achievable for teachers, students, administrators, and board members. Specifically, this balance includes a focus on instruction and assessment that is designed on multiple levels to reach

different types of learners, not in masses and by teaching to the middle but by reaching one student at a time (Levine, 2005, Sirotnik, 2004).

The requirements of NCLB (2001) have also directly impacted the curriculum that teachers teach. Many states have adopted new educational standards and assessments that are rigorous enough to hold schools and students accountable for academic achievement (Noguera, 2004). No longer are schools able to push students through the necessary coursework and give them a diploma. "To ensure that a high school diploma is regarded as a legitimate indicator of educational accomplishment to colleges and employers, students in several states are being required to pass "high-stakes" exit exams prior to graduation" (Noguera, 2004, p. 68). In order to address this level of accountability, the new standards have increased the academic expectations that students are required to meet. Teachers now teach from a curriculum that is directly tied to their state's standards because the mandated tests required by NCLB (2001) are testing those standards. While many educators struggle with the dilemma of "teaching to the test", the accountability system they are contending with leaves them little choice. In order to be deemed a successful teacher, their students need to do well on state tests. While not an easy task, ensuring that the students understand the content of the lesson is critical to these students performing well on standards-based assessments. If the tests given in every state are of high quality and require high levels of critical and creative thinking, then practicing these skills in the classroom is a positive endeavor. What seems to matter most is the way teachers go about preparing their students for these assessments. "This kind of accountability [system] requires not only a change in assessment but, even more important, a change in the way we typically think about teaching" (Noguera, 2004, p. 76). Noguera (2004) continues to explain

> When teachers are fully invested in learning and when they base their effectiveness on
> the academic growth of their students, they will routinely look for evidence that the

instruction they provide is enabling their students to acquire knowledge and skills deemed important. When teaching and learning are connected in these ways, the ultimate evidence of teacher effectiveness and student learning is quality of work produced by the students. Ideally, this should also be reflected in higher test scores and a variety of authentic indicators of learning and achievement. (p. 77)

Along with the challenges NCLB (2001) presents to educators, there is a tremendous amount of potential that it offers as well. Having students across the country learning similar standards and being measured on their understanding of those standards in similar ways helps to align education from state to state. However, measuring student growth and the quality of teaching by one test is dangerous. Educators and researchers are finding that there is a fine line between high stakes accountability measures and high quality education.

2.1.4 Other Issues Affecting American Schools

As part of the response to NCLB (2001) and raising accountability measures for our schools, school leaders and communities are faced with the increasing pressure from the federal government and educational agencies to reform their high schools. Several organizations have published articles, reports, and books on the topic of high school reform over the past five years, such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (NASSP) *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform* (2004), the Association of Career and Technical Education's (ACTE) *Reinventing the American High School for the 21st Century,* and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's *High Schools for the New Millennium* (2006). This sense of urgency around high school reform stems from the shift in the job market throughout the 1980s and 1990s. "Technology and the globalization of industry have changed the needs of business workers" (Priesz, 2006). While technological changes have impacted and reformed business and

industry, the high school institutions have remained fairly unchanged for the past 100 years. According to Gerald Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, "We must capitalize on the current sense of urgency surrounding the state of the U.S. high schools, and make a concerted effort to take a leadership role in framing the conversation and subsequent action around how to successfully re-engineer our high schools" (Educational Leadership, 2005). The debate for what high school reform should entail is taking place around the country, as organizations work to define what high school education should look like in the 21st century.

While the call for high school reform comes from several places and people, according to the American School Board Journal (2007), Bill Gates has been leading the charge through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's goal to ensure that every student in the United States graduates from high school ready for college, work, and citizenship. At the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools for the National Governors' Association, Mr. Gates said that our country's high schools were obsolete. After that speech more than half of the states took steps to increase graduation rates and set higher graduation standards…"Political, business, and education leaders convened at a National Education Summit on High Schools in Washington, D.C. in 2005. Later that year, the National Governors Association awarded the first of nearly $24 million in grants to over two dozen states to develop comprehensive high school improvement plans and every governor has signed an unprecedented NGA pact to measure high school graduation rates more accurately" (Jerald, 2006, p. 3). Along with the National Governors Association and the Gates Foundation's commitment to high school reform, President Bush also recently outlined "a $1.5 billion dollar high school initiative to help every high school graduate gain the skills necessary to succeed in college and be competitive in the work force"

(Priesz, 2006, p. 9).   As the national and local attention being given to high school reform continues to increase, high schools will change.   A concern related to this change effort, however, is if the current school leaders are prepared thoroughly enough to lead the monumental task of high school reform.

Another important trend to mention in terms of understanding the changes in schooling from the twentieth to the twenty-first century is the segregation trends occurring in the United States.   According to a report titled "Resegregation in American Schools" (Orfield & Yun, 1999), four trends are having a substantial impact on our school systems:

> 1) The American South is resegregating after two and a half decades in which civil rights law broke the tradition of apartheid in the region's schools and made it the section of the country with the highest levels of integration in its schools.
>
> 2) The data shows continuously increasing segregation for Latino students, who are rapidly becoming our largest minority group and have been more segregated than African Americans for several years.
>
> 3) Large numbers and increasing numbers of African American and Latino students enrolled in suburban schools are faced with serious segregation within these communities particularly in the nation's large metropolitan areas.
>
> 4) There is a rapid ongoing change in the racial composition of American schools and the emergence of many schools with three or more racial groups. The report shows that all racial groups except whites experience considerable diversity in their schools but whites are remaining in overwhelmingly white schools even in regions with very large non-white enrollments. (p. 3)

What much of this research indicates is that within poverty stricken areas, there is a lower educational achievement rate. Again, the polarization continues to occur between the "haves" and the "have-nots" and, in this example, between the whites and the minorities. Orfield and Yun (1999) pointedly agree:

> In a period in which mandatory state tests for graduation are being imposed, college admissions standards are rising, remedial courses in college are being cut back, and affirmative action has already been abolished in our two largest states, the harmful

consequences for students attending less competitive schools are steadily increasing. (p. 3)

If federal action is not taken, the NCLB (2001) legislation will punish students who attend the low-income schools that are not able to meet the accountability standards rather than help them achieve at higher levels. This punishment may include corrective action which includes the removal of some or most of the staff, offering school choice to parents, and turning over the operation of school to state (NCLB, 2001). Overall, the report on resegregation in schools across the country indicates and reiterates the increased concern around the effects of concentrated poverty on student achievement. While poor minorities suffer educationally, 92% of white schools do not face a poverty problem …"This relationship is absolutely central to explaining the different educational experiences and outcomes of the schools" (Orfield & Yun, 1999, p. 16). Even with accountability measures in place, poverty's effect on education in high-minority areas are staggering and debilitating to this country.

While the poverty and minority issues facing schools are large and complex, they also have a drastic effect on educators, especially school leaders. School leaders are challenged by NCLB's adequate yearly progress expectations and the need to bring all students up to proficiency levels by the year 2014 (NCLB, 2001). However, school leaders of schools in high poverty, high minority areas are faced with an even more intense and complicated challenge than those in the white suburban schools.

To summarize, while there has been an obvious progression over the past several decades toward the alignment of content and increased measures of accountability through testing to prepare students for the 21st century, there has also been a fair amount of neglect toward issues facing poverty and minority schools. Several reform efforts as well as population and poverty

trends have created multiple changes to the nature of schooling in the United States. In response to the rapid-fire federal and state mandates and reform initiatives, each level of educator, from teacher to principal to superintendent to university professor, has been affected. The following section of this literature review addresses how the changes in education have affected the principalship.

2.2   DEVELOPING PRINCIPALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

As the government unveiled several reform efforts over the past 50 years, each has affected the role of the principal in different ways. Over the course of time, schools and their leaders have had to change and adjust in order to meet the needs of society and its students (Fenske, 1997). Elmore (2000) tells us that in most respects schools are the same as they have been in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What has remained constant about schooling over the centuries is the basic premise of how schools are internally organized.

In general, the principal has been the person to manage and lead change at the building level. The principal has had to keep the school running smoothly with as few interruptions to the teaching and learning as possible while implementing the necessary changes. In order to accomplish this, principals have had to come up with ways to alleviate teachers being distracted by outside influences, like changes in policies, procedures, or complaints from parents. While teachers' work focuses on the students, the principal has had to manage the outside world of distractions. Principals "stood between the schools and the outside world, both as shields and as spokesmen" (Bamford, 1967, p. 135). Elmore (2000) would agree that principals have also kept this sort of position as protector – although he added that principals also protected the teachers

from outside scrutiny while protecting them from outside distractions. In the past, the formula for accountability was weak, which led to a weakness among the *technical core* of teaching (Elmore, 2000). It also kept principals fairly separate from the technical core of teaching as they managed the school and kept things running smoothly.

Another viewpoint discussed within the research is the separation between the act of teaching and the act of administrating. Peter Hill discusses this view in Marc Tucker and Judy Codding's book *The Principal Challenge* (2002) by describing how educational administration has little to do with education, and how schools are run by leaders "who know very little about the core business of schooling and devote remarkably little time to its core technology" (p. 45). Teachers, on the other hand, haven't fully understood the role of the administrator either. The two roles, although housed in the same place, are very different and require different skill sets. This separation and lack of understanding of one another's roles has added to the complexity of leading schools, building relationships, and improving student achievement.

Although many factors influence teaching and learning, "the game of school learning is won or lost in classrooms" (Sizer, 1984, p. 5). By sheltering the teachers from scrutiny and remaining on the outskirts of the classroom, some believe that the separation of principal from the classroom actually contributed to a decline of the teaching. For example, Elmore (2000) stated "Administration has come to mean not the management of instruction but the management of the structures and processes around instruction" (p. 6). Administrators have been separated from instruction and, therefore, are less aware of educational gaps and problems that may exist within and across classrooms. Without a specific level of accountability to ensure that teachers were teaching what students needed to learn, teaching was left up to the teachers without much monitoring, alignment, discussion, or accountability. By choice or default, the role of the

principal has concentrated on putting out fires and dealing with a myriad of other issues that haven't centered on instruction or working toward high levels of student achievement. This dilemma of the distance between the principalship and teaching and learning, as well as the recognition that the role of principal can be pivotal to student success, has brought about federal and state government legislation that aims to address this gap. As the new accountability system found in No Child Left Behind (2001) is enforced, a need to prepare and develop principals as instructional leaders has emerged as one of education's greatest needs in the 21st century (Elmore, 2000; Iriti & Bickel, 2005; Hill, 2002; Usdan et al., 2000). Now more than ever there is a need for principals to be an intricate part of the instructional program.

2.2.1 NCLB's Influence on the Principalship

As NCLB (2001) has unfolded, it has revealed the need for the principal to take a different role in and among the organization. While the principal has had a dominating presence and large amount of control among the staff, "the hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational structures that have defined schools over the past 80 years are giving way to more decentralized and more professionally controlled systems that can be viewed as a new paradigm for school management" (Murphy, 1991). The emphasis on maintaining and managing the organizational infrastructure continues to shift, now placing more of an emphasis on human relationships, resources, and instruction (Schlechty, 1990; Cuban, 1988; Elmore, 2000). As the expectations for increased student learning continue to change due to legislation like *A Nation at Risk (1983), Goals 2000* and *No Child Left Behind (2001)*, the principal has been relocated "from the apex of the pyramid to the center of the network of human relationships and functions as a change agent and resource" (Chapman & Boyd, 1986, p. 55). Instead of being viewed as a middle manager, the

principal is more likely to be viewed as facilitator/change agent/educational leader; all of which revolve around working with and developing opportunities for people to succeed in a time where accountability is paramount.

While multiple versions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have provided certain levels of ongoing accountability, NCLB has tied student success on high stakes testing directly to principal effectiveness. According to an article in Education Week (September 15, 2004), Marc S. Tucker, the president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, said, "For the first time in the history of American education, with the advent of the accountability movement, bad things happen to school leaders who don't improve student performance, and good things happen to those who do" (p. 3).   Besides the federal government's agendas, other tensions complicate the current role of principal, such as maintaining a balance between being a manager vs. an instructional leader, being a generalist vs. a content-specific expert, balancing responsibilities and authority, and deciding what is most important for the students and school (Iriti & Bickel, 2005; Waters & Grubbs, 2004; Waters et al., 2003; Marzano et al., 2005, Sergiovanni, 1998). The multitude and complexity of tasks and decisions a principal faces often leads to a lack of direct involvement with instruction (Murphy, 1991; Cuban, 1988; Elmore, 2000). A day in the life of a principal involves many tasks such as disciplining students, talking with parents on the phone, arranging for testing, organizing a breakfast for the staff, meeting with the superintendent, ordering supplies, monitoring the cafeteria, mediating an issue between two teachers, finding teachers to cover other classes, issuing detentions to students who are tardy, writing up budgetary proposals, attending a luncheon with the police chiefs of surrounding areas, observing teachers teach and students learn, and so forth. If not preplanned, a principal's daily tasks may not include any long term planning, but instead focus on the

administrative minutia that chokes the position. "Today, most principals are caught in a complicated bureaucratic web. Far too many of our school systems are top-heavy with administration; they are administered to within an inch of their lives. School leadership is crippled by layer upon layer of administration. And, while control is rooted in the need for accountability, the reality is that it makes change in many schools all but impossible" (Boyer, 1983, p. 224).

From this complexity has come a deep need to determine what would be necessary to develop school leaders who can improve student achievement through an atmosphere of collaboration, shared vision, and distributive leadership. This need has driven the policy makers as well as educational organizations and researchers to be proactive in creating different plans for leadership development across the country (Elmore, 2000; Elmore, 2004). As aspect, however, that has been important in educational reform and leadership development but is more difficult to change or develop is the human side of accountability.

2.2.2   The Human Side of Accountability

While the term accountability implies measurement and test scores and has a more quantitative connotation, there is another definition of accountability that is surfacing in the more recent literature. This definition has to do with being accountable to others by building relationships among those in the organization in order to collectively rethink and reform education. Terms like "emotional intelligence", "soft skills" and "building human capacity" are increasingly being used to describe some of the qualities that effective leaders need to motivate employees, create a shared vision within an organization, and lead change. According to Bar-On, Maree, and Elias in

Educating People to be Emotionally Intelligent (2007), people with emotional intelligence demonstrate the following competencies:

- The ability to recognize and understand emotions and to express feelings non-destructively.
- The ability to understand how others feel and relate with them cooperatively.
- The ability to manage and control emotions effectively.
- The ability to manage change and the emotions generated by change, and to adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature.
- The ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated (p. xiv).

When leaders have these emotional intelligence competencies teamed with the core knowledge of their field, they are more likely to improve the organization's culture, communication patterns, and be more effective overall (Tyran, 2007). According to Coyle-Shapiro and others in the book *The Employment Relationship* (2004), employees' global view of the organization is based on a complex mixture of organizational culture and the nature of interactions with others in the organization, including immediate leaders…" (p. 227). Being able to build relationships among and between people while maintaining high quality products (or test scores) is becoming more recognized as critical for leaders and organizations.

References to emotional intelligence are lacking in the literature on school leadership. The area where it is more likely to be found, however, is in the discussion around leadership styles for school leaders. The most direct connection between leadership styles and emotional intelligence is found in the literature around transformational leadership, which is discussed later in this chapter. "The goal of transformational leadership is to intrinsically inspire and motivate followers so that they see accomplishing the leader's vision as a way to find meaning and purpose in their work life. Therefore, inspiring positive affect and emotional experience – both passive and active – is an appropriate goal for a leader" (Tyran, 2007). The ability to connect with others and inspire and motivate them is critical in the role of school leaders, especially in

light of school reform and the need for schools to change and adapt in our rapidly changing world.

In order to help educators face the challenges of change, principals need to have solid understanding of organizational behavior. Challenges that emerge in schools due to reform efforts, new initiatives, turn over, or administrative changes, as defined by Daniel Duke in his book titled *The Challenges of Educational Change* (2004), include: combating complacency; overcoming resistance; inspiring commitment; and providing direction (p. 189). In order for principals to respond to these challenges they need to be able to read and understand people's fears, provide a safe environment for people to voice their fears and concerns, pay attention to the reasons for resistance, inspire teachers and others to implement change by being committed to the meaning behind it, encourage teachers to set individual goals that are meaningful to the them as well as the organization, and work closely with the staff to set a meaningful path toward improvement that will be traveled together (Duke, 2004). All of these skills require high levels of emotional intelligence and the ability to reflect and model desired behaviors. If Daniel Duke's (2004) definition of leadership as that which "helps bring meaning to the relationships between individuals and greater entities – communities, organizations, nations" is accurate, then the softer skills of leadership are as important as the knowledge, testing and measurement side of educational reform (p. 194). Without having the ability to make important human and relational connections to the people with which one works, implementing the mandates and educational reform goals will remain out of reach for many school leaders.

2.2.3 Administrative Standards for School Leaders

In addition to the relational affective aspect of school leadership, the administrative standards were created in order to add consistency and common language to the position across state lines. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) along with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) combined forces to meet the need for consistent language and expectations around school leadership standards across the country. There also was a need for a common guide to school leadership preparation programs across the country. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) created the Interstate School Leaders Consortium (ISLC), consisting of a board of representatives from states and professional associations, who wrote the Administrative standards in 1994-1995 through support by grants funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Danforth Foundation (CCSSO, 2006).

The ISLLC Administrative standards consist of six national standards and 184 indicators that address what principals need to know and should be able to do when they enter the principalship. These standards were created as a result of educators and policy makers working together to address the changing leadership needs of schools and include expectations around creating a shared vision, focusing on quality instruction, managing the organization in a safe way, promoting collaboration among all stakeholders, being politically savvy, and being aware of situations that affect teaching and learning (CCSSO, 2006). The intent of creating these standards was to continue the tradition of working to upgrade the profession of educational leadership in order to prepare and encourage the school leaders of today to create a new vision of educational leadership for schools of tomorrow (CCSSO, 2006). These standards, now used in over 40 states, have become a national model of standards that serve as common language of

leadership expectations across different state policies (Sanders & Simpson, 2005). Due to the ISLLC standards being updated and renamed in March 2008, they are now referred to as the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008.

2.2.4   The Administrative Standards' Influence on Research

Since the creation and adoption of the ISLLC standards, many researchers have continued to narrow the focus on specific leadership development needs for the changing role of the principal. According to the Institute for Educational Leadership's *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship* (Usdan et al., 2000), the 21st century will require a new kind of principal, one whose role will be defined in terms of:

- **Instructional leadership** that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability;
- **Community leadership** manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school's role in society; share leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources; and
- **Visionary leadership** that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside the school building. (p. 4)

While in the past the principalship has been filled with daily management tasks, the position now includes the daily management tasks *and* being an active instructional, community, and visionary leader of the school. Principal involvement in the instructional planning process, including curriculum alignment and overall instructional delivery within the classroom, becomes paramount with this new vision for the principalship (Elmore, 2000; Marzano, 2003; Schmoker, 2006). Although teachers, supervisors, and central office administration are also able to act as instructional leaders, principals are the foundation for instructional leadership at the school level

(Sergiovanni, 1998; Schmoker, 2006). Because principals are in the best position to know all the

stakeholders within their building, they should be well versed in best practices and authentic

pedagogy in order to influence student achievement and provide the necessary support and

direction to teachers concerning curricular and instructional issues (Elmore, 2000; Waters et al.,

2003; Goodwin et al., 2006). Hallinger and Heck (2000) determined that principals influence

school performance by shaping school goals, direction, structure, and organizational and social

networks. The Educational Research Service (2000) found that researchers, policy makers, and

educational practitioners agreed that good school principals are the bedrock of good schools.

The message here is that principals can make a difference in the achievement levels of students

within their schools, and can influence achievement levels positively when they are focused on

what matters.

2.2.5   Balanced Leadership Study

The Balanced Leadership Study (Waters et al., 2003) is a 30-year study that examined the effects

of leadership practices on student achievement. The authors identified 21 leadership

responsibilities that are associated with student achievement. They then created a framework

that includes concrete examples of practices and strategies that would aid principals in becoming

effective school leaders. Within the framework, the authors discussed the importance of how

school leaders view and push for change in their building and/or district, as well as how they

prioritize certain policies, practices, and resources in order to create learning environments that

support people and encourage collaboration (Waters et al., 2003). The results of their study

demonstrated a correlation between student achievement and two variables: 1) whether the

school leaders properly identified and focused on improving school and classroom practices; and

2) whether they understood the magnitude of change they are leading and adjust their leadership practices accordingly (Waters et al, 2003). The study speaks to the use of different leadership practices and how school leaders need to be able to develop many different skill sets in order to have a positive impact on student achievement.

While this study is helpful in identifying areas for principals to focus on, mastering all of the responsibilities can be overwhelming and unrealistic. In another study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, Leithwood and others (2004) expressed a concern about the likelihood that a principal would have the capacity to master all 21 responsibilities. "The estimated effects on student achievement described in the study depend on a leader's improving their capacities across all 21 practices at the same time. This is an extremely unlikely occurrence" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 22). Some of these practices are a matter of personality or beliefs a principal may have. Changing these beliefs or core personality traits would be significantly challenging.

Multiple examples of what principals should know and be able to do exist in the research. Researchers have discussed areas of responsibility in detail around the principalship, which can be grouped into three basic sections. The first group involves *people*. As a leader of a school, the principal is charged with making sure the students are learning what they need to be learning by creating a learning community within the school (Hallinger & Heck, 2000; Leithwood, 1996). The next large section of responsibility is ensuring that all people are focused on the same goals and *share a common vision*. It is the responsibility of the principal to bring people together in order to develop common understandings and common goals (Hallinger & Heck, 2000; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Leithwood, 1996). The third large section of responsibility is *managing the organization* in order for teaching and learning to occur (Hallinger & Heck, 1999; Leithwood, 1996). According to the Leithwood (2004), all of these categories "reflect a transformational

approach to leadership…which has proven useful for educational organizations" (p. 23). What is meant by a transformational approach to leadership is one's ability to build capacity for high performance among all stakeholders involved. While there are many levels of leadership within a district, the building level leader has the responsibility of making sure the students are learning what they need to know for success on the high stakes tests. By incorporating other people into the fold of leading learning in the building, the students have a higher chance for academic success.

2.3   MODELS AND APPROACHES TO PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Various authors have coined terms when talking about leadership. These terms are used across the literature related to principal and superintendent training and professional development for practicing school leaders. While the research on leadership theories and dimensions is extensive, certain descriptions of leadership are more prevalent in the literature. Several researchers refer to how people in leadership positions need to have the ability to use many types of leadership strategies in order to run successful organizations (Waters, et al. 2003; Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001). However, as advised by Davis et al. (2004), "we need to be skeptical about the leadership by adjective" literature. Sometimes these adjectives have real meaning, but sometimes they mask the more important underlying themes common to successful leadership, regardless of the style being advocated" (p. 6). Although there is not one best style of leadership for leading schools, exploring different styles or approaches helps develop of a broad understanding of the multiple dimensions of leadership. Some of the most common descriptions of school leaders are explored here.

2.3.1   Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is the guidance and direction of improved instruction that can lead to higher student achievement (Elmore, 2000; Usdan et al., 2000). Instructional leaders focus on "the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 8).   These leaders know what to look for in the classroom and understand what constitutes effective instruction. Instructional leadership comes in multiple dimensions, including the consistent use of and evidence to support best practices and behaviors. According to Hallinger and his colleagues, instructional leadership consists of three broad categories of leadership practice: defining the school mission; managing the instructional program; and promoting a positive school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).   Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four key responsibilities of instructional leaders: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. Blase and Blase (1999) identified the following in their Reflection-Growth model as necessities for instructional leaders: encouraging and facilitating the study of teaching and learning, facilitating collaborative efforts among teachers, establishing coaching relationships among teachers, using instructional research to make decisions, and using the principles of adult learning when working with teachers.

Principals who have an instructional focus are frequently found in classrooms, talking with teachers and students. They engage in discussions with the teachers and students about the teaching and learning that is taking place in the classroom. According to Elmore (2000), "The skills and knowledge that matter in leadership…are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and student performance" (p. 14). Principals who are instructional leaders understand what effective instruction looks like and can generate conversations around student understanding and instructional delivery methods. Principals who

strive to be instructional leaders are committed to meeting the needs of their schools by serving stakeholders and pursuing shared purposes (Sergiovanni, 1998). Overall, these principals put instruction and curriculum issues first above many of the management issues that affect a school. They also tend to exude the leadership behaviors that impact student achievement through supporting and developing effective teachers and implementing effective organizational processes (Davis et al., 2005). These types of instructional leaders advocate for excellence in student performance in order to build a system of relationships with stakeholders and create positive environments where all students can learn (Hallinger & Heck, 2000). Overall, instructional leaders ensure the consistent use of best practices, create and environment of sharing, and establish common community standards for best practices and good student work.

It is important to note that research findings differ as to whether or not instructional leadership increases student achievement. While the *Balanced Leadership study* by Waters et al. (2003) indicates that principals can influence student learning, other researchers such as Hallinger and Heck (1996) found little evidence of a direct effect from instructional leadership on student achievement, although they did find some indirect positive effects. A possible reason is that "most principals really don't exert much impact on student outcomes because they remain disconnected from the core business of schooling and devote very little time to improving teaching and learning" (p. 54). While it is likely to assume that instructional leaders have a positive impact on student achievement, some of the research is contradictory. As the role of the principalship evolves in the 21st century and becomes more tied to instructional leadership, more research is likely to emerge to speak to the effects on school leadership and student achievement.

2.3.2   Distributive Leadership

Distributive leadership, also known as participative or collaborative leadership, is based on the leader distributing or sharing responsibility with stakeholders in order to improve the system. According to Spillane (2001), the distributed theory of leadership revolves around four ideas: "Leadership tasks and functions, task enactment, social distribution of task enactment, and situational distribution of task enactment" (p. 23).   Spillane (2001) believes that "school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, *stretched over* the school's social and situational contexts" (p. 23).   Therefore, distributed leadership involves many people and aspects within the school environment, including teacher leaders, decision making, and professional development structures and processes.   "If expertise is distributed, then the school rather than the individual leader may be the most appropriate unit for thinking about the development of leadership expertise" (Spillane, 2001, p. 27).   Spillane (2001) sees this approach to leadership as a marriage between people, the environment they are situated in, and the tasks they work together to accomplish.

Building upon the distributive leadership theory is the idea that regardless of how extraordinary great leaders and mangers may be, they are able to create teams of people with complementary strengths (Elmore, 2000; Reeves, 2006).   "The essential challenge of the leader is not attaining perfection but acknowledging imperfection and obtaining complementarities. Rather than develop what they lack, great leaders will magnify their own strengths and simultaneously create teams that do not mimic the leader but provide different and equally important strengths for the organization" (Reeves, 2006).   Just as the old adage says, 'two heads are better than one', this idea holds much potential for principals who are overwhelmed with the responsibility and accountability aspects of their position.   Reeves (2006) builds upon Elmore's

definition of distributed leadership by adding the term "complementary leadership" (p. 28). He speaks of the leader as an architect, using many people to help build a strong foundation within a strong organization. The ultimate challenge of a good leader becomes finding people who complement him/her and bring them into the fold of decision-making, discussions, strategic planning, and more. As Reeves (2006) also points out, "the challenge of the educational organizations is not to make these leaders into perfectly complete beings by filling in their deficiencies, but rather to create an environment in which the leaders are empowered to create complementary teams" (p. 29). With this focus on using the strengths of people within the organization, the potential to make tremendous change in student success increases exponentially.

It is important to note some of the challenging aspects of distributive leadership as well. Because power and influence are shifted to the stakeholders who are included in the specific decision making process(es), it is crucial that those involved have and keep the organization's focus in mind. According to Schlechty (1997), site-based decision-making can either lead to or diminish support for schools. Much of the success of site-based management teams depends on how the team is managed and who is on the team. If members on the team all have the same agenda in mind for the school, like improving gifted education, then they risk making decisions that could be detrimental to other aspects of the school. Schlechty (1997) provides another example, "When the dominant decision makers at schools are parents and teachers and when school sites are the primary locus of decisions, those who pay the majority of taxes – non-parents- may have even less ability to influence the direction of education in their communities and even fewer opportunities for meaningful involvement in matters that really count in the schools than they now have with unresponsive central office bureaucracies" (p. 116). Therefore,

not only are site-based members important, but so are the agendas that they come to the table with. The school leader needs to ensure that their decisions are in the interest of all stakeholders, not just a few; therefore, the balance or complementarities of who is on the team is crucial for success. The framework for the decision-making process within participative leadership can range from administrative control to local control to community control (Savery et al., 1992). School leaders may use participative or collaborative leadership in order to build support and satisfaction among all stakeholders while remaining aware of its pitfalls.

2.3.3   Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership should be "the commitments and capacities of organizational members" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 9). Leithwood's study (1999) also mentions this type of leadership encompassing charismatic, visionary, cultural and empowering concepts. Burns (1978) claimed that transformational leadership represented the transcendence of self-interest by the leader and those being led. Dillard (1995) described transformational leadership as the person having the ability to "reach the souls of others in a fashion which raises human consciousness, builds meanings and inspires human intent that is the source of power" (p. 560). Leithwood (1994) identified several factors that make up transformational and transactional leadership, including: building school vision; establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; modeling best practices and important organizational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Transformational leaders aspire to "increase members' efforts on behalf of the organization, as well as develop more skilled practice" (p. 20).   Overall,

transformational leadership focuses on building capacity for high performance among all stakeholders, especially students.

2.3.4 Moral Leadership

Moral leadership focuses on the morals, values and ethics of the person leading and how they are central to leadership practices (Evers & Lakomski, 1991; Greenfield, 1991; Bates, 1993). These leaders act with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of the people around them. Because morals, values and ethics can be very personal, there are concerns around moral leadership as well. The success of this type of leader will depend upon the nature of the values of the leader and how conflicts involving values can be resolved within the organization (Leithwood, 1999). Another perspective on moral leadership focuses on the nature of the relationships of those within the organization, and how power is distributed between stakeholders within and outside of the organization. "Values central to this form of leadership are derived from democratic theory, and give credit to wide participation of organizational stakeholders as a reflection of the society in which we live" (Leithwood, 1999, p 11). Running a school or school district by one's own values, however, can discredit them if their values differ from those within the organization.

2.3.5 Situational leadership

Situational leadership depends on the leader's ability to "read" the followers and to adjust his/her leadership style based on the followers' willingness to perform a task (Hersey et al., 2001). This style of leadership ranges from having to *tell* followers what to do if they are

unwilling to perform a task, *participating* in the task through guidance and concrete direction, *persuading* the followers to engage in the task, and/or *delegating* responsibility of a task to followers (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 17). Situational leadership requires the leader to be able to read and respond to the unique organizational circumstances in relation to the nature and preferences of the workers, the organization, and the tasks to be completed. Situational leadership calls upon the leader's ability to solve problems, be cognitive aware of the situation, and to be reflective in one's own practice (Leithwood et al., 1996). This leadership style, in essence, lends itself to other leadership approaches depending on the context of the situation. By using a situational leadership approach, the leader takes into account the severity of an issue and is able to transform her strategies or tactics to address the need at hand.

2.3.6   A Different Perspective on Leadership

While reviewing several different types of leadership styles and theories, the research by McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) from The Center for Creative Leadership offers another perspective that is valuable for leaders within any organization. They recommend a comprehensive approach to leadership that includes "developing connections between individuals, between collectives within an organization, and between the organization and key constituents and stakeholders in its environment" (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004, p. 19). The emphasis within their work speaks to looking at the multiple dimensions of the organization rather than just the leadership within the organization. Developing collaborative teams of people to help make decisions and contribute to the work within schools will continue to be important in creating effective schools. As they work with organizations over time, McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) have witnessed the limitations of an organization when the focus is strictly on

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individual leadership development. "Individual leaders can no longer accomplish leadership tasks by virtue of their authority or their own leadership capacity. Instead, individuals and groups need to carry out the leadership tasks together in a way that integrates differing perspectives and recognizes areas of interdependence and shared work" (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004, p. 20). In order to accomplish this, they recommend focusing on creating well-developed connections between individuals and their relationships around shared work. People within organizations need to get better at "integrating the learnings into a unified sense of purpose and direction, new systems, and coherent shifts in culture – that is, to enact leadership together through the connections between individuals, groups, and organizations" (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004, p. 21). By creating partnerships around what is most important in schools, stakeholders must work together to reform schools while minimizing the hierarchical power struggles that currently exist in the school organizations. Leaders who can let go of top down leadership styles and work to build relationships and connections among all involved will have a better opportunity to create the schools our students need.

Many approaches to leadership styles are evident in the literature. While people may adopt one leadership style that fits them best, now there is research to support how different leadership styles can and should be practiced in different situations. While it may seem to the reader that one leadership approach is more comfortable than the other, it is important to understand that each of these approaches are not necessarily competing with each other, nor are they definitive. What the research indicates is that successful leaders need to know when to use which leadership approach. Although this may be difficult, one of the ways to determine which leadership approach to use in which situation may rest upon how well the leader knows the people with whom she works, which again is one of the recommended leadership qualities that is

found within the Balanced Leadership Study (Waters et al., 2003) and supports the human side to accountability concept. Fullan (2001) defines effective leadership as

> 1) having an explicit "making-a-difference" sense of purpose, 2) using strategies that mobilize many people to tackle tough problems, 3) being held accountable by measured and debatable indicators of success, and 4) being ultimately assessed by the extent to which it awakens people's intrinsic commitment, which is none other than the mobilizing of everyone's sense of moral purpose (21).

Overall, it is important for school leaders to be familiar and comfortable with different approaches to and definitions of leadership in order to lead an organization toward collaboration with a focus on improving student achievement.

2.4   DEVELOPING PRINCIPALS THAT SCHOOLS NEED

Training educators to become effective school leaders is imperative to school success and has stemmed from the needs that policies have created over time. Because principals have the power to influence school performance and guide school policies, procedures, and practices that contribute directly to student learning, the depth of training needed is extensive (Usdan et al., 2000, p. 6). Universities cannot fully prepare principals for the position because so much of the learning happens on the job. Therefore, the development of principals cannot continue to be "the neglected stepchild of state and district professional development efforts. It must be standards-focused, sustained, intellectually rigorous, and embedded in the principal's workday" (Sparks, 2002, p. 8-5). Developing principals should continue to occur through the school districts, where learning opportunities are relevant and job-embedded.

Several organizations have devoted a substantial amount of time and resources to determining the type of school leadership necessary to run schools in the 21st century. The Institute for Educational Leadership's publication *School Leadership for the 21st Century* (2000) sought to raise public awareness about the critical problems facing educational leadership. It also called upon partners from education, government, business, civic groups, and other organizations to work together to tackle leadership issues within the educational system. The Wallace Foundation has also focused much of its efforts on providing research around school leadership preparation and development programs in many of their initiatives like the *School Leadership Study* (2005). McREL's researchers in their *Balanced Leadership study* have made a statement in the context of their work about the complexities of the principalship, as well as applications and implications of their study (2003). The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) provides direction for how to develop teachers and administrators, and offers publications on that specific topic, like Dennis Sparks' on-line book titled *Designing Powerful Professional Development for Teachers and Principals* (2002). Anthony Alvarado, former superintendent of New York City 's District 2, noted during his presentation at the NSCD 1999 Annual Conference, "The truth is that the preparation of supervisors makes the preparation of teachers look outstanding. Principals and vice principals and superintendents rarely have good places to learn" (Sparks, 2000, p. 2). Experts within the field are making strong claims about the crisis that our schools leaders are facing in this era of accountability and increasingly competitive global market. In the absence of strong school leadership and meaningful opportunities for them to grow and develop, educational reform is at risk.

2.4.1 Learning from Professional Development for Teachers

Before delving too deeply into what constitutes effective principal professional development, it is important to explore the components of adult learning, specifically how it relates to professional development for teachers. Teachers have been the focus of professional development more than principals have so it makes sense to explore what research already exists about how teachers learn best. Additionally, due to NCLB's requirements that all students meet high standards, there is a need for high-quality professional development for teachers (See NCLB definition of professional development in Appendix A). The NCLB Act (2001) provides recommendations for professional development, stating that they should include activities that focus on improving teacher content knowledge and understanding of effective instructional strategies, the content standards, classroom management skills, are not short term or one-day workshops, and include instruction on data and assessments to inform classroom practice. Because NCLB has formalized professional development requirements, opportunities and research on what exists and what should exist abound in the literature. For instance, several recommended professional development activities are discussed in the *Teacher Quality Toolkit 2nd Edition* and speak to providing teachers with meaningful opportunities to engage in new ideas and learn new instructional strategies through collaboration and reflective inquiry with colleagues, as well as providing them with enough time, follow-up support, and feedback from successful practitioners (Lauer et al., 2005). These types of professional development opportunities are more likely to impact student achievement if the experience is of high quality and relevant to the learner.

In addition to the recommended activities, there are specific characteristics of model professional development programs. Guskey (2003) has analyzed several characteristics of

effective professional development programs and identified the most common elements among them, including opportunities that:

- Increase content and pedagogical knowledge

- Provide sufficient time

- Promote collegiality and collaborative exchange

- Explain evaluation procedures

- Show how activities align with other initiatives

- Focus on school-based activities

- Develop leadership capacity

- Take into consideration the identified teacher needs

Also noted in the research on school-level winners of the National Award for Model Professional Development was the importance of the development of a professional learning community (Lauer et al., 2005). Specific patterns emerged out of the research that indicated how the winners worked to develop a culture of learning. These patterns included the use of clear, agreed-upon student achievement goals to focus and shape teacher learning, an expanded array of professional development opportunities, on-going, informal learning embedded into the school culture, a highly-collaborative school environment where people solved problems together and learned from one another, and the use of student assessment data (Lauer et al., 2005). This culture of learning within a professional learning community "provides an environment in which teachers can work collectively and collaboratively to examine instructional practice, improve their effectiveness, and increase student achievement…but it is not easy. It takes commitment and time to break the pattern of teacher isolation that is common in many schools and to develop

new ways of working together " (Lauer et al., 2005, p. 26).   Success becomes evident as educators work together and focus on student achievement as a community, and it takes multiple forms of leadership to set this vision and create a culture for learning.

Interestingly, in much of the research on teacher professional development, there are several references to principals and teachers learning together.   This may be an important addition to consider as school leaders develop learning opportunities for both teachers and principals with an over arching goal of developing a professional learning community for all.

2.4.2   What Principal Professional Development Lacks

If we compare the elements of professional development of teachers to that of principals, obvious gaps become apparent.   Within the research on professional development for principals are findings that support the statement that what currently exists is lacking quality (Usdan et al., 2000).   The sporadic training that is offered doesn't address many current issues around developing principals as instructional leaders, is separated from building level goals, and is not occurring within a professional learning community. Although opportunities abound, the quality of the experiences tied directly to improving instruction is less than desirable (Davis et al., 2005; Mahon, 2003).   "Only a few years ago, professional development for principals consisted mostly of "chalk and talk". "Experts" presented and principals reacted" (Mohr, 1998, p. 41).   Many professional development opportunities exist as one-time workshops, where an expert presents the material but there isn't an active learning component to the experience. "Principal development, which traditionally has been given an even lower priority by school systems than teacher development, too often turns participants into passive recipients of information rather than active participants in solving important educational problems" (Sparks, 2002, p. 8-2).   In

order to create learning opportunities that are more meaningful for principals, there should be an active and relevant component to the learning.

Another aspect affecting effective professional development for principals is the way it is viewed by the principal. Many principals have a difficult time justifying being out of the building for their own learning. "Many principals are initially reluctant to leave their "work" in schools to get together to learn. They feel it is a luxury and perhaps even selfish" (Mohr, 1998, p. 42). These time and guilt factors play a large part in the reason why principals don't want to leave their building for outside learning opportunities. They feel responsible for their building and leaving it for several hours makes many feel uncomfortable. However, effective principals need to continue to be learners and participate in learning if they want to successfully lead change, address improvement issues, and if they expect their staff to do the same. Learning starts with the leader.

Not only should relevant learning opportunities occur within a principal's regular practice, they should also be focused on how to implement the consistent use of best practices and how to build professional learning communities (Elmore, 2000; Sparks, 2002). "Few principals and teachers have had serious and sustained opportunities to cultivate the skills associated with instructional leadership and the building of professional communities" (Sparks, 2002, p. 8-1). Principals need to know how to talk with teachers about effective strategies in order to meet the needs of students in the class and help instruct the teachers on meaningful methods of instruction. They also need to be able to compare achievement rates of their students by "examining the data, finding disparities in performance, and developing an instructional plan to eliminate them" (Murphy & Schiller, 1992, p. 38). Leading change and reform efforts is another area in which principals, especially secondary principals, would benefit from

professional development (Priesz, 2006). Currently, principals may understand the need to use data to drive instruction and decision-making to push reform efforts, but many are not receiving enough in-depth training on how to accomplish that task. Although the needs should be clear, "most educational administrators have little or no opportunity to receive meaningful training in these areas…They are rarely taught the analytical skills required for diagnosing a program's strengths and weaknesses, understanding data, and making trade-offs among competing programs" (Murphy & Schiller, 1992, p. 38). Working to understand the data and how to use it to make educationally sound decisions would be an important piece of professional development for principals.

Overall, principal professional development seems to lack relevance to personal and organizational needs and goals, is not focused on problem solving but is rather more of a passive experience, and is in direct competition with a principal's availability and time. Because principals are under the accountability microscope, it is very important that they have meaningful professional learning opportunities that are job-embedded, focused on needs of the school, involve collaboration among colleagues, and align to district and personal professional goals. Several organizations, educational institutes and agencies have recommended specific professional development strategies that elicit sustained growth and improvement in areas such as instructional and visionary leadership.

2.4.3   Recommended Methods for Professional Development

Ultimately, local school districts must assume the responsibility for improving school-level administration (Murphy & Schiller, 1992; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sparks, 2002).   Principal professional development should focus on the every day work of principals and be supplemented

by job-embedded learning. School systems that are serious about student learning and the quality of teaching will ensure that all principals are learners.

There are several different ways the in-service professional development learning opportunities can be structured for principals. Recommended are the long-term, in-house, planned experiences that focus on student achievement, reflection, and relationship building (Educational Research Service's *Informed Educator Series*, 1999; Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). The recommended methods include developing professional learning communities through ongoing study groups, regular visits to one another's schools within the district, and frequent in-school coaching on critical skill areas (DuFour, 2004; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000; Hoffmann & Johnston, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Houston, 2001).

Schools need principals who are able to build communities of practice that ensure the highest levels of student achievement. When principals create opportunities for faculty to participate with colleagues in job-embedded, long-term, data-driven professional development focused on student achievement, they are creating a professional learning community and a culture of learning for all stakeholders. According to the National Education Service's *Professional Learning Communities that Work: Best practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (1999) featuring DuFour and Eaker

> A school that is a professional learning community has a culture unlike any school of the past. The creation and maintenance of this culture is the foundation for change and improvement. It is also the hardest part of the improvement effort. An organization's culture rests upon attitudes, values, and habits of mind that can take a long time to develop and internalize (p. 5).

In order to create a professional learning community within a school, the principal needs to share or distribute some of the leadership responsibilities. Sharing the decision making and tapping into those willing to take on some leadership responsibilities can help create a culture of learning

in the organization. There are several steps a principal can take, according to Barth (1988), to help foster a culture of learning: "The principal should articulate the goal of the school, relinquish the power, empower and entrust, involve teachers before decisions are made, carefully consider which responsibility goes to whom, share responsibility for failure, permit the teacher to enjoy responsibility success, recognize that all teachers can lead, and be willing to say "I don't know" (p. 137-141). By developing professional learning communities where leadership is shared, a professional culture in schools can exist. "Professionalism and shared leadership are one in the same" (Barth, 1988, p. 147). By taking this shared leadership approach, more people become involved and invested in creating a school environment that ensures student success.

A recommended strategy to help principals build a community of learners is through the use of study groups. Study groups usually involve a group of educators who are interested in focusing their learning on a specific topic due to a need or an interest they have for improving student achievement. According to Birchak et al. (1998), a study group is not a staff meeting or an in-service, but rather a group of people who voluntarily commits to studying a topic of interest while building a sense of community, challenging each other's thinking as educators, and integrating theory and practice. Birchak et al. (1998) describe several types of study groups, including school-based groups, topic-centered groups, professional book discussion groups, and job-alike groups. Each of these groups decides on their focus of discussion and scheduled meeting times. "While the groups may be school-based, job-alike, or topic centered and function as a discussion group, all groups share the focus on transforming teaching through dialogue and reflection and on creating a sense of community among teachers" (Birchak et al., 1998, p. 28).

The use of study groups where principals and teachers consider problems, research some solutions, and change their practice because of their findings can greatly enhance teaching and

learning within the school and classroom. "This sense of organizing ourselves through study groups, action research groups, or a wide variety of practitioner-related structures is essential to making progress in organizations" said Alverado (1999). Several benefits may occur through the use of study groups because the group focuses their work on a specific need that they have identified. The study group format for professional development "has the capacity to survive trends, district policies, and 'musical chair games' with administrative personnel. A study group has this rare capacity because 1) it does not depend on external agencies to initiate or maintain it; and 2) it does not have to assume responsibility for implementing the vision of remote, un-invested parties" (Birchak et al, 1998, p. 143). Because study groups can stand the test of time and pendulum swings in education, it is a very viable option for long-term professional development in schools. Through study groups, the educators involved enhance their own learning and teaching practices that carry over into the classroom and can impact student achievement tremendously.

Another recommended strategy found within the research is the use of coaching. Coaching can be traced back to the field of psychology and is prevalent in business executive development programs. According to e-Lead: Leadership for Student Success, a partnership of the Laboratory for Student Success and the Institute for Educational Leadership (2006), "Coaching is a process that equips people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities to be effective in their work and organization. This strategy distinguishes itself from training insofar as it is seen as a process rather than an event – it is a vehicle for analysis, reflection, and action that ultimately enables the person to achieve success" (p. 1). Coaching is based on a collaborative partnership between a coach and an individual willing and ready to engage in work to develop his or her skills to their full potential.

Within the field of education, the practice of coaching has been mentioned as a recommended method to use to help develop new and veteran principals in dimensions of leadership and problem solving as they tackle the demands of the job. Because there is a fear of fewer quality people going into school administration, several researchers believe that providing a more comprehensive professional development plan for school leaders that includes coaching will ensure the future success of our schools and our nation in years to come (Bloom et al, 2005; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000).   A multitude of organizations and researchers support and/or recommend coaching as a strategy to help develop school leaders, including the *School Leadership Study* (Davis et al., 2005), *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship* (Usdan et al., 2000), Sparks & Hirsch's *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn* (2006), Tucker and Codding's *The Principal Challenge* (2002), NISL's *New Institution to Train School Leaders*, The Accelerated Schools Project (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p.337), and LIFT – Chicago Principals and Administrators Association Professional Development Programs for the Chicago Public Schools (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p. 328).

One of the more important aspects of coaching is the understanding among participants that it is not a "how-to" strategy. Coaching is a "how to get there" process, not a "where to go" process (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p. 99), similar to the "guide on the side" versus the "sage on the stage" philosophy we often hear about in the teaching profession. Coaches are to help the administrator think about multiple solutions to the dilemmas they face by brainstorming many solutions with them rather then telling them what to do. School leadership coaches should take a facilitative approach by stimulating learning through questioning, providing feedback, and helping to analyze perceptions and behaviors (Bloom et al., 2005). It is also important to note that if the organization is headed in the wrong direction, behavioral coaching will not really help.

Anthony Alverado, deputy chancellor of the San Diego Unified School District, advocates for the use of coaching in schools. Alverado (Sparks, 2000) stated

> You cannot change behavior, change practice in organizations, without large-scale coaching by people who know the content, who know how to do it, and who know how to help people learn. At the heart of it is the simple notion that you need someone working with you to model, to give feedback, to assist in the actual trying of the new practice to support in the ongoing habituation of new practice. It is impossible to improve practice without access to high quality coaching (p. 1).

The relationship that the administrator and the coach create is an important one. The people coaching and being coached should have ongoing conversations about the expectations of their relationship, confidentiality, meeting times and frequency, commitments to being open with one another, and communication practices (Bloom et al., 2005). "Coaching bridges the gap between what managers are being asked to do and what they have been trained to do…As [organizations] shift away from a traditional top-down, command-and-control organization structure, coaches teach managers how to motivate rather than command, as well as how to communicate with workers and elicit their opinions" (Bloom et al., 2005, p.117). As school leaders work to build a community of learners within their schools, the use of the coaching strategy can help them develop a comprehensive approach to shared leadership.

2.5   RESPONSES FROM THE FIELD

The literature supports how changes in schooling and accountability have drastically affected the role and responsibilities of the principal. One of the results from the NCLB challenge is the need for more training for those people running the organizations. Many organizations have been working to address the needs of principals through pre-service and in-service programming.

While pre-service education is not the focus of this literature review, it is important to note that many of the established needs are being addressed in university pre-service courses. Universities and colleges across the nation have been adapting their coursework to reflect the administrative standards and issues caused by the reauthorization of NCLB (2001). The actions that state policy makers and universities have been taking are reinforcing the importance of creating or redesigning principal training opportunities that align to the state's licensure standards, focus on curriculum and instruction, and incorporate school-based experiences in leading school improvement just to name a few (SREB, 2004). Universities are faced with competition for students from one another and from national initiatives, like the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) (Tucker & Codding, 2002). As states and universities continue to define their role in their pre-service programs focused on preparing school leaders, agencies and institutions have been creating in-service training for those already in the field.

What follows are some of the examples found across the nation, which focus on in-service professional development opportunities for school leaders. These examples give the reader a snapshot of what is happening across the country to develop leaders that our schools need in order for our country to remain competitive in a global society. The examples begin with a national curriculum for developing school leaders then move to examples of professional development plans for different states and finally end with local examples of what is happening in Southwestern Pennsylvania. While there are overlapping practices and strategies being used in many of the following examples, it is evident that educational individualism within organizational plans is still very much a part of the institution.

2.5.1   A National Response

After processing and synthesizing the NCLB requirements for professional development for school leaders, the ISSLC standards and determining what school leaders need to know, the next step in many national organizations, like *Standards for School Leaders* and the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), has been to create professional development opportunities for principals in order to address the growing need for leadership development in schools (Goodwin et al., 2006).   This effort to create learning opportunities for school leaders is currently a predominant trend across the nation and is being felt by universities, colleges, and many educational agencies.   This trend, which is a response to the established needs and policies of NCLB and other federal legislation, is changing pre-service and in-service education training programs alike across the nation.

An example of a national comprehensive professional development/leadership training program is available from the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL).   This organization, with the help of other organizations, has recently developed a school leadership training program titled the *New Institution to Train School Leaders*.   The mission of NISL's program, headquartered in Washington, D.C. and managed by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), is to "enable principals to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to produce substantial gains in student achievement in their schools" (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p. 393).   In order to accomplish this mission, NISL has worked with well over one hundred educators (superintendents, principals, university professors, agency directors, etc.), many whom are quoted within this literature review, to develop an extensive plan that includes partnering with districts and local universities to create training opportunities for teams of educators who will then go into schools and train and work closely with principals. Tucker and Codding's book

titled *The Principal Challenge* (2002) includes several different chapters by prominent educators and researchers that explain why such a program is needed. While NISL is directly involved with organizing the partnerships, developing the curriculum, and providing technical assistance, it is the school districts' and their partners' responsibility to provide the faculty and coaches to train principals and redesign the job as it is currently.

NISL's core role in this endeavor has been to create an extensive curriculum that works to address the needs of school leaders. The curriculum is designed to "support the development of principals who see their task not as keeping school but as creating a new kind of high-performance school dedicated to bringing all of its students up to an internationally benchmarked standard or performance as quickly as possible" (Tucker & Codding, 2002, p. 395). The curriculum will be delivered in a classroom setting and on-line via the Web. Another important aspect of the NISL curriculum is that there is a strong coaching component affiliated with it. Therefore, a coach will assist principals who are involved in the NISL courses.

The NISL curriculum includes 4 courses, with three or four units in each, that are to be taught locally to principals and aspiring principals over two years. Along with the courses, principals are also expected to participate summer training sessions and in local study groups during the year. The courses and units available over the two-year period include:

Course 1 – World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals

- o Unit 1 – The Educational Challenge
- o Unit 2 – Standards-Based Instructional Systems
- o Unit 3 – The Principal as Strategic Thinker
- o Unit 4 – The Principal as School Designer
  Course 2 – Focusing on Teaching and Learning

- o Unit 5 – The Foundations of Effective Learning
- o Unit 6 – Leadership for Excellence in Literacy
- o Unit 7 – Leadership for Excellence in Mathematics
- o Unit 8 – Promoting Professional Knowledge

Course 3 – Developing Capacity and Commitment

- o Unit 9 – The Principal as Instructional Leader
- o Unit 10 – The Principal as Team Builder
- o Unit 11 – Creating a Culture That Is Ethical, Results-Oriented, and Professional
  Course 4 – Driving for Results

- o Unit 12 – The Principal as Driver of Change
- o Unit 13 – Managing for Results
- o Unit 14 – Standards-Based reform Project (p. 404)

The funding for the NISL training has been presented as a shift of current funds rather than a need for more funds. Rather than reimbursing for graduate classes, school districts would now use that money to pay for the NISL curriculum and implementation plan. Tucker and Codding (2002) explain this rationale as better than what districts are doing currently because they would have more control over the type of training aspiring principals are receiving, as well as who is selected to enter the school leadership development program. Tucker & Codding (2002) also lay out the advantages for this type of design:

- It focuses on the most important goal – finding and training leadership needed to put a more effective system into place.
- It ties training to district goals – professional development for leaders is tied to school goals, strategies, and their own system.
- It deals with the problem of the undoable job – it aligns schools with the government as they move toward standards-based, results-oriented policy systems by raising principals' pay, restructuring the job, and strengthening the principal's authority.
- It brings universities into the fold – Local universities have seats on the local teams, and their faculty members will be members of the faculty for the local training of school leaders. They will be teaching a national curriculum, but they may add to it and offer their own credits, certificates, and degrees to those who complete part or all of NISL's curriculum (p. 397).

NISL'S *New Institution to Train School Leaders* came about due to several philanthropic institutions voicing a concern about the prospects of leadership in the schools (Tucker & Codding, 2002). The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) joined forces

with many of the foundations across the country, namely the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the New Schools Venture Fund, and the U.S. Department of Education to address the problem at hand. They set out to create a comprehensive, research-based program that would address the growing needs of schools and school leaders. While their plan is thorough and grounded in research and best practices, it is also expensive and likely to set off a huge debate among universities, states, and professional organizations and agencies. The main issue here is that NISL has privatized professional development for school leaders and packaged the curriculum so that it may be easily outsourced. For instance, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has purchased two modules of the NISL curriculum to use in their Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership - Grow and Support program for principals, while the southwestern Pennsylvania's Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) has based some of their training curriculum on different aspects of the topics discussed in the NISL modules. Granted, this form of outsourcing and capitalism is a reality that educators will need to address and assess for themselves. What results from this professional development package, however, may affect educators in terms of certification issues, other available training programs, and funding for universities. It is possible that this national curriculum will lead to major changes in the way that educators, especially school leaders, are prepared to run schools.

2.5.2   Various State Responses

Currently, several different types of opportunities for principal professional development exist outside of school districts. Many of these opportunities vary widely in style, format, content, and focus. Some initiatives are associated with universities, while others are statewide initiatives and need to follow state funding guidelines. Many of the initiatives mentioned below do have a

focus on instructional leadership, which has been a lacking in the past. Others focus on building capacity among schools by including principals, teachers, and parents in training sessions.

According to the Council of Chief State School Officers website, several states are involved in the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) which focuses on developing and supporting leaders in an educational system and changing the conditions of leadership at all levels of the state system to improve student achievement (CCSSO, 2001). The 22 states currently involved in this project are Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) has identified areas where state action can make a difference, including setting the direction and priorities, expanding the candidate pool, enhancing administrator training and professional development, setting licensure, certification, and accreditation requirements enhancing the conditions of practice, and allocating legal authority (CCSSO, 2001).

Specifically, *Kentucky's State-wide Continuous Professional Development Learning Program(s)* includes the work of the Kentucky Department of Education in developing a professional development program that focuses on improving instruction and leadership in public schools. These programs work to help educators meet goals set by Kentucky's legislation; engage educators in learning opportunities that foster collaboration and collegiality; and provide support for practice of newly acquired skills (CCSSO, 2001).

Each of these states that are involved in SAELP recognize the importance of professional development for educators and school leaders. Each state creates their own plan for professional development within the guidelines, but what is evident is that many of these states are focused on

the same broad strategies that are known to build capacity within schools. What are lacking from the examples are specific activities and practices within these professional development plans that prove to be effective in raising student achievement. The states involved with the SAELP project are providing a framework for professional development rather than the specifics. Therefore, given the framework, it remains the responsibility of the leaders within the school district and other agencies to create professional development opportunities that develop the teachers and school leaders who can move schools forward in the 21st century.

2.5.3   One District's Response

While many school districts have adapted the professional development requirements to suit their learning community, one district stands out among the literature as an exemplary model: Community School District #2, New York City. While this school district is unique in many ways, their commitment to developing principals with an instructional focus is admirable. Through several different learning opportunities for principals, District #2 administrative leadership created an in-house, job-embedded professional development structure that keeps instruction and learning as its top priority while creating a community of learners through collaboration, visitation, and discussion (Elmore & Burney, 2000). According to Elmore and Burney (2000), their district-wide formal structures for developing current and new principals include principal conferences, school-based staff developers, principal site visits, principal study groups, new principal support groups and mentors.

The District #2 plan for developing principals is extensive and intense. The examples above are elements of professional development that any school district could put in place to some degree, but what should remain essential is the very clear focus on instruction. When

principals are able to learn together and talk about the core of teaching and learning, they begin to understand deeply what good instruction looks like and how to work with teachers in order to help them deliver the best instruction possible to their students. The professional learning community that exists in District #2 is certainly a model to be followed as district administration work to develop instructionally focused principals.

The point in mentioning each of these opportunities is to demonstrate how many different organizations are involved in creating learning opportunities for school leaders. As is evident across many of these initiatives is the separation or isolation that continues to occur based on the institute implementing the professional development. Educating people is a business, regardless of who the students are. Because of this sense of capitalism among educational agencies and organizations, isolationism continues among those creating learning opportunities for adults. Just as isolationism in the classroom is an impediment to improvement, so is the act of isolationism among many of the educational institutions and agencies. While the NISL curriculum mentioned earlier aims to alleviate the scattered approach to developing school leaders that is found across the country, universities and other agencies continue to develop their own plans for helping local school leaders improve. Meanwhile, as the educational agencies and universities wrestle and compete with one another to provide the best professional development plan, individual districts are benefiting from the research and are beginning to develop individual plans that are tailored to their needs and goals for improving student achievement.

2.5.4   Various Responses from within Pennsylvania

In 1999, then Governor Ridge signed Act 48 into state law stating that professional education was required for school personnel, and stemmed from the previous requirements for professional

development already established (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2006). Act 48 requires that all educators complete six college credits or the equivalent every five years and that the professional education experience must be aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The law also states that each school entity must submit a three-year professional development plan to the state department of education for approval. Act 48 applies to administrators as well as all teachers.

The state defines what criteria the professional educator should meet in order to satisfy the Act 48 requirements. The experiences should provide opportunities where educators learn about best practices that can change their practice, address organizational goals, and provide sufficient support over time to mast new skills (PDE, 2006). Some of the key components in professional development that the state department recommends are keeping a focus on the academic standards and developing learning communities while addressing the school's needs through continuous improvement efforts (PDE, 2006).

As the urgency for school leadership development has increased over the past 10 – 20 years, different agencies, organizations, and institutions have organized learning experiences that intend to move principals from managers to leaders with an emphasis on instruction. Below are just a few of the initiatives currently available in Pennsylvania, most located in Southwestern Pennsylvania:

Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative (PIL) is a current statewide, standards based leadership development and support system for school leaders at all levels (PDE, 2006). Its intention is to build capacity among school leaders by focusing on what they need to know and do in order to facilitate instructional improvement and increase student achievement (Baughn, 2006). The program's core standards focus on creating an organizational vision; using

standards-based systems reform theory and design, and making data-driven decisions, and the six "corollary" standards are regionally determined (Baughn, 2006). These standards are the basis for two different Inspired Leadership Initiative programs: The "Grow" program for newer principals with four or fewer years of experience and involves coursework and dialogue based on the National Institute for School Leadership's (NISL) curriculum; and the "Support" program for principals or other administrators with more than three years experience, with curriculum relating to the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Center (PLDC) and other practices identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This initiative is housed in eight regions throughout the State and is located in the intermediate units, which are educational agencies of the State. Each region has its own coordinator and Advisory Committee to assist in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Initiative. Recently, legislation was passed that requires all administrators at all levels to complete the PIL program in order to renew their certification, ensuring that all administrators will have been trained in the same content across the state.

Lenses on Learning, which is organized through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit as part of the Math Science Partnership and is partially funded by the National Science Foundation, is professional development for school leaders who work with math teachers and observe and evaluate instruction in this areas (Grant et al., 2006). According to the Allegheny Intermediate Unit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, "Lenses on Learning" is a research-based program, developed by the Educational Development Center, that helps administrators develop the skills necessary to support effective mathematics teaching and learning through observation and supervision. "Lenses on Learning" consists of two strands: Developing a personal knowledge base about the terrain of leadership for mathematics education; and Connecting Data to school-based practices

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(Grant et al., 2006). Once school leaders in our region have attended the ten Lenses on Learning sessions on math instruction, they may then attend ten sessions on science instruction called "Eyes on Science". School leaders work to develop a solid understanding of what high quality math and science instruction looks like, how assessment can support learning and instruction in these areas, how we can help all students learn math and science, and more. "Lenses on Learning" is a national initiative with pilot sites in Albuquerque, Colorado Springs, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, University of Missouri, and West Virginia (Grant et al., 2006). The Allegheny Intermediate Unit has had Lenses on Learning in place since the 2003 – 2004 school year.

The Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, housed at the University of Pittsburgh in the School of Education and funded by local foundations, offers ongoing professional development to individual principals with a focus on differentiated supervision and instructional leadership. Principals are recommended for the Academy by their superintendents or seek to participate on their own. Cohorts are created as professional learning communities. Each cohort moves through sessions that are held once a month over a two-year period. Based on personal experience, The Principals Academy emphasizes individual development as an instructional leader and provides discussion around ways to monitor teaching and learning, create a community of learners, and increase the instructional rigor within the classroom.

In order to create bridges between multiple institutions and reduce the isolationism among educational agencies, a few non-profit foundations in southwestern Pennsylvania have pulled different organizations together to ensure that they work together toward a common vision. This plan is known in the region as the *Educational Leadership Initiative* (ELI). This initiative was created out of a need for a comprehensive professional development plan among school districts, institutions, and agencies in the region. The directorate of ELI is made up of

education professors and/or retired school administrators and an organizational management specialist, along with advisory groups including the local foundations, local educational agencies, and practicing superintendents, principals, and educators. These groups determined that most school districts in Western Pennsylvania lacked a comprehensive, systemic, and integrated leadership development plan, that enabled principals, teacher leaders, and superintendents to exercise effective instructional leadership to improve student learning (Goodwin et al., 2006, p. 1). Their intention is to focus on data-based instructional leadership, vision-based organizational leadership and authentic pedagogy and assessment with participating school districts to achieve the primary goal of changing the leadership practices of principals, teacher leaders and superintendents in key competency areas that impact the school system and student achievement (Goodwin et al., 2006).

A key element to ELI will be their use of the coaching model to support and enhance leadership within the participating school districts. ELI is referring to coaches as "Colleagues in Residence". These people will be selected by the ELI Directorate based upon a determined evidence of competency and results in areas such as successful instructional leadership, good interpersonal skills, experience as a successful collaborator, commitment to the project, and more (Goodwin et al., 2006). Many of the Colleagues in Residence will be former superintendents, principals and teachers, university professors, and other active and relevant professionals. It is their responsibility to guide the leadership teams toward solutions rather than telling them what to do. Another critical responsibility of the Colleagues in Residence is to maintain a confidential relationship with the participating educational professionals (Goodwin et al., 2006). Building the relationship around trust will be critical to the implementation of the leadership development goals and ELI's success.

3.0   RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The review of the literature discussed in chapter two supports how the concepts of change and reform in the United States education system are cyclical. As we proceed through the 21st century, increasing school accountability systems and keeping our country competitive with other countries continue to drive reform efforts in schools, especially in high schools. As educational institutions, agencies, and organizations work to respond to the needs of school leaders, determining the needs of those school leaders is an important step toward school improvement. This chapter addresses the plan used to determine what secondary school principals in the southwest region of Pennsylvania say they need in terms of skills and competencies, what they say they are currently receiving through professional development opportunities, and how these two elements align to prepare these school leaders for 21st century challenges.

3.1.1   Research Population

The research population for this study consists of the secondary principals in the 10 county region of southwestern Pennsylvania as defined by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) and its Affiliates. The ACCD works in collaboration with public and

private sector partners to stimulate economic growth and enhance the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania. "The Conference is a private sector leadership organization with over 300 Regional Investors. Regional Investors – all heads of our region's employers – provide civic leadership to execute a focused agenda for regional improvement" (Allegheny Conference, 2007). Because each geographic region of the country is impacted by the success of the local economy, which impacts the success of the region's school districts, the investigator recognizes the importance of connecting the research to economic development, school success, and the overall success of the region. Therefore, conducting research across the 10-county region can inform the region's educational and business leaders about the results and provide potential recommendations for ongoing educational improvement.

The region, as defined by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, is made up of 10 counties including Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland. There are a total of 124 public school districts, 169 secondary public schools, and 170 secondary public school principals in the region. These secondary schools are rural, urban, and suburban and encompass approximately 187,409 average daily membership (student population) based on the 2004 – 2005 school year (PDE, 2006). This number indicates approximately 21% of the secondary students enrolled in public secondary schools across the state of Pennsylvania. The wide range of schools and students within this region offers an example of the diverse student population across southwestern Pennsylvania.

Secondary principals were chosen as subjects for this study because of the increasing focus on high school reform in the literature (Jerald, 2006; Quint, 2006; Gates, 2005; NASSP, 1999). "Many reports have been issued in the past few years that reveal deep problems with the

achievement levels of U.S. high school students as compared to international students" (NASSP, 2005, p. 3). With an increasing sense of urgency around high school reform, the researcher determined that the professional development needs of secondary principals were critical to country's high school reform movement (NASSP, 1999). In a report titled, *NASSP Legislative Recommendations for High School Reform* (2005), it states

> It is crucial to recognize that historically high schools have been the stepchild of school reform efforts in this country. For far too long, they have not received an adequate share of funding and other resources – at the federal, state, or local level – to make necessary improvements. (p. 1)

This lack of attention has moved high schools to the top of the list in terms of needed reform. In order to properly restructure and re-culture high schools to meet the needs of students for the 21st century, the NASSP has made several recommendations, including the use of collaborative, inclusive leadership and the strategic use of data. NASSP recommended $100 million dollars in Title II funds be used to help re-culture high schools into professional learning communities, provide money for principals, teacher leaders, and others to participate in ongoing, job-embedded professional development, establish inclusive leadership practices, create leadership teams to create a vision for the school, and establish an action plan that includes the strategic use of data that will result in increased student achievement in a personalized learning environment for all (NASSP, 2005). Considering that researchers have deemed our current public high school system as well as principal professional development a "step child" of the school reform and professional development efforts, the combination has created an outdated system for high school education.

Given the scope of the reform dilemma, it is important to determine what secondary principals perceive they need in terms of skills and competencies, as well as to determine what

professional development opportunities they are currently participating in and perceive to be effective. The results of this inquiry should be helpful for policy makers, university personnel, and professional development planners to know what current practices and experiences are better preparing principals to meet future demands of school reform.

3.1.2 Data collection via survey

In order to collect information from secondary principals across the economic region, the researcher sent a letter explaining risks and benefits of participating in the study and a copy of the survey to each principal at their respective school buildings in the identified southwestern Pennsylvania school districts (n=169) (Appendix B and C). The questionnaire is a basic survey instrument designed to collect information concerning the principal's perception of his or her needs regarding professional development in leadership competencies and skills, the professional development opportunities in which he or she has participated, and if these two circles of experience and need overlap. The survey is separated by categories for evaluating professional development needs, professional development methods of delivery, professional development opportunities they may have participated in, professional and personal impact the professional development experiences have had on them, and demographic information.

3.1.3 Survey Development

In order to develop the questionnaire, the researcher began by pulling ideas from the literature, personal experiences, and professional development opportunities and readings. This led to a long and cumbersome survey that was difficult to read and understand. In order to make the

survey questions more succinct and relevant, the researcher identified major themes emerging from the literature. Through this process, a refined survey was developed and consists of items that have been combined and adapted from existing surveys and further informed through a review of the research, including the skills and competencies identified, discussed and supported by the National Staff Development Council (Sparks, 2002), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (CCSSO, 1996), Balanced Leadership study (Waters et al., 2003), and the National Institute for School Leadership (Tucker & Codding, 2002). Other survey items were considered and adapted from Pamela Salazaar's research survey in her dissertation titled *The Professional Development Needs of High School Principals for School Improvement* (2002), as well as an evaluation form used for the Southwestern Pennsylvania's Superintendent's Forum created by the Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity (CEAC) out of the University of Pittsburgh. These sources helped create a framework for the survey that is divided into 5 sections:

I.   Needs Assessment: Content of Professional Development;
II.   Preferred Methods of Delivery for Professional Development;
III. Professional Development Initiatives in the Western Pennsylvania Region;
IV.   Professional and Personal Impact;
V.   Demographic Information.

A Likert-type scale was used to measure principals' perceptions and experiences related to each of these topics. An area for open-ended comment is provided for categories I and IV so that respondents could elaborate on their responses. In category II, respondents were asked to rate effectiveness of different types of delivery methods for professional development while in category III, respondents were asked to identify and evaluate effectiveness of professional development experiences they have had in the region. These experiences were determined by contacting the universities and intermediate units in the region and asking what professional

development opportunities they offer broadly across the region targeted for principals. As these experiences were determined, they were added to the survey. Category V seeks demographic information in order to provide information about the respondents' gender, ethnicity, educational background, years in the field, and years as an administrator.

The survey was sent to secondary principals via e-mail and through the United States Postal Service. Once the surveys were sent, follow-up phone calls and e-mails occurred after two weeks. A hard copy of the survey was also sent as a follow up process to those who did not respond to the e-mail. These phone calls and emails continued once every two weeks for 6 weeks. The researcher aimed for the highest possible response rate through the follow up process. As the surveys were returned, the analysis and synthesis process began. The timeline for this process is from November 2007 – April 2008. Since the school year was well underway when the survey was distributed, a high response rate was challenging because principals are busy with school activities.

In order to protect confidentiality, the data is stored by code only and the linkage between the code and the subject's/school's identity is stored separately. The data/information kept on the laptop computer is stored the same way and the computer and files are password protected.

3.1.4 Analysis Techniques

One of the goals of gathering and analyzing the data was to determine the current status and gaps in principal professional development offered in the region. Data from the survey were collected, entered, and analyzed electronically via SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages of the distribution of responses, were conducted. Measures of association, such as chi-square, were explored to consider

relationships and significance (Pyrczak, 2006). The data gathered from the surveys about the principals' professional development needs and experiences are compared in chapter four in order to determine if what is currently available for principals is meeting their stated needs (competencies and skills).

Use of a document to align the survey questions with the ISLLC standards, Balanced Leadership responsibilities, Pennsylvania school leadership standards, and research questions was used to analyze responses for alignment with research-suggested competencies (Appendix D). The analysis has been used to make appropriate recommendations. School districts, universities, educational organizations, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education may be interested in learning about the findings related to planning, delivering, and advertising professional development for principals.

3.1.5   Conclusion

The data collected and analyzed in this study of secondary principals' needs and experiences in principal professional development in the 10 county region of southwestern Pennsylvania are designed to provide valuable information that can help professional development providers better understand what current topics and practices are effective and why they are effective. Because adult learners need choices, collaborative discussions, and relevant, hands-on learning experiences, these methods influence the effectiveness of professional development (Sparks, 2002; Alvarado, 1999). By determining what professional development content and delivery methods the principals need and prefer, the results offer professional development providers with concrete examples of how to focus offerings to be most relevant for secondary principals. Overall, this study attempts to determine what the professional development needs are of

secondary principals in the region, how they prefer to learn through different professional development delivery methods, if their needs are being met by the current professional development offerings in the region, and if all of these experiences complement one another.

4.0   FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data and findings that pertain to the professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in southwestern Pennsylvania. The chapter has been organized into three sections. The first section provides information about the purpose of the study. The second section provides information on the demographic profile of the principals who responded to the survey, including information about their educational background. The third section reports on the findings from the survey data that are aligned with the first, second, and third research questions: 1) What professional development needs do secondary principals identify in order to be more effective as school leaders? 2) What professional development opportunities are secondary principals participating in across the region? 3) How closely do secondary principal professional development opportunities offered in the region align with the recommended practices found in the literature and what secondary principals indicate they need to be more effective leaders? The data are also analyzed and interpreted based upon the alignment document (Appendix D). This document was designed to track how the needs assessment and delivery method sections of the survey addressed the research questions and how they aligned to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, the Balanced Leadership responsibilities (Waters et al., 2003), and the Pennsylvania Department of Education administrative standards.

4.1   PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine what the perceive *professional development needs* are of secondary principals in the southwestern Pennsylvania region, *how they prefer to learn* through different professional development delivery methods, *if their needs are being met* by the current professional development offerings in the region, and if all of these experiences complement one another. By determining what professional development content and delivery methods these secondary principals need and prefer, the results offer professional development providers with an update on the current status of different opportunities available in the region, which professional development initiatives are meeting the needs of these principals, and insight into potential gaps between needs and opportunities.

In order to determine what the needs and experiences of secondary principals are in the region, a survey was conducted using an instrument that was designed by the researcher and informed by a variety of sources from the literature, including those that emphasized best practices for professional development, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), administrative standards[1], Balanced Leadership responsibilities (Waters et al., 2003), and Pennsylvania's administrative standards[2].

To identify a research population, the researcher had determined through the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website that there were 169 secondary principals in the region. However, four of these positions were either unfilled or the name of the participant was

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[1] The researcher used the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards as listed by the date the survey was created. By March 4, 2008, these standards had been updated and renamed "Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008".

[2] The researcher used the Pennsylvania administrative standards as listed by November 2, 2007 when the survey was created and sent out for this study. Recently, these standards changed to be more aligned with the National Institute for School Leaders (NISL) administrative standards.

not provided. Also, one district had just added an additional secondary principal which was not yet noted on the website, therefore, the researcher added him to the list of principals bringing the total number of secondary principals in the region to 170. On November 2, 2007, a total of 165 secondary principals in the region were e-mailed the invitation letter to participate and a website link to the online survey titled <u>Professional Development Needs and Experiences of Secondary Principals in Western Pennsylvania</u>. The researcher determined there was a problem with the on-line survey after a phone call from one respondent. The problem had to do with principals not being able to select more than one need in each category, which often times occurs with on-line surveys. This problem was fixed immediately and was sent out again with the corrected survey link available in the email letter to principals. There were 53 responses after the survey was corrected and published. Due to some of the e-mail accounts not working or not accepting the e-mail sent, 38 hardcopies of the letter and survey were mailed. An additional 13 surveys were emailed once the correct email addresses were determined. Two weeks later, a follow up e-mail was sent to 139 principals who had yet to respond. One month later, hardcopies and electronic copies of the letter and survey were sent to the principals who had not responded as of December 7, 2007. Of the 170 surveys that were sent out either electronically or through the mail, 82 were ultimately returned (48%). This response rate exceeded the researcher's expectations in light of the busy schedules of secondary principals during December.

For accurate and confidential information, the data from the surveys were coded numerically for follow up purposes and summary report mailings. Data were entered into the computer and assisted in the analysis of the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Several disaggregated analyses were generated using the SPSS software, including a gender analysis, educational institution analysis, and an initiative participant analysis.

4.1.1 Characteristics of Participants

Of the 170 secondary principals in the 10-county southwestern Pennsylvania region as defined by the Allegheny Conference, 82 responded to the survey. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's website provides a fairly accurate list of the names of the secondary principals by county. The researcher compiled the list of principals to send the surveys to from this source. While the response rate was 48%, not all of the respondents answered all of the questions; therefore, the response numbers differ in each section of the survey. Of the 82 secondary principals who participated in the study, 91% of them responded to Part V on the survey regarding demographic information about themselves and their educational experiences. Information was collected in the following areas: 1) gender, 2) race, 3) educational experience – what institutions they obtained their degree(s) from, 4) the year they became an administrator, and 5) the year they became an administrator at their current school. Table 1 below provides a comparison of the gender and race of the participants, with 74.7% of the respondents being male and 25.3% being females and 96.0% of the respondents being Caucasian and 4.0% being African American. Based on the latest data from 2003-2004 in a statistical report titled *Professional Personnel Gender, Average Salary, and Race by Position* (Rodriques, 2005) compiled through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the total population of secondary principals consists of 74.4% males and 25.5% females, 91.9% being Caucasian and 6.9% being African American. Therefore, the principals who responded to the survey are representative of the total population of secondary principals across the state.

Table 1 - Numbers and percentages of returned surveys by gender and race

	Gender		Race		
	Male	Female	Caucasian	African American	Other
Response Percent	74.7%	25.3%	96.0%	4.0%	-
Response count	56	19	72	3	-

4.1.2 Years of Experience as an Administrator

Data collected about the years of experience as an administrator ranged from being new to the principalship to having twenty-five years of experience. Table 2 compares the number of years the respondents have been administrators in general and within their current buildings. According to the table below, 40.7% of the principals who responded were fairly new to the administrative position entering school administration within the past six years, while 36.8% reported having been a principal for seven to ten years, and 22.3% reported having been a principal for twelve to twenty five years. Several principals (65.7%) reported that they had only been within their current building for six or fewer years, while 21.0% reported having been at their current school as an administrator for seven to eleven years, and only 14.4% reported having been in their current school for more than twelve years. According to the most recent report titled *Professional Personnel by Employment Status and Gender, Level of Education and Years of Service by Position* (Hobaugh, 2002) generated out of the Pennsylvania Department of Education in 2001-2002, the average unit for years of service within one local education agency was 13.5 years. The principals who responded to the survey averaged 13 years of experience within their local education agency; therefore, the sample of secondary principals in

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southwestern Pennsylvania is representative of the overall population of secondary principals across Pennsylvania.

Table 2 - Percentages and numbers of years as administrator in general and in current building

	1982 – 1995 n=76		1996 – 2000 n=76		2001-2007 n=76	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Became a school administrator	17	22.30%	28	36.80%	31	40.70%
Administrator in current school	11	14.40%	16	21.00%	50	65.70%

4.1.3 Educational Institutions and Degrees Obtained

The range of educational institutions and degrees obtained are reported in Table 3. While several principals reported that they obtained their degrees and/or certifications from institutions in western Pennsylvania, there were a number who attended universities outside of the state as well. The vast majority of respondents (98.7%) had their master's degree, while 35.5% of them had also obtained their doctorate degree or were doctoral students. This indicates a highly educated principal workforce among responding principals in the region. When comparing the survey respondents' education levels to those secondary principals across the state in the Pennsylvania Department of Education's report in 2001 – 2002 titled *Professional Personnel by Employment Status and Gender, Level of Education and Years of Service by Position* (Hobaugh, 2002), the average level of education for secondary principals across the state was a master's degree. Of the principals who responded to the survey, 98.7% of them had obtained their master's degree.

Again, this indicates that the principals who responded to the survey are representative of secondary principals across the state.

The survey also asked respondents where they had obtained their education. More than half of respondents (54.2%) received their bachelor's degree from smaller universities in Pennsylvania, such as Slippery Rock University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, California University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro University and Clarion University. Only 14.2% of the respondents received their bachelor's degrees from Pennsylvania research-based universities, specifically the University of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania State University, while 8.5% of respondents received their bachelor's degree from private universities, such as Duquesne University and Westminster University. For those who have obtained a doctoral degree, the majority (44.0%) attended research–based universities, with the highest number (n=10) from the University of Pittsburgh. The institutions where respondents received their administrative certification were more evenly distributed with 33.8% receiving it from smaller Pennsylvania universities, 26.1 % receiving it from research-based universities in Pennsylvania, 16.9% receiving it from private universities in western Pennsylvania, and the remaining 27.6% receiving it from a variety of other universities within and outside of the state of Pennsylvania. These data demonstrate the wide variety of institutions in which the secondary principals received their educational training.

Table 3 - Numbers and percentages of participants by educational institution and degree obtained

	Degree						Certificate			
	Bachelors		Masters		Doctorate		Teaching		Administrative	
	n=70	%	n=75	%	n=25	%	n=57	%	n=65	%
Smaller PA Universities	38	54.2	26	34.6	2	8.0	29	50.8	22	33.8
Research Universities	10	14.2	17	22.6	11	44.0	7	12.2	17	26.1
Private Universities	6	8.5	14	18.6	10	40.0	4	7.0	11	16.9
Other[3]	16	22.8	21	28.0	2	8.0	17	29.8	18	27.6
Overall totals	70	99.7	78[4]	98.7	25[4]	100	57	99.8	68[3]	<u>112.5[5]</u>

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[3] Other colleges and universities within and outside of the state of Pennsylvania listed not more than twice by respondents.

[4] Indicates that four principals are doctoral students but have not completed the degree.

[5] Indicates that principal wrote more than one school for degree or certificate.

4.2   RESEARCH QUESTION ONE - AREAS OF FOCUS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What professional development needs do secondary principals identify in order to be more effective as school leaders?

The needs section on the survey listed under areas of focus for professional development was drawn from the literature on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and Pennsylvania administrative standards that principals need to master, the leadership characteristics that came from the Balanced Leadership study (Waters et al., 2003), and the best practices for professional development strategies. In the alignment document, a grid represents where each area of focus aligns with the evidence in the literature (appendix D). The responses by the secondary principals confirm the research in the literature by the high percentages of *somewhat important need* or *extremely important need* responses that were indicated on the Likert-like scale provided on the survey. The three highest areas of need for professional development as indicated by these secondary principals were *analyzing data* (72.8%), *communicating effectively* (63.8%), and *using research and "best practices"* (61.3%). Appendix F includes all of the questions listed in the areas of focus for professional development within the needs assessment, with the response count and the *extremely important need* and *somewhat important need* response percentages included. The specific areas of need for professional development on the survey that had 50.0% or more principals marking it as an *extremely important need* on the Likert-like scale included twelve areas of focus. The top twelve areas of

focus for professional development determined to be extremely important needs are ranked in order below in Table 4.

Table 4 - Rank Order by % of Extremely Important Need as a Focus Area for Professional Development

Area of Focus for Professional Development	Rank Order by % of Extremely Important Need	Mean[6]	Standard Deviation[6]
1. Analyzing data	72.80%	3.59	0.755
2. Communicating effectively	63.80%	3.38	0.946
3. Using research and "best practices"	61.30%	3.45	0.778
4. Building team commitment	60.00%	3.44	0.793
5. Developing information and data collection strategies	58.80%	3.48	0.746
6. Creating a learning organization	55.60%	3.41	0.755
7. Designing, implementing, and evaluating	54.40%	3.38	0.805
8. Understanding measurement, evaluation, assessment strategies	54.40%	3.32	0.87
9. Understanding student development and learning	52.60%	3.31	0.857
10. Ability to deal with conflict	52.50%	3.18	1.041
11. Solving problems and making decisions	50.00%	3.5	0.96
12. Sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement	50.00%	3.5	0.814

Some of the secondary principals who completed the survey added other areas of focus for professional development in the open-ended response area. Some of these included use of technology, legal issues in education, and the ability to relate to diverse groups of students. One of the principals specifically said, "The integration of technology in the curriculum is vital for

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[6] Mean calculation and standard deviation are included as a measure of dispersion even though some researchers frown upon treating categorical survey data as continuous variables. The researcher still feels this rendering is useful to better understand the distribution of responses.

today's highly informational and technological society. Teachers and administrators need to be better equipped in terms of technology understanding and better prepared to deal with the tech savvy student." This point is especially relevant as the Classrooms for the Future grants, a Pennsylvania Department of Education High School Reform Initiative, are awarded to more and more high schools across the state.[7]

4.2.1   Data Results on Type of Educational Institution, Degree, and Certification

When the data were analyzed according to educational institutions, degrees and certifications, a few items of interest emerged. First, those principals who had received a bachelor's degree from private schools had a low variance across the mission/beliefs/mission category. Principals who received their administrative certification, regardless of what type of university they attended, also had a low variance across the vision/beliefs/mission category. This may indicate that those degrees and certifications (bachelor's and administrative) are more consistent with teaching the importance of developing a mission, vision and belief statements in a school district. Those

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[7] The Classrooms for the Future grant awards school districts with money for instructional technology, including interactive white boards, LCD projectors, laptops for students, digital cameras and more with the expectation that the teachers in the core discipline areas *and the secondary principal* who receive this technology for their classrooms and school will participate in 30 hours of online professional development about teaching and learning in the 21st century each year. There are a total of five online professional development courses that are available to teachers and administrators who receive the Classrooms for the Future grant. Learning to use the technology and being able to understand how it can change teaching and learning to become more engaging for students is an important aspect of this high school reform initiative (www.pde.pa.state.pa.us/ed_tech/cwp/view.asp?Q=118849).

principals with doctorate degrees had low variance in the category for School Action Plans and Continuous School Improvement for each sub-category except "developing and implementing strategic action plans". This also may indicate that those principals who have pursued doctoral study have a similar understanding of how school action plans are to be used to ensure continuous school improvement regardless of affiliated institution. Finally, the category for Professional Personal Readiness had the highest variance across every degree, certification and type of school attended. Because this category emphasizes a degree of emotional intelligence and personal aptitude, it is not surprising that respondents' answers varied within each of these sub-categories. The largest amount of variance within this category may also indicate a need for institutions and professional development providers to explore the topics associated with this category of personal development to determine if professional development may be necessary and of interest to secondary principals in the region.

4.2.2   Preferred Delivery Method

The next section in the survey asked respondents to determine which delivery method of professional development they found most effective in meeting their needs. *Coaching* was the overall preferred delivery method for professional development for the secondary principals surveyed, with 47.3% of them indicating coaching as very effective in meeting their needs and 39.2% of them indicating that coaching was somewhat effective in meeting their needs. The next highest preferred delivery method was *mentoring*, with 41.3% of principals surveyed saying mentoring was very effective in meeting their needs and 38.7% of principals saying it was somewhat effective in meeting their needs.

It is important to mention the difference between the coaching and mentoring. Coaches help the administrator think about multiple solutions to the dilemmas they face by brainstorming many solutions with them rather then telling them what to do. School leadership coaches take a facilitative approach by stimulating learning through questioning, providing feedback, and helping to analyze perceptions and behaviors (Bloom et al., 2005). Coaching should help establish a school culture that recognizes collaboration as an asset, develop individual and group capacity to engage in creative problem solving and self-reflection, and provide a continuum of professional learning opportunities to support adults in their acquisition and use of specific knowledge, skills, and strategies (Moran, 2007). Mentoring is a more collegial relationship that occurs through self-selection or assignment. Mentors tend to help new principals through friendly but less self-reflective methods. For instance, if a new principal has a question about the expectations of budgetary expenditures, she might ask her mentor for guidance. Mentors tend to be advice-giving while coaches tend to be focused on problem solving with the principal, as well as being able to critique a principal's current practices (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000).

Only 2.7% of the respondents found online/self-paced professional development very effective. It is important to note that the response numbers to this question drop to approximately two-thirds of the principals who responded to the survey overall. This could indicate that the principals who did not respond had never participated in certain types of delivery methods listed. For instance, some principals may not have participated in a study group and therefore could not respond to the question. Table 5 presents the response count and *very effective* and *somewhat effective* responses, as well as the cumulative frequency percentages for the preferred delivery method survey section.

Table 5 - Professional Development Delivery Method

Professional Development Delivery Method	Response Count	% of Somewhat Effective	% of Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective
Coaching (Collaborative partnership between consultant and leader/manager with a focus on improving or developing skills, providing feedback, and analyzing situations)	74	39.2%	47.3%	86.5%
Mentoring (Collegial relationship that is supportive and often self- selected)	75	38.7%	41.3%	80.0%
Focused Workshop (Professional conference session, half-day seminar, etc.)	76	55.3%	19.7%	75.0%
Coursework (Graduate credit, continuing education credit, etc.)	76	50.0%	23.7%	73.7%
Study group (Lesson study, book discussions, etc.)	76	50.0%	21.1%	71.1%
Seminar/Conference (Held across days, multiple targeted sessions, etc.)	75	53.3%	16.0%	69.3%
Problem-based projects (Action research, hands-on/field-based projects, etc.)	76	44.7%	22.4%	67.1%
Online/self-paced (Online tutorials, short courses, etc.)	75	40.0%	2.7%	42.7%

In the open-ended response area for this question, there were not many additional methods mentioned. One important point that was made, however, was that the *quality* of the professional development experiences tends to be more important than some of the delivery methods.

4.2.3   Review of Findings for Research Question One

Overall, the top five professional development needs of secondary principals in the southwestern Pennsylvania region include analyzing data, communicating effectively, using research and "best practices", building team commitment, developing information and data collection strategies. These five areas for professional development are represented in the table below (Table 6) and show how each area aligns to the ISLLC standards, the Balanced Leadership responsibilities (Waters et. al., 2002) and Pennsylvania's administrative standards as discussed in chapter two.

Table 6 - Alignment Document focused on Top Five Areas of Focus for Professional Development as indicated by responding principals

Survey Questions	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards	Balanced Leadership Responsibilities	PDE Administrative Standards
1. Analyzing data	1	Resources, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	I.B., I.D.
2. Communicating effectively	1, 6	Communication, Visibility	I.F.
3. Using research and "best practices"	3, 5	Intellectual stimulation, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	I.B.
4. Building team commitment	1, 5	Culture, Relationship	I.A.
5. Developing information and data collection strategies	1	Resources, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	I.B., I.D.

The survey needs align with the needs found in the literature that discuss the importance of principal professional development occurring within his/her daily practice, and how it should be focused on implementing the consistent use of "best practices" through the use of professional learning communities (Elmore, 2000; Sparks, 2002). The secondary principals' responses about their professional development needs within this survey are certainly supported by and closely aligned with the literature in the field.

Another section of the survey assessed the preferred delivery methods for professional development. Based on their indicated needs, these secondary principals reported that their preferred delivery method to learn about these topics was through coaching and mentoring. Coaching and mentoring are two methods that are recognized in the literature which allow the professional development to be more job-embedded and relevant to the principal's daily work. Other preferences beyond coaching and mentoring include focused workshops, coursework, and study groups. Their least preferred method of professional development was online/self-paced. Again, the literature supports the recommended methods including developing professional

learning communities through ongoing study groups, regular visits to one another's schools within the district, and frequent in-school coaching on critical skill areas (DuFour, 2004; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000; Hoffmann & Johnston, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Houston, 2001).

4.3   RESEARCH QUESTION TWO – EXPERIENCES IN THE REGION

What professional development opportunities are secondary principals participating in across the region?

Several professional development opportunities for principals exist across the region of southwestern Pennsylvania. Some opportunities are offered through universities, intermediate units, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and other organizations. The initiatives chosen for the survey were specifically for principals in service and offered more long-term professional development opportunities rather than a one-shot day of "chalk and talk". It is important to note that other types of professional development opportunities are also available in the region and were mentioned by some respondents in the open ended response area on the survey, such as the online course required through the state's Classrooms for the Future grant (see footnote on page 90 for more details) and some principal cohort meetings that are facilitated through the intermediate units.

When looking at the response rate to the questions about the initiatives, the numbers dropped substantially due to the number of principals who actually participated in one or more of the initiatives listed. Out of 82 principals who responded to the survey, less than 50 responded to the questions about the initiatives. This indicates that more than a third of the respondents may

not have ever participated in any of the long-term professional development initiatives available in the region. Access to these opportunities may be limited due to geographical location, time availability, and/or awareness of the opportunity. It does not indicate, however, that the principals who have not participated in the listed opportunities have not participated in any professional development at all. They may have participated in local sessions, conferences, workshops, and other opportunities that were not listed as choices on the survey. Due to the numbers of responses dropping in this section of the survey, it is possible that the percentages of responses are not necessarily representative of the region's secondary principals' opinions but rather, descriptive only of the principals who responded to the survey and participated in the listed initiatives.

It is also important to remember that the researcher has participated in the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, the Educational Leadership Initiative, and the Tri-State School Study Council at different times over the past five years and has also been involved sporadically with the Math/Science Partnership and the Institute for Learning. While the researcher does not think the reporting of the data is biased, the findings of the survey present an unbiased representation of the data, as does the literature, which supports the findings. Although the researcher has participated in many of the initiatives, she has also learned a tremendous amount about the importance of professional development for principals, which continued to lead her in the direction of this study.

4.3.1   Initiatives in the Western Pennsylvania Region

In order to determine initiatives to include on the survey, the researcher called the universities (n=10) in the western Pennsylvania region, as well as intermediate units (n=7), to see what types

of sustained professional development opportunities are offered to principals in service. The seven professional development initiatives listed on the survey were those that had a focused effort on principal professional development. There was also a place for respondents to list other professional development opportunities they had attended. The programs listed on the open-ended response area were Project 720, Classrooms for the Future, regional principal meetings in Butler County, principal mentors through the state, principal organization meetings, and the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative. These are not discussed because they were not mentioned more than twice in the open-ended responses section of the survey.

Of the seven programs listed, The Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh was ranked the highest in terms of being *somewhat* and *very effective* in meeting 44 of the principals' needs (Table 7). This initiative has a strong networking and collaborative component with an emphasis on instructional leadership. The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership initiative, which incorporates two curriculum components from the National Institute for School Leadership's (NISL) program titled the *New Institution to Train School Leaders*, ranked second in meeting the needs of principals. In support of the literature findings, this initiative has a strong coaching component, which was also a delivery method that respondents found to be most effective in meeting their needs (Tucker & Codding, 2002). The initiative that was ranked lowest in terms of effectiveness according to 16 principals was the Virtual Internet Coach through Duquesne University. This initiative, while having an online coaching component to the program, is one of the newer initiatives in the region and had the least number of respondents to the question. This may represent a limitation in the data and may have skewed the findings.

Table 7 below includes the numbers of participants who responded about each initiative and how they rated the initiatives. The initiatives that had the highest respondents include the Principals Academy, the Math Science Partnership and Tri-State Area School Study Council, while the initiatives that had the highest rankings include the Principals Academy, Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership, and Educational Leadership Initiative. It is important to notice that the Principals Academy (n=49), Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (n=28), and the Virtual Internet Coach (n=16) offer professional development only for principals and are focused on how to improve their practice as principals. The other initiatives, including the Math Science Partnership (n=48), Educational Leadership Initiative (n=36), Tri-State Area School Study Council (n=41) and the Institute for Learning (n=26) offer professional development for principals, teachers and other administrators. These initiatives have more of a range of focus areas for the different stakeholders included in the professional development experience. Some of these initiatives, like the Math/Science Partnership, also work to develop a community of learners from within a district or school so the sense of a team and the development of a common language and understanding will be carried back to that district or school. Another example is how the Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI) works with teachers, principals, and superintendents to create collaborative learning teams in order to break down the "hierarchy" traditionally found within districts. ELI works to "cultivate leadership practices at all levels from a foundation of collaborative, reflective learning teams. These multi-level district teams will be charged to problem-solve and share knowledge, both within and outside their districts, as they participate in program activities" (Goodwin et al., p 2, 2006). Each initiative has a focus area, some more closely aligned than others.

The actual number of participants in each of these initiatives may affect the results of this study. Some initiatives are relatively new, like the Virtual Internet Coach. Others, like the Principals Academy and the Math/Science Partnership, have been in existence for several years. The longer an initiative has been in place, the higher the number of participants in those initiatives. Therefore, the actual number of participants could be viewed as a limitation of the study. Also, some initiatives mentioned are only for principals, while others include the idea of working with a vertical slice of a district (superintendent, principal, teachers) or different teams of stakeholders within a district. This may also impact the researcher's findings because the professional development for a team of people could be viewed more holistically than professional development for an individual. In other words, the principals who responded to the survey questions could have been using a different lens or perspective as they completed the survey – one that was individual and practice-driven or the other that was more team-oriented and affected by others' views and input.

Table 7 - Professional Development Initiatives in Western Pennsylvania Region

Initiative	Response Count	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency
The Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	49	34.7%	55.1%	89.8%
Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)	28	53.6%	28.6%	82.1%
Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI), (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	36	47.2%	25.0%	72.2%
Tri-State Area School Study Council (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	41	51.2%	17.1%	68.3%
Institute for Learning (University of PittsburghÕsLearning Research and Development Center)	26	42.3%	19.2%	61.5%
Math/Science Partnership (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)	48	33.3%	12.5%	45.8%
Virtual Internet Coach (Duquesne Univ.)	16	37.5%	6.3%	43.8%

Several comments were made about the Principals Academy in the open-ended response question about how that professional development opportunity has impacted participant practices by offering opportunities to network and collaborate with other principals. One principal stated,

> The Principals Academy is a good model because it allows principals to be exposed to research-based best practices in instructional leadership and to discuss the implementation with other practitioners. Any professional development that gives principals the opportunity to hear, read or see leadership or management practices that are proven to be effective and then the opportunity to use action research and follow up discussion is most meaningful.

Another principal stated,

> University of Pittsburgh's Principals Academy has had the most impact on my practices as school leader because it focused on practical strategies to implement best practices to improve student learning. It's been the best combination of theory, research, and action in my development as a school leader that I've experienced. In particular, the use of "walkthroughs" as an instrument for monitoring professional growth has helped change my perspective of teacher supervision and evaluation from one of policing teacher behavior to one of supporting professional development.

Other initiatives were discussed in the open-ended response questions as well. Many principals referred to their coursework at the university level, as well as literature from professional organizations to help inform them on the important issues related to being an

instructional leader. However, the most substantial and most repeated themes in the open-ended response questions were the references to meeting with other principals to collaborate, share ideas, network, and learn from one another.

4.3.2 Comparing Initiative Participants' Responses

In order to determine if the principals who participated in the same initiatives had similar professional development needs, an analysis was performed using SPSS software that reported the level of variance among the professional development needs per initiative per participant (Table 8). By looking at the responses from participants across each initiative and how they responded to each professional development need, the researcher began to see a pattern within the data. Depending on the initiative, several participants had more consistent responses on specific professional development needs that tended to align with the initiative's focus areas. The lowest variance per need shows how respondents were more consistent with some needs versus others. Again, the number of participants in each initiative could influence the comparison of variance contributing to a limitation of the study.

First, all of the initiatives associated with the University of Pittsburgh, including the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, Educational Leadership Initiative, and Tri-State Area School Study Council, had the least variance on the professional development topic of *setting a results-oriented instructional direction* (Table 8). This indicates that the principals who have attended any, some, or all of these initiatives reported that this topic was an extremely important need. Many of the principals' open-ended responses support this finding as they refer to the Principals Academy and their coursework at the university to be focused on instructional leadership. The findings here also support how the Principals Academy emphasizes individual

development as an instructional leader and provides discussion around ways to monitor teaching and learning, create a community of learners, and increase the instructional rigor within the classroom.

Table 8 - Most Common Professional Development Need Indicated per Initiative

Initiative	Most Common Professional Development Need per Initiative	Response Count by Need
The Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	Setting a results-oriented instructional direction	47
Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI), (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	Setting a results-oriented instructional direction	35
Tri-State Area School Study Council (Univ. of Pittsburgh)	Setting a results-oriented instructional direction	40
Institute for Learning (University of PittsburghÕs Learning Research and Development Center)	Setting a results-oriented instructional direction	24
Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)	Building a shared decision making, collegiality and peer support	28
Math/Science Partnership (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)	Developing information and data collection strategies	48
Virtual Internet Coach (Duquesne Univ.)	Communicating effectively	16

The participants of the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative (PIL) at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, marked the professional development need of *building shared decision-making, collegiality, and peer support* most often. This pattern may speak to the focus of the initiative, which is using part of the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum. PIL's intention is to build capacity among school leaders by focusing on what they need to know and do in order to facilitate instructional improvement and increase student achievement (Baughn, 2006). The assignment of a cohort-based leadership group through this initiative could be a reason why the professional development need for *building shared decision-making, collegiality, and peer support* was similar among the PIL participants.

The participants of the Math/Science Partnership Initiative responded most consistently to the need of *developing information and data collection strategies*. This data support the focus areas of the Math/Science Partnership's professional development sessions about math titled "Lenses on Learning". This learning opportunity consists of two strands: Developing a personal knowledge base about the terrain of leadership for mathematics education; and connecting data to school-based practices (Grant et al., 2006). It could also indicate that the MSP stresses data-based decision making, especially in their professional development sessions.

Finally, the participants of the Virtual Internet Coach developed at Duquesne University indicated the professional development need of *communicating effectively* consistently. The fact that this initiative involves actually practicing communication with other principals and a coach over the Internet may be one of the reasons for this low variance. According to Duquesne University's website about the Virtual Internet Coach, this professional development initiative "provides an opportunity for principals to engage in professional dialogue. Specifically, the [principal] will have the opportunity to engage in discussions with other practicing administrators regarding real situations and real challenges" (http://www.education.duq.edu/vic/index.htm). The opportunity to participate in professional dialogue with other principals and former administrators may revolve around the importance of communicating effectively.

The Professional Personal Readiness category exhibited the largest range of answers among initiative participants across all but one category in the survey. The needs that differed the most among participants was the *ability to channel emotions, delay gratification, and stifle impulses* and the *ability to deal with others' emotions and social skills.* These needs most likely had the largest range of responses because they are more dependent on individual emotional

intelligence abilities rather than the skills learned through professional development experiences. These findings may, instead, represent a lack of opportunities for school leaders that focus on developing emotional intelligence or skills related to working effectively with others.

4.3.3 Emerging Themes in Open-Ended Response Questions

After analyzing and synthesizing many of the open-ended responses to the questions about ways professional development experiences have impacted practices, policy changes, and growth as a school leader, a few themes emerged. These included the importance of learning opportunities that allow for professional reflection and collaboration with other administrators, as well as those that are focused on best instructional practices that improve student achievement. One principal wrote, "I believe that many of the [professional development] experiences have broadened my perspectives. Having the opportunity to hear from and listen to leaders in different areas of education can inspire and motivate you. In addition, dialoging with peers who are dealing with similar issues is also beneficial." Another principal wrote that "belonging to a cohort of school leaders led me to believe that I needed to find a way to structure time for professional discussion within the school day for my own teachers. That is, I needed to build cohorts within my staff so that they could build a learning community, share their thoughts, concerns, and best practices, and develop professionally together." Many respondents shared similar comments about how professional development experiences had the most impact on their practice and growth if they incorporated professional reflection, collaboration with other administrators, and focused on best instructional practices that improve student achievement.

The importance of principals having the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another is quite evident in the open-ended question responses. There are multiple examples of

principals' recognizing this need, whether it is to voice common frustrations, find solutions, learn about new ideas, determine different methods of doing something, or just having a person who understands the role of a principal. Many of the principals also recognized the importance and power of coaching and/or mentoring. This one-on-one relationship allows for some of the collaboration to occur within a district and supports the findings of the other survey items in terms of preferred delivery method for professional development. In addition, a recurring theme in the responses is that many principals would like to have more collaborative opportunities available to them within the region.

4.3.4   Impact on Policy

Only a few principals indicated how professional development has impacted policy changes in their schools. Several principals commented that professional development had increased their knowledge and awareness of educational theories, which has been used as input for discussions about the need for new policies or policy changes. While the professional development experiences haven't had a direct impact on district policies at the district level, many principals felt that it helped generate discussions on important topics such as legal issues, teacher supervision, and grading and assessment practices. A few principals did mention specific policy changes due to professional development opportunities. As one principal stated, "School law seminars have led to the alignment of policy with school law. Sessions about reform have led to policy changes with respect to student credits and coursework options." In general, though, principals' responses related more to how the professional development opportunities have impacted the district's *vision* more than policy. For example, one principal stated, "Policy changes are slow changes; however, vision and direction established through cutting edge

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professional development helps shape those policies." Principal professional development has the potential to help school leaders establish the vision and direction of their school districts by exposing them to different ideas, ways of implementing new structures, and ways of shaping their policies and procedures.

4.3.5 Review of Findings for Research Question Two

Across the region, there are many principals who are participating in professional development initiatives. Out of the 82 respondents to the survey, the largest number of those respondents who had participated in the sustained professional development opportunities in the region was 49 principals. This indicates that possibly 33 principals who responded to the survey have not participated in the long-term professional development programs provided in the region. However, they may have participated in other professional development opportunities like conferences or workshops. Overall, there seems to be a large number of principals who responded to the survey who are not participating in the sustained professional development opportunities in the region. For those who have participated in the sustained professional development in the region, the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania was rated the most effective in meeting their overall needs. The data also indicate that the initiatives principals are participating in are focused on the needs that principals have indicated as somewhat or extremely important. These needs, which include analyzing data, communicating effectively, and using research and "best practices", align with the focus areas of the initiatives.

Other findings include the levels of variance among respondents who participated in certain initiatives. A trend was recognized among the levels of variance of responses according to participants of certain initiatives. The areas of focus among the respondents when analyzed by

initiative participants were closely aligned to the goals of the initiatives. The focus of each initiative seemed to emerge from the area of need with the least amount of variance. The three initiatives that are associated with the University of Pittsburgh had the least amount of variance for the area of focus - *setting a results-oriented instructional direction.* This finding indicates an alignment of the focus area for these initiatives and the University of Pittsburgh in terms of having a strong focus for the school leaders who are associated with the university.

When the researcher analyzed the data on preferred delivery method by respondents who participated in certain initiatives, the findings were similar. Coaching was determined to be the most effective method of meeting the participants' needs regardless of the initiative. Mentoring was also an effective method for professional development. On-line learning was found to be the least effective method of delivery for participants across initiatives. Consistency of responses across initiatives may indicate that delivery method is paramount to involvement in any particular initiative. Regardless of the type of professional development available in the region, secondary principals seem to prefer to learn and improve through the use of a coach.

Another finding that emerges from the research are the themes in the open-ended response questions. The aspects of professional development that affected the respondents' impact and growth as a school leader included *professional reflection, collaboration with other administrators,* and *best instructional practices that improve student achievement.* Opportunities that provided time for reflection and collaboration as well as a focus on instruction were what these principals found most beneficial.

**4.4   RESEARCH QUESTION THREE – ALIGNMENT OF NEEDS AND
EXPERIENCES WITH RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**

How closely do secondary principal professional development opportunities offered in the region align with the recommended practices found in the literature and what secondary principals indicate they need to be more effective leaders?

The principals surveyed indicated that the top five topics they found to be extremely important for professional development were: *analyzing data, communicating effectively, using research and "best practices", building team commitment, and developing information and data collection strategies.* They also indicated that their five most preferred professional development methods of delivery for working on these needs were through *coaching, mentoring, focused workshops, coursework, and study groups.* Several of the initiatives offered in the region meet the needs indicated and the preferred delivery methods. However, they all seem to meet certain needs or offer certain delivery methods but none of the initiatives meet all of the needs nor do they use all of the delivery methods. The fact that the principals did not mention that their school districts do a good job of providing them with extensive, job-embedded, relevant professional development is an important finding of the study.

When considering the quality of principal professional development initiatives offered in the western Pennsylvania region that were mentioned in the survey, there is evidence that these experiences are aligned with the literature and are valuable to the participants. For example, many of these experiences tend to be more sustained across time. Some are one-year commitments; others extend for two or more years. The length of these learning experiences allow for participants to focus on the recommended topics, including the use of research and

"best practices" to set a results-oriented instructional direction, analyzing data, and developing information and data collection strategies. Many of these initiatives also involve collaborating with colleagues through coaching and mentoring opportunities, such as the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership, the Virtual Internet Coach, and the Educational Leadership Initiative. Others have created professional learning communities among the participants, such as Principals Academy, Math/Science Partnership, the Educational Leadership Initiative, and the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership. While the focus areas in these initiatives are not necessarily aligned with the individual's school needs, participants do have the opportunity to work within a learning community and understand how they work so that they can incorporate a similar professional development method in their own schools.

4.4.1 Identified Needs Aligned with Initiatives

In order to determine if the professional development opportunities offered in the region aligned with the recommended practices found in the literature and what secondary principals said they need to be more effective leaders, the researcher analyzed the way the participants of the most effective local initiatives responded to specific needs and delivery methods that were recognized as extremely important in the literature. In order to select these specific needs, the researcher used the most highly ranked responsibilities found in the Balanced Leadership study (Waters et al., 2003). Specifically, she picked the needs that best aligned with Situational Awareness, Intellectual Stimulation, Change Agent, Input, and Culture (Table 9).

Table 9 - Balanced Leadership Responsibilities Aligned to Area of Focus for Professional Development on Survey

Balanced Leadership Responsibilities	Area of Focus for Professional Development on Survey	Sub-category of Area of Focus for Professional Development on Survey
Situational Awareness	Professional Personal Readiness	Ability to deal with conflict
Intellectual Stimulation	Desired Results for Student Learning	Using research and Ńbest practicesÓ
Change Agent	Organizational and Instructional Effectiveness	Facilitating the change process
Input	Vision, Beliefs, Mission	Building team commitment
Culture	Vision, Beliefs, Mission	Building shared decision making, collegiality, and peer support

The researcher then chose the two methods of delivery that were most prevalent in the literature, coaching and study groups (professional learning communities), to determine if the most effective professional development initiatives in the region aligned with the respondents' needs, preferred delivery methods, and what was indicated in the literature. By combining these recommended needs and the preferred delivery methods and comparing how different initiative participants responded, the responses from participants of Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership initiative most closely aligned with the highest ranked responsibilities in the Balanced Leadership Study (Waters et al., 2002) (Table 10).

Table 10 – Cumulative Frequency Percentages of Selected Needs and Preferred Delivery Methods of Top Three Initiatives

Balanced Leadership Responsibilities	Survey Needs	Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (n=28)	Principals Academy (n=49)	Educational Leadership Initiative (n=36)
		Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective
Culture	Building shared decision making, collegiality, and peer support	100.0	83.7	86.1
Input	Building team commitment	96.4	87.8	91.6
Situational Awareness	Ability to deal with conflict	92.8	75.5	80.6
Intellectual Stimulation	Using research and Ṇbest practicesÓ	85.8	83.6	77.7
Change Agent	Facilitating the change process	85.8	79.1	80.6
Recommended Delivery Methods of Professional Development	**Survey Needs**	**Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (n=28)**	**Principals Academy (n=49)**	**Educational Leadership Initiative (n=36)**
		Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective	Cumulative Frequency % of Somewhat and Very Effective
Coaching	Coaching	92.6	87.0	82.8
Professional Learning Community	Study Groups	74.1	67.4	72.3

Each of the initiatives listed in Table 10 have extremely high cumulative frequency percentages, which may indicate that they all are offering professional development that closely aligns to the literature and to the needs of the secondary principals in the region. It is also important to point out that this analysis was conducted with only the top five balanced leadership responsibilities out of the 21 that exist in the study. Many of the other responsibilities, like monitoring and evaluating instruction and outreach to the school community, were not used in this analysis but are very important to the work and professional development needs of principals. Interestingly, the study group delivery method of professional development was not as preferred as others mentioned in the survey.

4.4.2 Review of the Findings in Chapter Four

Overall, most of the initiatives across the region are providing professional development in many of the needed areas that the secondary principals have indicated. The initiatives that are addressing many of the needs mentioned in the survey and support the most important responsibilities for principals within the Balanced Leadership Study (Waters et al., 2002) are the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative, the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, and the Educational Leadership Initiative. These initiatives include either a coaching or mentoring style of delivery, as well as other delivery methods. The Principals Academy was ranked highest among the 49 respondents and had the highest number of respondents within this category. While the study group method of delivery is recognized more in the literature than in the survey results, this could be due to the difficulty of running a study group with principals who are located in many different school districts across the region. However, it is likely that

these initiatives recognize the importance of study groups or professional learning communities and are encouraging participants to implement them within their own schools.

Many principals are going outside of their district to receive training rather than staying in their buildings or districts, which may lead to accomplishing goals in the professional development sessions that are not necessarily aligned with the building or district's goals. Interestingly, the respondents did not mention the types of professional development offered for principals within school districts.

An important item to mention is that the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership initiative (PIL) incorporates components from the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum. While this is a nationally marketed professional development curriculum, it seems to be supported by 28 secondary principals in this region of the country who responded to this survey and providing them with professional development through mentoring, coaching, and relevant content.

4.4.3 Conclusion

Professional development for secondary principals is evident in western Pennsylvania through several different initiatives but there is room for improvement and growth. The professional development needs of secondary principals are many as high school reform challenges and federal and state accountability demands increase while the pre-service training of principals remains the same in many ways. Therefore, ongoing professional development opportunities can help principals improve their practice, become more focused on instructional leadership, data analysis, improving student achievement, and more. While the recommended location for such professional development is within a principal's school and district, attending professional

development opportunities outside of the building and district is still valuable. Professional development providers can align their opportunities to be more relevant, helpful, and meaningful to the principals after they have determined the principals' needs and preferences for delivery.

5.0   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1   WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRINCIPALS MATTERS

Principals have the power to influence school performance and guide school policies, procedures, and practices that contribute directly to student learning (Waters, et al., 2002). However, the depth of training they need to accomplish these challenges, as well as other challenges as expected in legislation like No Child Left Behind (2001) is extensive. While universities cannot fully prepare principals for the position, the development of principals cannot continue to be "the neglected stepchild of state and district professional development efforts. It must be standards-focused, sustained, intellectually rigorous, and embedded in the principal's workday" (Sparks, 2002, p. 8-5). Principals benefit from knowing how to talk with teachers about effective strategies in order to meet the needs of students in the class and help instruct the teachers on meaningful methods of instruction. They also are more effective if they know how to compare achievement rates of their students by "examining the data, finding disparities in performance, and developing an instructional plan to eliminate them" (Murphy & Schiller, 1992, p. 38). Professional development that provides principals with meaningful opportunities to engage in new ideas and learn new instructional strategies through collaboration and reflective inquiry with colleagues, as well as providing them with enough time, follow-up support, and feedback from successful practitioners helps them to be more effective (Lauer et al., 2005).

Among the programs offered, certain common elements, such as increasing content and pedagogical knowledge, promoting collegiality and collaborative exchange, providing sufficient time, being focused on school-based activities, and developing leadership capacity, make the learning more relevant for principals (Guskey, 2003). The importance of principal professional development is evident throughout the literature, as well as in the survey results from this study.

Current research available in the field supports survey results from this study. Professional development for secondary principals is necessary and evident across western Pennsylvania. Many secondary principals are participating in local initiatives and find them to be valuable and effective in meeting their needs. However, survey data indicate that there is room for improvement and growth in order to meet the extensive needs of the secondary principals in the region. In service professional development for secondary principals continues to be important as school reform and accountability demands increase while the pre-service training of principals remains virtually the same in many ways. Therefore, ongoing professional development opportunities can help principals improve their practice, become more focused on instructional leadership, analyze data, increase student achievement and more. Professional development providers can align their opportunities to be more relevant, helpful, and meaningful to the principals by conducting research and/or using survey findings like the ones found in this study.

5.2   FINDINGS OF THE STUDY - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR

SECONDARY PRINCIPALS

Principals identified their top five professional development needs in the areas of analyzing data, communicating effectively, using research and "best practices", building team commitment, developing information and data collection strategies. Data suggests that principals in the region recognize a need for profession development in many areas that were listed on the survey and identify these five as their greatest needs. Data also suggest that principals recognize that professional development in these areas could help them improve as instructional leaders by helping them learn more about analyzing and using data to drive instruction, implementing research and "best practices" among the staff, and communicate effectively so that these tasks can be accomplished.

Principals indicated that coaching and mentoring were their preferred delivery methods for professional learning. The findings of the study indicate that principals recognize that collaboration, effective communication, and informed instructional decision making through the use of data are important for school improvement and for their growth as school leaders. A recurring theme in the responses is that many principals would like to have more collaborative opportunities available to them within the region.

Interestingly, the need for principals to learn from one another represents a type of opening of the educational institution or classroom door as a way to deprivatize their practices in order to learn from one another and not be so isolated. Recognizing the need to collaborate and make decisions collectively can have a strong impact on school leadership and school

improvement. Shifting from the autocratic leadership style to a more distributive leadership style represents the "flattening" of the school leadership hierarchy. While there are other types of leadership styles as discussed in Chapter Two, many describe attributes of leaders who are viewed as effective because they are willing to share decision-making responsibilities, collaborate with others, respond appropriately to certain situations, and build relationships with multiple stakeholders. The need to bring more people into the decision making process is also recommended throughout the literature by experts such as Richard Elmore, Douglas Reeves, and James Spillane as reviewed in chapter two (Elmore, 2000; Reeves, 2006; Spillane et al., 2001). The leaders who have the attributes above can help reform and redefine school leadership practices.

5.3   REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Across the region, there are several initiatives that offer professional development for principals. These initiatives include but are not limited to the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, the Educational Leadership Initiative, Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership, the Math/Science Partnership, Tri-State Area School Study Council, Institute for Learning, and the Virtual Internet Coach.   Some of these are affiliated with local universities and others are affiliated with intermediate units and other educational agencies.

Out of the 82 respondents to the survey, the largest number of those respondents who had participated in the sustained professional development opportunities in the region was 49. This indicates that possibly 33 principals who responded to the survey have not participated in the long-term professional development programs provided in the region. However, they may have

participated in other professional development opportunities like conferences or workshops that were not reported in this study. Overall, the data suggest that a large number of principals who responded to the survey are not participating in the sustained professional development opportunities in the region. It is possible that they have not participated in these opportunities due to geographical location, time constraints, and/or lack of interest. It is also possible that some of these principals are unaware of professional development opportunities offered in the region.

For those who have participated in the sustained professional development opportunities in the region, there were three initiatives that rose to the top of the rankings. Of the 49 respondents for this initiative, 89.8% recognized the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania as somewhat and very effective in meeting their needs. Following the Principals Academy, 82.1% of the 28 respondents found the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative to be somewhat and very effective in meeting their needs. Finally, 72.2% of the 36 respondents recognized the Educational Leadership Initiative to be somewhat and very effective in meeting their needs. The data indicate that the initiatives are focused on the needs that principals have indicated as somewhat or extremely important. These needs, which include analyzing data, communicating effectively, and using research and "best practices", align with the focus areas of the initiatives within the region. It is important to note, however, that the survey did not ask the participants to compare initiatives. It only asked if participants found the initiatives to be effective and to what extent. This may been seen as a limitation of the study.

Survey data suggest a trend among the levels of variance across responses according to participants of certain initiatives. The areas of focus among the respondents when analyzed by initiative participants were closely aligned to the goals of the initiatives. The focus of each

initiative seemed to emerge from the area of need with the least amount of variance in participant response. The three initiatives that are associated with the University of Pittsburgh had the least amount of variance for the area of focus - *setting a results-oriented instructional direction.* This finding indicates an alignment of the focus area for these initiatives and the University of Pittsburgh in terms of having a strong instructional focus for the school leaders who are associated with the university.

When the researcher analyzed the data on preferred delivery method by respondents who participated in certain initiatives, the data were similar. Coaching was determined to be the most effective method of meeting the participants' needs regardless of the initiative. Mentoring was also an effective method for professional development. The similarities and differences between the two could lead to some concern about how well the participants were able to discern the differences between coaching and mentoring. Respondents may have indicated coaching as a preferred delivery method but defined the term of "coach" inaccurately. Although definitions for both were provided on the survey, there could be some discrepancies with these two terms. Coaches help the administrator think about multiple solutions to the dilemmas they face rather then giving them advice about what to do. It is recommended that school leadership coaches take a facilitative approach by stimulating learning through questioning, providing feedback, and helping to analyze perceptions and behaviors (Bloom et al., 2005). Several researchers believe that providing a more comprehensive professional development plan for school leaders that includes coaching will ensure the future success of our schools and our nation in years to come (Bloom et al, 2005; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000).

On-line learning was found to be the least effective method of delivery for participants across initiatives. While the initiative that uses on-line learning is fairly new to the region, it

may struggle to attract principals due to its on-line format. It is possible that the participants responded this way due to not having grown up in a digital society. Their comfort level with technology may be a reason for why they are not comfortable with this choice. As younger principals enter the field, this type of format may become more attractive as a preferred delivery method. A benefit to on-line learning is the convenience of it. Principals do not have to leave their building in order to participate in on-line learning experiences.

A limitation of the study is that the researcher did not ask the leaders of the initiatives how many principals participated in their programs and what professional development needs their initiatives addressed. She also did not specifically align the needs with the initiatives. If this had been done, there would be a clearer answer to if the specific initiatives were meeting the principals' specific needs. Further research could include these next steps in order to help inform the organizers of the initiatives on how to align professional development areas of focus to the said needs of their participants, as well as to the needs of the 33 other principals in the region who responded to the survey.

5.4   REGIONAL ALIGNMENT OF SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES

Overall, many of the initiatives across the region are providing professional development to secondary principals in several of the needed areas. The respondents recognized the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative, and the Educational Leadership Initiative as being somewhat and very effective in meeting their needs. Also, some of their delivery methods of professional development for their principal participants

are supported in the literature. However, this study only represents a small number of secondary principals in the region, and an even smaller number of participants for each initiative. This study provides a snapshot of a representative group of participants for each initiative. It does not represent the opinion of all participants in each initiative.

Data suggest that because these initiatives include either a coaching or mentoring style of delivery, they meet the principals' needs for collaborative learning. On the other hand, study groups or professional learning communities are not as evident in these initiatives. Data suggest that study groups/professional learning communities do not seem to be as valuable to principals. There are a few reasons why principals might indicate that they do not find study groups as valuable as coaches. First, the principals may not have experienced a worthwhile study group or professional learning community, which would explain the lower percentages in this category. Second, many initiatives occur outside the school districts and organizing study groups among participants may be difficult to do in light of geographical location and time constrictions. Third, the data might indicate that districts have not planned for principal professional development via study groups, have not assessed what principals need to know or improve, and/or do not view principal professional development as a priority. The implications of this study may convince districts to pay closer attention to developing their principals through the use of study groups within the district as well as outside of the district. Finally, another possibility is that the principals who answered the survey did not consider the learning opportunities they have within their schools or districts as professional development. A limitation of the study may be that the researcher did not ask about professional development opportunities within their own school districts.

5.5   ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Because Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership (PIL) initiative most closely aligned with the top five Balanced Leadership responsibilities (Waters et al., 2002) in the cross comparison between these Balanced Leadership responsibilities and the survey needs (Table 10), the results may support the push for NISL's curriculum to be used to train principals as they grow in the profession. An example of how this is occurring already is the adoption of the PIL legislation by the Pennsylvania's Department of Education. The department is now requiring all administrators to participate in the PIL coursework or an approved program to fulfill the induction program for principals and/or continuing professional development hours (Act 48) for certification renewal. The department is specifically "assigning" the PIL coursework for all school leaders as part of their Act 48 hour requirement, which basically means that all school leaders across the state will at some point participate in the PIL coursework or approved programs.   This focus on professional development for principals is a direct response to many of the experts in the field who have said that professional development for principals is practically non-existent. Pennsylvania is making an aggressive and responsible step by moving in this direction.

The use of the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum within the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership initiative suggests that Pennsylvania's Department of Education values this curriculum. Because the state department is now requiring this curriculum for all school leaders, it leads one to question if they have investigated the current professional development opportunities to see if they are currently meeting any of the NISL standards, which are closely aligned with the ISLLC standards. This study did not address these issues.

As Pennsylvania's Department of Education begins to require the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership initiative (PIL) curriculum for all principals across the state, they may want to

consider building partnerships between current successful initiatives and affiliated universities and agencies to align offerings and programs. Initiatives like the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania have been in existence for over twenty years. It would be a shame to dismiss opportunities like the Principals Academy because they may not use the exact NISL curriculum or their providers have yet to be trained in the NISL curriculum. While the PIL legislation is demonstrating forward thinking and movement on their behalf, it seems that research of existing professional development opportunities across the state, similar to this study, would be helpful before they decide to dismiss what has been successful for many principals and schools up to this point. By conducting similar studies of professional development opportunities across the state, the Pennsylvania Department of Education may be able to align the required training to what principals say they need, how they need it to be delivered, and where they are currently receiving meaningful professional development.

This study represents data from 82 secondary principals in the region. It does not take into consideration their pre-service training, but rather focuses on their professional development experiences while in practice. It also relies on a small number of participants in each of the initiatives. Many of the initiatives listed on the survey have hundreds of participants or past participants. Also, by not asking about needs related to pre-service training, some of the needs that these principals indicated could relate to the training they received in their pre-service programs. It is important to recognize these issues as limitations of the study.

5.6   DILEMMAS EMERGING FROM STUDY

Professional development can be a very personal endeavor or it can be very prescriptive. Given the principal's ability to reflect on their own growth as a learner and a leader, many principals know what skills they may need in order to improve. Other principals may be less reflective or aware of their professional strengths and weaknesses. While many of these initiatives mentioned within this study are beneficial for their participants, it is important to keep in mind that sometimes principals, or any other professionals, do not necessarily know the skills they need in order to improve. This lack of knowledge or awareness may be reflected in this study because one cannot speak to what one does not know. Responses to the open ended questions may not fully explore areas that principals may need to improve because those responding may not be fully aware of what they need in order to improve. Therefore, the emotional intelligence, especially the level of reflection on practice, plays an important part in a principal's growth as a learner and leader.

Another consideration is how the term 'professional development' is defined. This study explores professional development as learning experiences that are available to principals in the region and that consist of content that has already been decided for the participants. Professional development may also be viewed as learning experiences that help people determine, assess, and address the needs that the individual principal determines for herself. Similar to the ways of teaching and learning in a classroom, professional development can be viewed as happening to someone or with someone. While many of these learning experiences available to principals in the region are valuable, there is also value to principals being able to determine what they need in order to be effective. It is important for principals to seek and participate in opportunities that

help them learn *how* to think critically and creatively and develop problem-solving skills, rather than or in addition to *what* to think when it comes to reforming education.

Another dilemma that has emerged from this study is related to the preferred delivery method findings, coaching and mentoring, and the initiatives in the survey. While many of the respondents favored the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership, Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, and Educational Leadership Initiative, some of these initiatives do not offer coaching and mentoring within their program model. The way that the terms coaching and mentoring are being defined by the literature may be different from the way that respondents and initiative directors are defining those terms. Additionally, the process of working with a coach or a mentor can become very personal. This method for professional development can be complicated, uncomfortable, tumultuous, as well as very helpful and successful. The literature related to these two methods of professional development is growing in the field of education. Initiative directors who intend to use coaching or mentoring as a method of professional development delivery may want to consider what type of planning and professional development will be needed to train future coaches and mentors, as well as those they are coaching and mentoring, due to the personal relationship building necessary for these methods to be successful.

5.7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR PRINCIPALS

Based on the reading of the literature in the field, the findings of the study, and personal experience, the researcher would like to add recommendations for effective professional

development strategies for principals. Recommendations include: 1) Creating a study group consisting of other principals, administrators and teachers in their district that agree on a focus area and explore it using a specific protocol to keep the meeting focused and meaningful; 2) A district level administrator with principal input would be responsible for determining different professional development options and opportunities for principals. These opportunities would align with and support the same goals as the professional development for teachers; 3) Structured opportunities would be available through universities and other educational agencies to bring principals together to share experiences and methods of addressing certain issues and share how the dilemma or issue was solved; 4) School visits and observations would be conducted with a team of principals and teachers across other districts; 5) Existing initiative directors would pre-assess their principal participants in order to determine needs and align learning experiences to meet those needs; 6) Principals need to be current with new technologies and use them in their practice in order to set the level of expectations for the staff; and finally 7) Principals need more opportunities to develop skills related to the human side of leadership and/or emotional intelligence. These could be offered as workshops, courses, or personal study. Overall, the most important recommendation for principals is that they continue to learn on their own, from others and with others in order to effectively prepare schools for the 21st century students.

5.8   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are several research studies that could build upon this study and contribute more to the field of principal professional development. There are different categories of research that could be conducted, including district-wide, regional, and statewide professional development

opportunities for principals. In order to contribute more research to this growing field, a variety of further studies could be conducted.

Further studies could include interviewing initiative directors about what needs their program aims to address and determining if their program is meeting the needs of the principals. An evaluation of each of the initiatives mentioned in this study could help determine if the initiative is meeting the specific needs of the principals, as well as help them directors determine what principals would like to learn. Principal professional development needs could be aligned to the state administrative standards, Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium standards, National Institute for School Leadership standards and more. Further research could also include interviewing the principals within this region to learn more details about the types of learning experiences they prefer and that make a difference in their practice. As a professional development provider, this information could be extremely useful for aligning their topics and methods of delivery to what their participants state as needs and learning preferences. In other regions of the country, research could be conducted on initiatives similar to the ones in this study.

Another study could be conducted to identify what types of principal professional development is occurring within school districts. A qualitative research study could seek to determine how many school districts were offering professional development for principals, what needs were being addressed, what delivery methods were being used, who organized the professional development for principals, and how effective the principals thought the professional development was in meeting their needs. Evidence of effectiveness could include data on student achievement and/or interviews with principals and teachers within the district and buildings. Examples of high quality principal professional development within a school

district would be a rich contribution to this growing field. Another additional research possibility within a district could include developing job-embedded, data-driven, and collective professional development experience via an action research project where both the principal(s) and teachers work together as learners to solve a problem within their school or practice.

Further research could also include measuring how certain principal professional development experiences directly impact student achievement. This could be conducted locally, regionally, or statewide. The concentrated topics within the professional development experiences would be important in order to determine which topics had the greatest impact on student achievement. This study could be similar to the Balanced Leadership Study (Waters et al., 2002). It would be interesting to measure this within districts in order to gather evidence on specific professional development opportunities that seem to be having a profound effect on student achievement.

As the field of principal professional development grows, the need for research will continue. No longer should principal professional development be neglected. In order to maintain or improve the quality of education provided in our schools, the effectiveness of the school leader is essential. Quality professional development opportunities that align with what the principals say they need to know offered in a way that they prefer to learn can positively impact school reform, student achievement, and teacher growth. Now is the time for more school district leaders to investigate ways to create their own sustained and meaningful principal professional development plans within their districts in order to ensure educational growth and change for 21st century schools.

5.9   CONCLUSION

The results of this research study on the professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in the western Pennsylvania region suggest that secondary principals have a preference for learning how to create learning organizations that are collaborative, team-oriented, and data-driven. These principals also recognize the importance of communicating effectively in order to be clear about the direction of the school and motivate stakeholders to help sustain school improvement efforts in order to impact student achievement. They prefer to collaborate with other principals in order to learn new ways of addressing issues in their schools, and appreciate the opportunity to reflect on their practice while learning from others. Through their work with coaches, secondary principals believe that they can learn and grow professionally in order to impact teaching and learning in their buildings. While there are many options for professional development in this region of the country, these opportunities are sprouting up all over the country. Whether the principals are getting in service training within their districts or outside of their districts, the field of professional development for principals is a growing. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, western Pennsylvania regional educational agencies, universities, and other professional development providers are recognizing the importance of professional development for principals and acting upon this need in a variety of ways. Attention to this growing field is critical to help ensure progress on the current school reform efforts, the accountability measures of No Child Left Behind (2001), and, most importantly, the success of our students.

APPENDIX A

Professional Development (NCLB Definition)

The term 'professional development'-

(A) Includes Activities that-

(i) improve and increase teacher's knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;

(ii) are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans

(iii) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;

(iv) improve classroom management skills';

(v) (I) are high quality, sustained, intensive and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom;

(II) are not 1 day or short term workshops or conferences;

(vi) support the recruiting, hiring and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;

(vii) advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are –

(I) based on scientifically based research (except that this sub-clause shall not apply to

activities carried out under part D of title II); and

(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the

knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and

(viii) are aligned with and directly related to –

(I) State academic content standards, student achievement standards and assessments; &

(II) The curricula and programs tied to the standards described in sub-clause (I) except that this sub-clause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section

2123(3)(B);

(ix) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

(x) are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

(xi) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;

(xii) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;

(xiii) provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;

(xiv) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and

(xv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and

(B) may include activities that –

(i) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish

school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;

(ii) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and

(iii) provide follow-up training to teaches who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

12/3/06 Retrieved from http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/1439.pdf

LETTER

September , 2007

Dear Fellow Secondary Principal,

I am a doctoral candidate in School Leadership at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education. I am studying the professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in the 10-county Western Pennsylvania region. I am respectfully requesting your participation in a research project by asking you to complete a survey of principal professional development needs and offerings in our region.

The study is of minimal risk to those willing to participate because the information will be confidential. Your responses will be reported within groups or subgroups only. No individual or district names or results will be reported or released. The potential benefits of this study may include more information to you about your own professional development experiences and may also generate more information about the professional development needs and experiences of secondary principals in our region. Professional development for secondary principals is a growing need in our country, especially as changes in technology and globalization drive the economy and education. Participation in this study gives you an opportunity to actively provide some direction for future professional development activities. Your participation may also help inform district, state, and local professional development policy makers and providers about the needs of secondary principals in the era of school, especially high school, reform.

Participation in this study is voluntary. While your name is needed to code responses in the research study, the content will be analyzed and reported confidentially. Your identification code on the survey represents your school district and school building. The coding system is designed to track the return of the survey for follow-up purposes only. Once the study is complete, all identifying information will be destroyed.

Enclosed in this packet are the survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Please use the envelope to return your survey by XX/XX/2007.

If you would like any additional information before completing the survey, please feel free to email me at Jillian_Bichsel@fcasd.edu or call me (412) 967-2436 or (412) 735-1400. I would gladly answer any questions you may have related to the content of the survey. If you would like to know the results of the study, please indicate that you would like a summary of the research results on the final page of the survey.

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,

Jillian Bichsel
Assistant Principal of Fox Chapel Area High School
University of Pittsburgh Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

SURVEY

C.1   NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The items below represent areas of knowledge that are reflected in the in Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for School Leaders and other leadership qualities correlated with the school improvement process. Please rate the importance of these topics as subjects for future professional development activities. *Indicate the level of importance that this knowledge has on your ability to effectively lead your school through a school improvement process by circling the number on the right.*

Area of Focus for Professional Development

Scale:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Not a Need	Somewhat a Need	Somewhat Important Need	Extremely Important Need

Skills/Tasks		**Scale**		
1. Developing information and data collection strategies	1	2	3	4
2. Analyzing data	1	2	3	4
3. Communicating effectively	1	2	3	4
4. Building consensus and negotiating effectively	1	2	3	4
Vision, Beliefs, Mission				
5. Creating a learning organization	1	2	3	4
6. Developing the vision and the mission	1	2	3	4
7. Building shared decision making, collegiality and peer support	1	2	3	4
8. Building team commitment	1	2	3	4
9. Defining the core values and beliefs of education	1	2	3	4
Desired Results for Student Learning				
10. Using research and "best practices"	1	2	3	4
11. Designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum	1	2	3	4
12. Understanding measurement, evaluation, assessment strategies	1	2	3	4
13. Understanding student development and learning	1	2	3	4
14. Setting goals and determining outcomes	1	2	3	4
Organizational and Instructional Effectiveness				
15. Developing the school organization through systemic reform	1	2	3	4

Scale:

1	2	3	4
Not a Need	Somewhat a Need	Somewhat Important Need	Extremely Important Need

	1	2	3	4
16. Managing the organization and operational procedures	1	2	3	4
17. Organizing resources	1	2	3	4
18. Facilitating professional development/Development of others	1	2	3	4
19. Facilitating the change process	1	2	3	4
School Action Plans/Continuous School Improvement				
20. Developing and implementing strategic action plans	1	2	3	4
21. Resolving complex problems	1	2	3	4
22. Setting a results-oriented instructional direction	1	2	3	4
23. Solving problems and making decisions	1	2	3	4
24. Sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement	1	2	3	4
25. Building community and involvement	1	2	3	4
Professional Personal Readiness				
26. Ability to be self-reflective in practice	1	2	3	4
27. Ability to deal with conflict	1	2	3	4
28. Ability to channel emotions, delay gratification, stifle impulses.	1	2	3	4
29. Ability to tolerate and be sensitive to various perspectives	1	2	3	4
30. Ability to deal with others' emotions and social skills.	1	2	3	4

Do you have other needs that are not indicated above? Please explain.

C.2 PREFERRED DELIVERY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For each topic below, circle the number to the right that best reflects how effective you perceive the method of delivery for professional development. Use the scale below to match your opinion (Choose only one).

Professional Development Delivery Method			
Scale:			
1 **Ineffective in** **Meeting my Needs**	**2** **Somewhat Ineffective** **in Meeting my Needs**	**3** **Effective in** **Meeting my Needs**	**4** **Very Effective in** **Meeting my Needs**
Focused workshop session (Professional conference session, half-day seminar, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Online/self-paced (Online tutorials, short courses, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Mentoring (Collegial relationship that is supportive and often self-selected)	1	2	3	4
Coaching (Collaborative partnership between consultant and leader/manager with a focus on improving or developing skills, providing feedback, and analyzing situations)	1	2	3	4
Coursework (Graduate credit, continuing education credit, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Problem-based projects (Action research, hands-on/field-based projects, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Study group (Lesson Study, book discussion, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Seminar/Conference (Held across days, multiple targeted sessions, etc.)	1	2	3	4
Other:	1	2	3	4

C.3 INITIATIVES THAT ARE OFFERED IN REGION THAT YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN.

For each initiative, please indicate whether you have participated by circling yes or no in the left column. If you **have** participated, please rate the overall effectiveness of each initiative's professional development opportunity.

	Professional Development Initiatives in the Western PA Region				
Part icipated: Yes/No	**Scale:** **1** Ineffective in Meeting my Needs	**2** Somewhat Ineffective in Meeting my Needs	**3** Effective in Meeting my Needs	**4** Very effective in Meeting my Needs	
Y / N	1. The Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania (Univ. of Pittsburgh)				
Y / N	2. Educational Leadership Initiative (ELI), (Univ. of Pittsburgh)				
Y / N	3. Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Institute (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)				
Y / N	4. Math/Science Partnership (Allegheny Intermediate Unit)				
Y / N	5. Tri-State Area School Study Council (University of Pittsburgh)				
Y / N	6. Institute for Learning (University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center)				
Y / N	7. Virtual Internet Coach (Duquesne University)				
Y / N	8. Other – Please list:				

C.4   PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL IMPACT

Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible, including why certain experiences were valuable for you as a school leader and educator.

1) In what ways have your professional development experiences impacted your **practices** as a school leader?

2) In what ways have your professional development experiences impacted **policy changes** in your school or district?

3) In what ways have your professional development experiences impacted your **growth** as a school leader?

4) Please share advice you'd like to offer as to what types of professional development would help you further develop as a school leader?

C.5   DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please complete the following by checking the appropriate box.

1. Are you female or male?

☐ Female   ☐ Male

2. What is your race?

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native   ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ African American   ☐ Caucasian   ☐ Hispanic

3. Educational experience – Please indicate your level of education and institution of degree granted.

☐ Bachelor's degree from _____
☐ Master's degree from _____
☐ Doctorate degree from_____
☐ Teaching Certificate from_____
☐ Administrative certificate from_____

4. What year did you become a school administrator? _____

5. What year did you become an administrator at your <u>current</u> school? _____

I would like a summary of this research study: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study!

APPENDIX D

ALIGNMENT DOCUMENT

Survey Questions	Research Questions 1. What professional development needs do secondary principals identify in order to be more effective as school leaders? 2. What professional development opportunities are secondary principals participating in across the region?	ISLLC	Balanced Leadership responsibilities	PDE Administrative standards
Content of PD				
1. Developing information and data collection strategies	1	1	Resources, Knowledge of C, IA	I.B., I.D.
2. Analyzing data	1	1	Resources, Knowledge of C, IA	I.B., I.D.
3. Communicating effectively	1	1, 6	Communication, Visibility	I.F.,
4. Building consensus and negotiating effectively	1	1, 3	Culture	I.A., I.B.
5. Creating a learning organization	1	2	Intellectual stimulation, Culture	I.A., I.B., I.F.
6. Developing the vision and the mission	1	1	Focus	I.A.
7. Building shared decision making, collegiality and peer support	1	1, 3	Culture, Relationship, Visibility	I.A.,
8. Building team commitment	1	1, 5	Culture, Relationship	I.A.,
9. Defining the core values and beliefs of education	1	1, 5, 6	Focus, Culture	I.A.

10. Using research and "best practices"	1	3, 5	Intellectual stimulation, Knowledge of C, IA	I.B.
11. Designing, implementing, and evaluating curriculum	1	2	C, I & A, Knowledge of C, IA	I.B.
12. Understanding measurement, evaluation, assessment strategies	1	2	Knowledge of C, IA, Monitors/evaluates	I.B.
13. Understanding student development and learning	1	2, 6	Ideals/Beliefs, Monitors/evaluates	I.B.
14. Setting goals and determining outcomes	1	1	Focus	I.A., I.B.
15. Developing the school organization using systems thinking	1	1, 6	Order	I.A.
16. Managing the organization and operational procedures	1	3	Order	I.E.
17. Organizing resources	1	3	Order, Resources	I.E.
18. Facilitating professional development/Development of others	1	2	Resources, Intellectual stimulation	I.A., I.B.
19. Facilitating the change process	1	2, 6	Change agent	I.A., I.B., I.D., I.E.
20. Developing and implementing strategic action plans	1	1	Focus	I.A., I.E.
21. Resolving complex problems	1	3	Input	I.A., I.D., I.F.
22. Setting results-oriented instructional direction	1	2	Focus	I.B., I.D.
23. Solving problems and making decisions	1	3	Input	I.A., I.F., I.D.
24. Sustaining and motivating for continuous improvement	1	1, 5	Contingent rewards, Affirmation, Situational awareness	I.A., I.B.
25. Building community and involvement	1	4, 6	Optimizer, Culture	I.A., I.F.
26. Ability to be self-reflective in practice	1	1, 5	Flexibility, Optimizer, Relationship	III.D.
27. Ability to deal with conflict and manage emotions within self	1	5	Situational awareness, Flexibility	III.D.
28. Ability to channel emotions, delay gratification, stifle impulses.	1	5	Optimizer, Flexibility, Situational	I.A.

			awareness	
29. Ability to tolerate and be sensitive to various perspectives	1	2, 4, 5, 6	Outreach, Relationship	I.F.
30. Ability to deal with others' emotions and social skills.	1	5, 6	Outreach, Relationship	I.F.
Delivery Methods				
31. Focused workshop session	2	--	--	--
32. Online/self-paced	2	--	--	--
33. Mentoring	2	--	--	--
34. Coaching	2	--	--	--
35. Coursework	2	--	--	--
36. Problem-based projects	2	--	--	--
37. Study groups	2	--	--	--
38. Seminar/conference	2	--	--	--
PD in W. PA				
40. Principals Academy	2	--	--	--
41. ELI	2	--	--	--
42. PA Inspired Leadership	2	--	--	--
43. MSP	2	--	--	--
44. Tri-State	2	--	--	--
45. Institute for Learning	2	--	--	--
46. Virtual Internet Coach	2	--	--	--
47. Other	2	--	--	--
Prof. & Personal impact	The participants' answers to these questions will help in the analysis of the study. The answers may address needs of principals, as well as experiences they have had with certain professional development opportunities.			
51. Practices				
52. Policy changes				
53. Growth				
54. Advice				

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW UP PHONE CALL TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Jillian Bichsel and I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh. As you may remember, I recently sent you a copy of a survey/link to the survey titled "Professional Development Needs and Experiences of Secondary Principals in Southwestern Pennsylvania" for my dissertation research. I was wondering if had a chance to look at it and if you may have any questions I could answer for you? Would you like another copy sent to you either electronically or through the mail? Your participation in the survey is strictly voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential.

Your participation in this study would be very helpful in furthering this area of research along in our region.

Thank you for your time.

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