

**SOCIALIZATION OF PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION**

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# **SOCIALIZATION OF PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION**

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This study investigates the challenges, responses, and the importance of socialization in public high schools and the context of principal succession in specific contexts as well as how these contexts affect succession. Additionally, investigation into transition assistance is also studied. The concern is not the rationale for the candidates' reasons to change positions or schools or districts; rather to focus on the succession, as defined as the first year. The purpose of the study is to assist districts in providing better transition assistance, and to better prepare those principals who wish to have a smooth and successful first year. By showing patterns or themes of concerns, clustering responses, counting, seeing plausibility for connectedness, organizing descriptive statistics, comprising a common list of challenges and by highlighting areas of need, general conclusions are drawn in a reasonable path involving complex problems.

This study is presented in four chapters. Chapter I presents a review of the existing literature related to principal and assistant principal historical representations, job responsibilities, instructional leadership, role ambiguity, principal preparation, organizational succession, and principal succession. Chapter II provides participant information, research questions, instrumentation, and procedures for data collection. Chapter III provides an analysis of the collected data, and Chapter IV presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and implications for practice.

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## **1.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The responsibilities of the high school principal have drastically changed over the past fifteen years, and as such the role of principal has evolved into the most important figure and instructional leader in the accountability era (Ellwood, 1923; ERS, 1998; Leadership, 2000). This role includes taking on additional responsibilities both academic and programmatic. With the paradigm shift of principals moving from managers to instructional leaders, the role of the assistant principal has also changed accounting for more critical responsibilities and duties. One reason the role and responsibilities of the principal and assistant principal were redeveloped was to meet demands and legislative impact on the American public educational system.

Building level administrators need to be skillful at assisting teachers with instructional practices, building vision, and guidance. However, the duty of handling the day-to-day middle management responsibilities is also necessary. It is not a reach to say that leadership, specifically instructional leadership, is both important and necessary for the smooth functioning of school systems and successful learning in the accountability era. The credit or blame for school and student performance is often the direct result of a principal's work. Principals and assistants alike must have the knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical knowledge of school functions, teaching, and learning issues to advance public education into the next century.

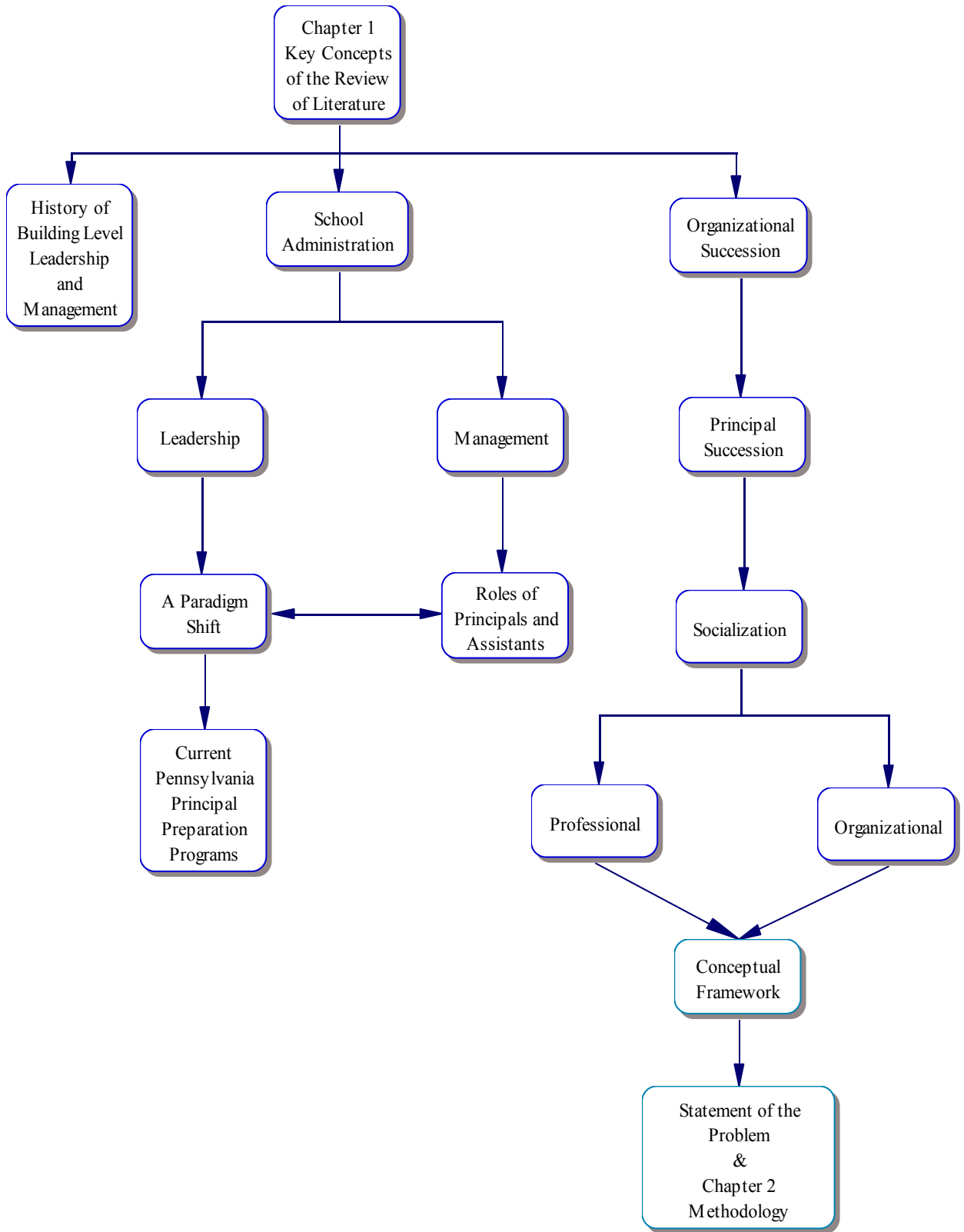
The position of principal is one of the most important, complex, and stressful in a public school. The literature identifies a need for assistants and principals to devote additional time to

inform the public about the increased expectations imposed on school systems and school leaders. A principal carries certain qualities from preparation programs, professional socialization, and prior teaching experiences to their job. Assistant secondary school principals could be placed in two career categories. One is a career choice of being an assistant principal; however, this is rare. The other is serving as an assistant principal as a stepping-stone to a higher administration position, such as a building principal. Often, assistant principals have less experience than a building principal. When less experienced administrators are promoted, or succeeds, they often move with neophyte conceptions not of the experiences of seasoned veteran administrators. These conceptions are often ill-conceived ideas regarding responsibilities and job descriptions and put the beginning principal at a disadvantage. The unexpected challenges and demands of newly appointed principals often lead to professional and personal strain, most notably: role-conflict and ambiguity, mobility, self-efficacy issues, and responsibility overload (Austin, 1970; Bottoms, 2001; Byrk, 1996; Duke, 1984). Challenges of change, stress, and improving student outcomes occupy a new principal's thoughts, actions, and emotions. Prior training only affords assistants the opportunity to become a principal in title alone. Becoming a principal involves leadership development and professional development to assist them in their professional quest.

As the role of building level leadership evolves and more principals become instructional leaders first and a managers second, opportunities for changing roles could correct some contextual succession issues. Some researchers and practioners dispute the assistant principal position is an appropriate training ground for the principalship. Even some principals believe the training ground is inadequate, and those in the role of principal may be under prepared. This review of literature examines the roles and responsibilities of assistants and principals in

identifying socialization issues, leadership and management skills, and position descriptions to better understand the challenges of succession.

This chapter is organized first with a historical perspective, followed by research on leadership and management. The next concept covered discusses how roles of principals and assistants, with respect to their responsibilities, relate to management and leadership. A significant portion of the Chapter 1 literature review is focused on succession and aspects of succession that affect the principalship. The last section of this chapter presents a summary and a conceptual framework. The following figure is a flow chart of Chapter 1 concepts and will help to further clarify the issues covered.



**Figure 1. Chapter 1 Flow Chart**

## **1.1 HISTORY OF BUILDING LEVEL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The original purpose of schooling outside a family environment has been and is civic, economic, and religious in nature. In the Colonial Era schools existed to prepare young boys for college and later the ministry (Cubberley, 1922; Smith, 1989, 1907). According to Clubberly (1992) the principal college was Harvard, and to that end the requirements for admission to Harvard was the loosely coupled curriculum. The Colonial Schools' main purpose and coursework was rooted in morality and religious training, understanding scripture, and the teaching of reading, writing, and Latin (Bonner, 1920; Cubberley, 1922; Smith, 1989). Successful completion of school during the Colonial Era was a gateway to the ministry or to government office. These schools did not require a supervisor or principal as they were contained in one-room school houses with a small number of pupils and one teacher. The teacher attended to all instructional and daily management tasks associated with the upkeep of the building including cutting firewood and ensuring fresh drinking water. A small board of laymen served as school examiners (Cubberley, 1922). As populations continued to grow and settlers arrived education expanded.

Merchants and tradesman began seeking education as a practical and cultural means of social movement (Gaither, 2003). By the mid-1750s and for the next century, according to Thorndike (1907), The American Academies, as they became known, continued to grow to include newly arriving groups of immigrants: Separatists, French Huguenots, German peasants, English bond servants, and the Scotch Irish. This influx of new peoples, cultures, and ideas upset the system in place and challenged the traditional religious customs from England (Boyd, 1977; Cubberley, 1922). The need for a building level administrator or principal began with the American Academies. Anderson (1963) noted how the popular support of separation of Church and State sparked a change in curriculum and organization. Influential men such as Ben Franklin

cited a need for schools to prepare young boys for trades and skilled work in addition to college. Ben Franklin continued identifying a need for multiple teachers and a more diverse curricula to include mathematics, literature, science, and speech (Cubberley, 1922; Gaither, 2003). It was at this time physical education and vocational subjects such as agriculture were introduced in secondary schools. Towns were forced to employ multiple teachers in several classrooms within one building (Gaither, 2003). As these schools evolved, a need for an organization of activities and instruction developed. No single teacher had authority outside his classroom to make decisions. According to Anderson (1963), it was during this era that a “head teacher” would take responsibility for decisions such as determining the opening and closing time, scheduling classes, requisitioning supplies, managing the building, and communicating with parents and the community. It is from this “head teacher” position the secondary school principal evolved. The head teacher or “principal teacher” was later shortened to principal. A close relationship evolved between the teachers and the principal because the principal still taught classes and could empathize with the concerns and frustrations of teachers (Ellwood, 1923; Gaither, 2003). Freeing the principal from teaching allowed him (there were no women) to take on other professional responsibilities, namely the supervision of teachers. The principal also acted as a liaison between the school and local board of education. By the mid 1850s, during the common school era where tax dollars funded schools, superintendents of schools became a regular position in larger cities that had multiple schools or large grammar or secondary schools (Cubberley, 1922). As this occurred, the principal became a liaison between the school and the central office (Anderson, 1963; Gaither, 2003; Smith, 1989). The principal began to network outside the school, and to take on community responsibilities in the town hall and church, for example serving as home visitor of the sick, bell ringer, grave digger, and court messenger (Jacobson, 1950, 727). His



public presence and education level elevated him to the same status as a mayor. Along with this status came responsibility and expectations from the community. Jacobson (1950) cited how the principal was expected to be present at local cultural and civic affairs. It was not uncommon to find principals working long hours involved in volunteer capacities, projects, and sitting on social committees.

The last half of the nineteenth century's most notable change in America was that of social equality (Anderson, 1963; Boyd, 1977). Farmers, merchants, shop keepers and the like organized to abolish the barriers which eliminated their sons (the education of girls came later) from the schooling their tax dollar funded (Gaither, 2003; Smith, 1989). It was during this time the number of public high schools increased from 321 in 1860 to 2526 in 1890, according to the US Bureau of Education in 1904. Cubberley (1992) discussed John Dewey as the foremost "American interpreter, in terms of school, of the vast social and industrial changes"(435). Cubberley recounts how Dewey was the first to note that schools are reflections of society as a whole. Dewey and his ideas set in motion a path which American schooling would continue on through the next century and is still popular today, most notably "learning by doing" (Cubberley, 1922, 436). During this era, the position of school Administrative Aides or Part-Time Principals first appeared in schools. Administrative Aides or Part-Time Principal's duties spanned discipline issues, attendance concerns, building maintenance, counseling, record keeping, cafeteria service, health service, and transportation. Duties outside the scope of instruction became their main responsibility leading the way for building level management or middle management. More traditional roles of teacher supervision and school-central office and school-community liaison were left to the principal. Also at this time, the bureaucracy of secondary schooling began to appear with the addition of secretaries, athletic directors, counselors, and

cafeteria managers. During the late 1800s school systems began to experience problems with the coordination of activities, direction, and leadership competencies (Anderson, 1963; Boyd, 1977; Cubberley, 1922; Gaither, 2003). Anderson (1963) stated that these part-time principals, administrative aides, and principals of small schools used their positions as steppingstones for more lucrative positions (11). Expansion of teacher scholarship, the textbook, school management, and educational science were highlights of the late 1800s (Gaither, 2003).

At the turn of the century, the expansion of secondary schools led to an increase in bureaucratic problems and an additional level of building management, the Assistant or Vice Principal (Smith, 1989). According to Jarrett (1958) the assistant principal was a direct subordinate to the principal who usually had specialized tasks: school management, extracurricular activities, college admissions, co curricular activities, pupil services, and discipline. The majority of these assistants knew and understood their job responsibilities as dealing primarily with pupil welfare and building management and looked at their current position as a training ground for the principalship. It was unwritten policy that promotions to the principalship occurred from within in large school districts (Anderson, 1963, 56). This became the basic organizational model for modern high schools, defined since 1890.

Twentieth century secondary education and administration of that education was marked by both amazing gains in number of schools and enrollment, and by criticism of opposing interest groups with respect to curriculum and co curriculum (Tycak, 1974; Tycak, 1994). Similarly a steady increase in the diversity of student abilities, interests, and backgrounds occurred. It is the amalgamation of these increases that bring us to our present day position of secondary schools.

The role of the principalship has evolved into a highly complex and legislated position of responsibilities and accountability in the past five to ten years. Rapid technological advances and governmental changes added to those pressures. Some observers of education attempt to link educational progression and change to forces outside the institution itself. And, at the same time other observers attribute the change and progress of education to forces within the institution, such as, educational philosophies, pedagogy, and self-imposed educational structure. It is difficult to say with any certainty that one has affected public secondary schooling to any greater degree than the other. It is also presumptuous to say it is only one or the other. A school represents and reflects the community it serves. Outside forces of a larger social structure, including political, economic, legal, technical, demographic, ecological, and cultural, influence who and what enter the school house gate (Ubben, 2001). Implicitly acting upon these forces is the organizational structure comprising the secondary school. The internal pressures of change from academics and practitioners are profound. The high school principal and assistant principal are charged with overseeing these external forces and from those within. Their chief function is the education of children (Anderson, 1963, 25). However, it is not this simple. To achieve this goal of providing quality educational opportunities, it is necessary to have a multitude of systems, structures, and procedures in place. It is also necessary to have the capacity to oversee those activities with some degree of efficiency. Wernick (1960) highlights that administrative detail is part of the principalship, but should in no way take priority over leadership. There is a need for principals and assistants to see the breadth and depth of educational issues. They must have an understanding of its past and present situation, and the direction and issues on the horizon - theoretical, practical, and philosophical. The role of the principal as instructional leader

began at the same time that the position began. As previously mentioned, principal was shortened from principal teacher.

- The role of principal developed out of necessity during a time when school population experienced a sudden and prolific expansion. Principals are important instructional figures in schools and important community leaders and education activists. The role of principal has been and is one of supervision of faculty and students, community relationships and communication, and management and leadership. Principals perform vital leadership roles around the function of public education. These roles vary in contextual and situational arenas.

## **1.2 SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP THEORIES**

[Leadership is a subject that appeals to and intrigues many Americans.] “Leadership tends to be romanticized in American culture, especially in the culture of schooling”(Elmore, 2000, 13). The characteristics of good leadership are discussed at length in schools and corporate offices. These definitions of leadership “differ sharply...and a plethora of research exists”(Mitchell, 1991, 217). Often, and throughout history, conversation turns to the lack of leadership in public schools. There is an extensive quantity of literature on the types and styles of leadership, traits and characteristics of effective leaders, and theories about leadership. Shelves are filled with books on effective leaders, and business executives flock to learn the so called proven methods of effectiveness. Many believe if they follow these prescribed behaviors, their organization will run as a machine does. The only variable in those manuals is people, and people fill schools.

School administration is found in treatises of public administration and government, business management, industrial psychology, military leadership, and various writings(Campbell, 1969). Campbell (1969) says it is through all of these that a common educational leadership definition has evolved. The following are popular leadership theories.

**Table 1. Popular Leadership Theories**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>Authentic Leadership</b>	Involves a leader being themselves, being guided by qualities of the heart and mind. These leaders have a purpose and values, and they work hard to overcome shortcomings ultimately realizing leadership is a lifetime of personal growth.
<b>Charismatic Leadership</b>	Max Weber 1947 - A person set apart from others, this persona exhibits and is endowed with hero type qualities; they are superhuman.
<b>Fiedler’s Contingency Theory</b>	Leadership effectiveness depends on the leaders personality and the situation and due to this dichotomy a leader can be effective in a certain situation but not another.
<b>Great Man Theory</b>	Leaders are born not made. Great leaders will arise when there is a great need. Example often cited: Jesus, Churchill, and Eisenhower

<p><b>Path-Goal Theory</b></p>	<p>Joseph House 1971 – Similar to contingency theory, except the focus is on the situation and leader behavior, not leader traits. A leader can change subordinate outcomes through clarifying the path towards employee goals.</p>
<p><b>Level 5 Leader</b></p>	<p>Jim Collins – A Level 5 Leader is one who builds enduring greatness long after his departure by a blending humility and will. Leadership is a function not a role, and by sharing leadership it is enduring.</p>
<p><b>Situational Approach</b></p>	<p>Sam Hershey - A leader analyzes a situation and then adopts the best fit for the situation. These behaviors fall into four categories: supporting, coaching, delegating, and directing</p>
<p><b>Trait Theory</b></p>	<p>People are born with certain traits. Certain traits are particularly suited for leadership, and those who possess these certain traits will make good leaders.</p>

<p><b>Transformational Leadership</b></p>	<p>George Burns 1978 – This theory professes to make followers self-empowered leaders and then into change agents. They exhibit characteristics such as persistence, logical thought processes, self-control, and empowerment. Leadership as bonding with others. Examples often cited: Luther, Alexander, Gandhi, Kennedy, and Moses.</p>
<p><b>Transactional Leadership</b></p>	<p>Burns/Weber – This theory relies on bureaucratic knowledge and a prescribed power structure. The exercise of control is on the basis of knowledge. Leaders and followers exchange needs and services; leadership bartering and often building. Examples often cited: Franklin D. Roosevelt, McCarthy, and Jefferson.</p>

\*The previous leadership theories appear in the following works – Stodgill (1973) *Handbook of Leadership*; Drucker (2001) *The Essential Drucker*; Sergiovanni (1996) *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*; Collins (2001) *Good To Great*; Sergiovanni (1990) *Advances in Leadership Theory and Practice* .

Stodgill discussed, in his 1973 *Handbook of Leadership*, his examination of 120 leaders during the first half of the twentieth century. He revealed the following five consistent personal factors associated with leadership.

1. Capacity – intelligence, verbal ability, judgment, alertness
2. Achievement – knowledge, scholarship, accomplishment
3. Responsibility – initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, dependability
4. Participation – activity, sociability, humor, cooperation
5. Status – socioeconomic position, popularity

Stodgill and Coons 1957 study of leader behavior, cited in Stodgill's *Handbook of Leadership*, utilized a rating scale to identify leader behavior entitled Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire or LBQD. This scale was designed to categorize leaders as consideration behavior and initiation of structure. Consideration refers to behaviors that stress interpersonal relationships of warmth and friendliness, trust and respect; while initiation of structure stresses goal facilitation, is task oriented, and keyed on goal accomplishment.

### **1.2.1 School Leadership**

“Many experts believe that the traditional view of leadership has run its’ course” (Sergiovanni, 1990, 3). The school principal is not a supervisor of procedures and technical operations, he or she is a leader of people focused on a common goal. And, in turn principals should seek to gain effective responses from those people he leads (Brown, 1973; Sergiovanni, 1996). Thurston (1991)asserted, “despite a flood of articles and books on the topic (of leadership) we surprisingly know little about how leadership works in American public schools”(ix). The flood Thurston



cited derives from a variety of perspectives: organizational, personal, extraneous, and within a person. Leadership in American secondary schools transcends all of these ideas and includes cultural, technological, ecological, demographic, and economic forces. According to Elmore (2000) “the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role”(20). Smith and Piele (1989) defined leadership as “the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals”(22). Similarly and more simply, former President of the National Association of Secondary School Principals defined leadership as “getting the job done through people”. However easy to understand these definitions, it is still difficult to observe effective leadership in a school setting. Burlingame (1991) attempted to clarify why leadership in schools is difficult to define:

... I believe it is the most common solution for an author or authors to legislate the characteristic(s) that determine leadership. In fact, that is what theories of leadership in general, and school leadership in particular, do. For example, leadership is the right amounts of initiating structure and consideration, or leadership is situational, or leadership is contingent. Such legislation succeeds or fails when it convinces or prescribes others to use that particular characteristic or set of characteristics to designate leadership. Most reviews of leadership in general consist of tracing these various legislative definition of leadership and their chief proponents or antagonists. (2)

Burlingame’s explanation is validated when applied to a schools standardized test results being linked to school leadership. Many contemporary education proponents and pundits agree that effective school leadership is a necessity for student success and success on standardized test scores (Sergiovanni, 1996). Foster, as quoted in Ubben, (2001) said, “leadership is the final analysis, it is the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a more perfect union”(3). He continued acknowledging the value of shared ideas and responsibilities, which are “validated by the consent of his followers”(3). Ponder this perception of running schools and job responsibilities and the daily minutia of building level tasks. This oversight of schools does not

necessarily define the community's perception of how principals and assistants spend their day. According to Giannangelo and Maloney's (1987) survey of 143 teachers in a large urban district, teachers overwhelmingly (90.2%) believe the principal's main responsibility is instructional leadership. However, the survey also revealed that 70% of respondents agreed principals are the school's chief disciplinarians.

Based on the definitions and citations in the previous two sections regarding management and leadership coupled with the job responsibilities of each, an assumption is made that while the principalship is a leadership role, the assistant is more closely associated with that of middle management. While this is a generalized assumption and not exclusively defined, it is reasonable to assume that both principals and assistants can both lead and manage. However, the "new breed" of principals are expected to further focus on issues of teaching and learning with skills that far exceed the "school managers" of the past (Bottoms, 2001). "Two decades of school effectiveness research reliably conclude that successful schools invariably have dynamic, knowledgeable, and focused leaders" (Kaplan, 2005, 31). Principals are important players in the shaping of the American public school system and America in a social, economic, and political context (Sergiovanni, 1994, 1996; Tycak, 1982).

The NASSP published results of a survey of contemporary public high school principals (NASSP, 2001). In their findings, 65% of those responding listed priorities of instructional concerns first and establishing a learning environment second. Another significant aspect of the study's results is the tasks and responsibilities principals delegated or passed-off to assistant principals or the central office personnel: program evaluation (79%), curriculum development (77%), and professional development (78%). In the same study, nearly half (44%) cited working conditions and added responsibility as their major points of dissatisfaction.

Leadership is the single most important aspect of school reform (Friedkin, 1994; Marzano, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1996). Regardless of the theories that exist about leadership of any kind, it is naive to believe that one specific approach is best or most adequate for school leadership due to cultural factors, size, and tradition; a multidirectional approach is affirmed by many school leaders. The following table is a compilation of researched based effective school leader characteristics.

**Table 2. Effective School Leader Characteristics**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Core Characteristics</b>
Blum, Butler, and Olson	1987	knowledge of instruction, monitors performance, clear vision, communicates effectively to staff, establishes a safe environment
Hallinger and Murphy	1987	frames goals, explicit academic goals, maintains visibility, selects and participates in professional development, coordinates curriculum, evaluates instruction
Levin and Lezotte	1990	supervises instructional practices, high energy, monitors school activities, acquires resources, supports teachers, highly selective when replacing teachers

Neufield and Freedman	1992	gives a clear voice with teaching decisions, invites contrary views into discussions, treats teachers as professionals, creates non-restrictive teaching environments
Sammonds, Hillman, and Mortimore	1995	leading professionals, purposeful, firm, uses participatory management

\*(Baum, 1987; Hallinger, 1987; Levine, 1990; Neufeld, 1992; Sammonds, 1995)

The Educational Research Service defined the ten skills necessary for successful 21<sup>st</sup> century school leaders (ERS, 1998). They are as follows:

1. Visionary leadership
2. Policy and governance
3. Communication and community relations
4. Organizational management
5. Curriculum planning and development
6. Instructional management
7. Staff evolutional and personal management
8. Staff development
9. Educational research, evaluation, and planning
10. Values and ethics of leadership

Covey (1986), in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, identified the habits school leaders could find useful. They are as follows:

1. Be yourself, interject your personal touch
2. Communicate openly and honestly
3. Be a good listener
4. Seek first to understand, then be understood
5. Show respect for the other person's opinions
6. Be a good role model
7. Be fair: avoid any appearance of favoritism

Elmore offered six principal leadership functions in his treatise *Building a New Structure for School Leadership* (2000). They are as follows:

1. Design school improvement functions
2. Implement incentive structures for teachers and support personnel
3. Recruit, evaluate teachers
4. Broker professional development consistent with improvement strategy
5. Allocate school resources toward instruction
6. Buffer teachers from non-instructional issues

Smith and Piele suggested five critical functions for instructional leadership in their book *School Leadership* (1989).

1. Supervision
2. Providing teacher in-service training
3. Evaluating teachers
4. Selecting teachers
5. Protecting instructional time and teacher integrity

*How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie (1936) offered solid advice for school leadership. His lessons are still applicable to school leadership nearly 100 years later. They are as follows:

1. Make the other person feel important and do it sincerely
2. Strive to maintain your credibility
3. Set high expectations for yourself and others
4. Use a team approach and seek consensus
5. Make informed decisions
6. Be proactive
7. Think win/win
8. Synergize for creative cooperation
9. Show your human side and display a sense of humor
10. Share a vision for the future success

Glanz (2002) encouraged educational leaders to use their style, a style that works for them, to become an effective leader. He pointed out three primary quality types: Dynamics, Adaptives, and Creatives. He also indicated three secondary types: Agressives, Assertatives, and Supportives. He applied these six qualities and forms seven Natural Leadership Qualities(NLQ).

**Table 3. Natural Leadership Qualities**

<b>NLQ</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Dynamic Aggressives	Natural leaders, charismatic, skillful orators, visionary, domineering, and extroverted
Dynamic Assertatives	Change agents, idealistic, spontaneous, introspective, and risk-takers
Dynamic Supportives	Charismatic, warm-hearted, gentle, humorous, articulate, strong-willed, and easy-going
Adaptive Aggressives	Resourceful, self-assured, socially aware, exciting, and success-oriented
Adaptive Assertatives	Organized, diligent, civic, principled, dependable, and value centered
Adaptive Supportives	Trustworthy, status-quo supporters, consensus builders, hard working, and charitable
Creative Supportives	Self sufficient, visionary, emotional, unpredictable, absorbed, and driven

Ramesy's book (1999) *Lead, follow, or get out of the way: How to be a more effective leader in today's schools*, indicated thirty (30) qualities of effective leaders. They are as follows:

Ability to close the deal, ability to get the most out of people, ambiguity tolerance, authenticity, buoyancy, commitment to ethical leadership, commitment to excellence, commitment to life-long-learning, commitment to common sense and uncommon sensibility, communication skills, decision-making and problem solver skills, fascination and comfort with change, flexibility, genuine love and concern for kids, goal-setting skills, good physical and mental health and balanced life, high-level thinking skills, optimism and hope, philosophy of risk-taking, passion, planning/organizing and prioritizing skills, political savvy, a professional image, reality based attitude, self-confidence, self-discipline, technological know how, tenacity/perseverance, time management skills, and a willingness to be intuitive. (10)

Simply stated, effective school leaders not only know what to do, but know when and how to do it. It has been clearly stated and cited how despite a wide array of ways to lead, a leader must choose a style all his or her own.

Elmore (2000) stated school "leadership is the guidance and direction of instructional improvement"(13). Instructional leadership and leading professional learning communities begins with the principal (Franklin, 2005; Sergiovanni, 1996). Heck and Hallinger (1999), commenting on the principalship and school leadership, noted there is a generalized assumption about the principal's effect on school and student achievement. Heck and Hallinger agreed that principals had an indirect affect on student outcomes, with respects to how this effect was they disagreed with the larger body of research of effectiveness. Heck and Hallinger indicated the larger body of effective evidence is concerned with student achievement, creating a bias toward quantitative methods. By looking through diverse lenses they concluded the focus of research has primarily been on the principal's role, and that any singular method to a study will not yield "universal understandings of schools"(143). They continued by stating that a school is not a closed system that strives for a simple singular purpose. As shown by the research thus far



presented and in agreement with Heck and Hallinger, school leadership is often defined and studied in different contexts not comparing many similarities. In addition, how knowledge is constructed amongst research may impede results. Heck and Hallinger concluded that “researchers are looking for regularities in social data”(151). No such animal exists in public education when factoring in local control of education and people as variables.

### **1.2.2 School Management**

Leaders and managers are known for what they do. Their deeds and accomplishments are seen by the way they make things happen with people and things, their actions, influence, and the capacity in which they get their ideas across. It is important to recognize that management is only a subset of the whole school leadership experience. Managers think tactically, whereas, leaders may think strategically. Here, task evaluation can separate job responsibilities and narrow a definition. Mitchell (1991) explained that if task execution is more important than interpersonal relationship, the role engaged in is management, not leadership. Mitchell used supervision of teachers as an example of management. The desired result is effective implementation of curriculum through analysis and planning. The identification of a particular problem requires a prescribed skill set to supervise and implement. Sergiovanni (1994) listed five forces which instructional leader exert upon school and those within: technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural. It is difficult to question that schools are large institutions which require a high degree of consistency, procedures, and management. This is true with all organizations regardless of their scope. In many communities the school itself is the largest employer and concentration of people at any given time. Someone needs to handle the daily minutia of running

the school. The ability to plan, analyze problems, make decisions, communicate, perform under pressure, and work with others is essential in this endeavor (Ubben, 2001).

“People are led and things are managed” is a common leadership mantra. This simple quotation simplifies a highly involved skill set, viewpoint, job responsibilities and didactic relationship in schools; however, there is some validity to the saying. The principal acting as an administrator according to Mitchell (1991) is more of a leader than a manager (232). The art or science of being a principal has changed so drastically in the recent past that the position is much more than a reactive middle manager (Ubben, 2001). Leaders do not simply maintain orderliness or build on the status quo to improve an activity or set of conditions.

“Administration in education has come to mean not the management of instruction, but the management of the structures and processes around instruction” (Elmore, 2000, 6). The link of high stakes test scores and effective instructional leadership is often cited as a defining quality for effective leadership. “Instructional leadership is equivalent of the holy grail in educational administration” (Elmore, 2000, 7). Sergiovanni’s (1994) study of school leadership diminished the argument that the old guard of top down leadership or the hierarchy of the 1800s is not as effective when looking for student learning and performance on high stakes tests. He continued by adding that as the rigid structure decreases, the possibility of an improvement in scores increases significantly. Howell’s 1980 study of principals as instructional leaders discovered that even the best, as he defined them, only devoted about twenty percent of their time to issues surrounding teaching and learning(335). This provides an opportunity for a principal to share responsibility and ownership while creating time for him or her to attend to other responsibilities (Ubben, 2001). This form of empowerment creates time and additional power for principals.

- There are an abundance of leadership classifications, definitions, designations, and applications to the principalship. Choosing which is most effective and appropriate is as varied as those who inhabit leadership positions. There is a delicate balance between leadership and management. Effective principals and their assistants utilize both to fulfill their roles. Due in part to the variables of contextual institutional issues and interpersonal relationships there is no prescribed formula for successful leadership. Deciding on style and application of those styles of leadership may further or hinder a principal's effectiveness. Many researches, such as Sergiovanni, Ubben, Elmore, and Fullan, believe a new leadership style is necessary to advance school systems into accountability era. Through the blending of management and leadership by both the principal and his or her assistants, the advancement of school administration is affirmed. The previously cited researchers identify a common strain of leader characteristics and skill sets: a proactive vision of the future, communication amongst constituents, strong ties toward instructional practices, and an importance placed upon interpersonal relationship.

### **1.3 A PARADIGM SHIFT AND A REMOVAL OF THE OLD GUARD**

As early as the mid 1950s with the beginning of the US-Soviet Space Race a slow change developed in public high schools; a need to focus on principals' managerial and instructional responsibilities emerged (Beck, 1993). During the 1970s and 1980s the College Board and the Education Testing Service further defined who enrolled in specific programs, while private interest groups attacked localized curriculums. In 1983, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and federal and state public policy, schools focused on improving school and individual student

achievement through systematic and systemic school reform as measured by collective school performance and individual student achievement (Beck, 1993; Burlingame, 1991; Week, 2001). Due in part to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and The Second Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act of 2001 (IDEA) or No Child Left Behind (NCLB), many schools and districts identified and accounted for the need to change the way things are done. School systems and publicly funded education are and have been changing. Changes in school leadership and principal preparation are part of these changes.

“What standards were in the 1990s leadership is to the 2000s” (Fullan, 2003, 16). Accountability and high stakes assessments have required a “new breed” of principals who are focused on understanding school and classroom practices that contribute to school achievement who have the ability to work with teachers to focus, fashion, and implement continuous student improvement; and who have the ability to provide support to carry out sound school curriculum and instructional practice (Bottoms, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1996). There is a leveling of the leadership hierarchy in certain communities. School systems have moved their organizational structure to allow more assistants and principals to truly become instructional leaders seeking to improve the issues hindering teaching and learning.

School Based Management (SBM) is an old, 1900s, approach to addressing leadership issues involving more school decision making. SBM transfers the authority of decision making from the school board and the central office to the principal and holds decision makers accountable (Smith, 1989). Smith (1989) continued calling for a need for more autonomy for principals within their buildings. Such a transfer replaces the governmental structure of schools and a shift from middle manager to true building leader occurs. Without trust and commitment to this idea of school or site leadership from the central office, its effectiveness is not truly

witnessed (Smith, 1989). This shift from leadership within a school whether it is called Participative Decision, teacher empowerment, Site Based-Management, distributed leadership, or simply shared leadership, is occurring (Elmore, 2000; Marshall, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1996). The underlying assumption is that people care more about a decision they make than they do about a decision that is imposed on them. In this traditional hierarchical school structure, building level leaders are moving from a supervision or administrator decision making model to a group of subordinate decision makers (Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1996; Smith, 1989). Gone are the days of the administrator's single handedly saving a school (Barth, 2003). A benefit of this type of decision-making is that a principal, or anyone for that matter, who realizes his or her shortcomings can effectively move a school forward without having to be all things to all people with all of the answers. The underlying principles for its success has roots in those who decide to have a vested interest in seeing their decision to a particular problem succeed (Marshall, 1992). Pierce (2003) stated principals must take a more active role in convincing and establishing support for the public school system. This includes outside sources as well as from those within, structurally and fundamentally, all the while developing communities of learning from within (Barth, 1990).

Today's principals are expected to do all the "things" those who came before them have and in addition, to be excellent instructional leaders (Glanz, 2005). The idea of instructional leadership is relatively new to the principalship's history. DuFlour (2002) and Elmore (2000) discussed how the roles of the principalship are being redefined and instructional leadership is at the forefront. Both researchers add that the principal should focus on the learning of those under his or her direct supervision. Glantz (2005) suggested supervision of instruction, amongst other variables, as crucial to the schooling of children.

Recently the role of the assistant principal is changing due in part to increasing demands on schools and the implementation of other supportive positions such as the dean of discipline or instructional coaches. Bartholomew, Lelendez-Delaney, Orta, and White (2005) stated that assistant principals are “often overlooked as a resource for creating, advancing, and sustaining a compelling vision”(23). Bartholomew et al continued to say that the job description of chief disciplinarian is changing towards instruction leader both directly and indirectly through their numerous job descriptions. The evolving role as instruction leader is out of necessity, and no longer can school systems continue the stagnating role of the assistant principal.

- The position definitions themselves hinder the progress of the position if instructional leadership is the goal of the principal and his or her assistant(s). The call for a change in the system may be needed to implement the most idealistic and necessary changes to school systems, schooling, and leadership. No longer is management of schools systems acceptable for principals. The daunting challenges and variety of demands are forcing building level leaders to change they way teaching and learning occur and in varying roles and responsibilities.

#### **1.4 CURRENT PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

“For the last 100 years or so, schools have operated on the nineteenth-century model of principals as management and teachers as labor” (Pellicer, 2003, 139). This model may have added to the fractured relationships of schools and school personnel. Roland Barth (1990) stated, “new leadership skills, and, indeed, new conceptions of leadership are urgently needed so that principals may effectively contribute to schools” (67). The leadership role in highly

bureaucratized organizations is vital to success; the American public school system is included. Demands for school effectiveness and accountability have reached a new height in recent years. It is no longer acceptable for building level administrators to correctly and physically account for students, ensure the busses run on time, provide lunch, and provide the opportunity for students to learn (Bottoms, 2001; Leadership, 2000). Bottoms (2001) expanded by saying school leaders must continue to meet raising workplace and global demands for all students to succeed. It is essential for principals and assistants to possess the skills, abilities, and knowledge to bring this concept to fruition.

The development of preparation programs brought the Department of Education, local education agencies, and institutions of higher learning (since graduate credits are required) together to develop more comprehensive programs and to align coursework and professional standards. Elmore (2004) unkindly refers to this relationship as the “three-way cartel”. To meet these challenges and the increasing responsibilities and duties, preparation programs, college and universities, interest groups, and the department of education increased their expectations and standards to assist prospective and veteran principals (Barth, 1990; Bottoms, 2001; Hart, 1993; Leadership, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1994; Ubben, 2001). Barth (1990) and Elmore (2004) believe a gap between public education and institutions of higher learning exists. The good intentions of higher education may never have an impact on schools unless certain barriers are eliminated, namely through principal preparation programs and mentorship programs associated with those programs. Smith and Piele (1998) indicated practioners mostly complain about their graduate training when discussing avenues to the principalship. The authors expanded citing the lack of preparation for the quick paced work encountered, dealing with conflict and emotion, and communicative concerns.

A recent study of 151 students in a principal preparation program cited the following reasons preventing people from becoming principals: salary, discipline, possible litigation, paperwork, bureaucracy, and standardized tests (Christy, 2000). Effective principals demonstrate common qualities, characteristics, and professional development (Burlingame, 1991). Bottoms and O’Neill’s research study, *It’s Time For Action*, made recommendations for states seeking to improve the quality of their school leaders.

- Tapping potential leaders in local school districts with demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction and then planning quality school leadership growth and opportunities for them
- Opening the educational leadership certification process to more educators with a proven record of success
- Basing certification on performance
- Making major changes in university-based school leadership preparation programs
- Requiring that to maintain leadership certification one must successfully participate in continuous learning activities that are closely aligned to school improvement. (18)

Bottoms and O’Neill further clarified what universities should do to improve their preparation programs, “focus on developing persons who can give leadership on improving the core function of the school – curriculum, instruction, and student learning”(22). The university coursework for certification is grounded in empirical management, leadership, and teaching and learning research (Stein, 2003). However, Stein and Gewirtzman (2003) stated, “there is no formal accountability mechanism to ensure that university program graduates learn anything useful for their future practice”(4). Often downfalls of the system erupt in a blame game when a



shortage of qualified leaders exists, as Stein and Gewirtzman (2003) claimed we are currently experiencing.

In 1989 and 1990 two significant publication reform reports by the National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) aimed at refocusing school leaders on instructional leadership -- *Improving the preparation of school administrators: An agenda for reform* (1989), and *Principals for our changing schools: Preparation and certification* (1990). These two reports paved the way for another significant reform in the 1990s. The past ten years saw two significant groups of professional educational organizations joining forces to construct guidelines and standards for school principals. In 1994 and again in 1996 the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NBEA), and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed standards for school leaders (Appendix A) to follow in order to enhance student learning and achievement (CCSSO, 1996). This system of standards was developed to meet the recently imposed demands on principals. The Pennsylvania principal licensure exam, conducted by Educational Testing Service, is directly tied to the ISLLC standards (ETS, 2000; Pennsylvania Department of Education). The ISLLC and the Pennsylvania Department of Education have made a commitment to ensure that principals are highly qualified to lead schools by using the ISSLC as its guidelines for their school leaders. Rooted heavily in research and developed by various educational professionals in 24 state educational agencies, the ISSLC standards aim to “stimulate vigorous thought and dialogue about educational leadership among stakeholders” and “enhance the quality of educational leadership throughout the nation’s schools” (CCSSO, 1996, iii). The Pennsylvania Department of

Education requires certifying universities to align their programs to the standards of the ISLLC and for principals to pass the ETS Praxis examination (ETS, 2000).

“Good schools have good principals” is common mantra heard when reading and researching the principalship. Goodlad (1984) is one of those researchers who agree to a point. In his book *A Place Called School*, he discussed many reasons why this is not necessarily the case. He cited other factors such as curricula, collective bargaining agreements, school economics, demographics, and school boards to name a few. Goodlad continued describing how good schools appear to have good principals because of the opposite reasons for poor performing schools. Goodlad and Barth are two of many calling for a re-organization of schools and school communities, beginning with school leadership.

Choosing who will lead the school can be a daunting task for those undertaking this endeavor. Stein and Gewirtzman (2003) are calling for a reorganization of principal preparation programs that lead to a co-construction of and co-creation of these programs as a partnership between districts and certifying universities focused on theory and practice of the instruction of pupils, in addition to the managerial and regulatory issues. One can assume that the diversity of curriculum, instructors, and issues surrounding adult teaching and learning distinguish between certification programs and universities, lending one to produce more prepared and qualified principal candidates. Many researchers simply cite the succession pipeline for principals as a root cause of certificated, but not qualified candidates (Hart, 1993; Marshall, 1992; Stein, 2003).

- A void between coursework or training and workplace demands exists in current principal preparation. To combat this fracture, institutions have formed a coalition to ensure those preparing and leading our schools have the adequate tools be experience success. Changes and systems currently in place to advance the Principalship may lend

itself to defeat due to long standing tradition and culture without safeguards and a new structure. The advances made by the ISLLC and others has pushed principal preparation to a standards based system of certification aligned to proven and necessary skills of instructional leadership. Factors other than leadership do affect the principalship and without a change in those areas that influence school systems a positive change may not be realized. To truly experience change a system overhaul may be necessary.

## **1.5 ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION**

Succession is based in the belief that leaders make a difference in an organization, and managers or executives can exercise leadership. A look into management succession within the corporate world, military, and other organizations such as non-profits is important in the scope of school leadership succession. It is necessary to understand the breath and depth of succession leadership to a better understand the concept and context of succession. When a leader in any organization leaves, a void must be filled, and how the void is filled has a significant effect on organizational hierarchy (Boeker, 1993; Haverman, 1993). A change in the person holding any influential office in a formal organization being replaced has lasting effects on that organization. According to Grusky (1962) administrative succession is defined as the “process by which key officials are replaced” (261). Grusky (1961) identified reasons for succession: death, promotion, demotion, or dismissal. Each reason has its own set of unique issues. For example if an executive dies, transfer of important information is lost; whereas, if an employee is dismissed, instability and a disassociation may occur among other top level managers. However, if a long-time executive retires and has groomed a successor it is likely that the organization will experience little change.

Haverman (1993) stated that researchers have long sought an answer to the following two questions: (1) “Do managers make a difference?” and (2) “How does succession make a difference?” (864). Succession-crisis hypothesis states that as managerial succession occurs worker productivity decreases due to worker insecurity and command structure (Haverman, 1993). Poor organizational performance leads to manager turnover beginning a cycle of instability and poor succession (Grusky, 1963). Opposing the succession-crisis hypothesis, the succession-adaptation hypothesis states succession improves organizational performance by tension reduction (Boeker, 1993; Guest, 1962). Still another hypothesis is there is no relationship between succession and organizational success (Haverman, 1993). Variables cited in the literature suggest that size of the manager’s role and of the organization impact succession thus impacting performance (Grusky, 1963; Guest, 1962). The smaller the organization, under 500 employees (Grusky, 1961), or larger the position in the organization the greater the impact, and conversely the larger the organization and the smaller the position the impact is lessened (Grusky, 1961). Size equals stability. According to Haverman (1993) the majority of the research on managerial succession occurs in larger more bureaucratic organizations. According to Miner (1987) smaller organizations regardless of size feel greater effects of managerial succession because the succession is not simply in position, but rather a loss of personal and leadership characteristics witnessed by sub and super-ordinates.

Haverman (1993) suggested that time is a contingency factor when determining how succession affects organizational performance. Simply stated, as time passes, organizations adjust to new routines and procedures, and any change, depending on how drastic, diminishes and becomes the new norm. According to Grusky’s 1961 study of size and bureaucratized organization, he discovered that succession occurs in a comparable rate. Grusky (1961) also

suggested that there is a difference in how those organizations deal with the succession. Smaller organizations tend to have a predisposition toward personalities while larger organizations tend to have a rigid orientation to respect authority more than the person. This is a generalization Grusky noted. He indicated that which vacancy is filled has a degree of greater or lesser effect.

Boeker and Goodstein (1993) defined insiders as past or current managers and outsiders as all others. Hemlich (1972) suggested that individual successors from outside the organization impart qualities to the executive committees that successors promoted from within cannot and do not have. His research has confirmed previous research by finding that outside successors are chosen to “mandate change or break from tradition” (371). Boeker and Goodstein (1993) concurred with Hemlich and others that insider successors are chosen to maintain the course an organization has chosen and an outside successor is chosen to change directions. Hemlich’s work also confirmed those before him stating that as outside successors arrive they have opportunities those before them may not have had: removing stagnant employees, bringing in fresh thinkers, and general strategic replacements. Other benefits of outside successors are an increased dedication and opportunistic decision making (Fredrickson, 1988; Haverman, 1993). Grusky (1961) suggested that reassignment and replacement of staff is more often initiated. Whisler (1960) identified that outside successors make more demands and initial uses of their assistants than successors from within. He continued stating reassignment and replacement is an effective use of personnel to handle interpersonal conflicts and issues. Grusky (1963) confirmed Whisler’s findings. This effective assistant becomes a trusted advisor and facilitates the outside successor’s style and abilities. Hemlich (1972) stated in his research that without substantial initiatives and successful organizational and service changes any beneficial change in those around the successor, the organization will most likely revert back to the organizational state prior to his or

her arrival within two years. Helmich (1978) affirmed that leadership succession from outside the organization functions in five ways: (1) building a new executive team, (2) allowing flexibility to rejuvenate a stagnant company with a leadership team resistant to change, (3) bolstering sagging performance, (4) improving inter-organization communications, and (5) managing interdependence with its environment(463). Helmich's 1978 study of 54 petrochemical companies suggested that successors from outside the company alone, generally speaking, do not have lasting organizational changes and success. According to Boeker and Goodstein (1993), an major influence on successorship, regardless of from within or from outside the organization, depends largely on "structure and board influence" (172). They continued, stating there is a "moderate relationship" between outside successors and poor performance, and a "poor relationship" from those promoted from within (173). Boeker and Goodstein uncovered some significance for the reason for the poor performance and outside successorship – "political processes" surrounding the position (173).

Organizational size is an influence on successorship as larger organizations tend to promote from within, due to their large talent pool and training opportunities, while smaller organization promote from outside (Boeker, 1993; Fredrickson, 1988). Also influencing the succession choice is perceived success by those selecting, past succession choices, and past practice (Boeker, 1993; Fredrickson, 1988; Nelson, 1982). Trow's (1961) study of 108 small companies (less than 500 employees) revealed that there is some significance, regardless of insider or outside selection of successors, that poor planning by those surrounding the selection influence the possibility of organizational success. Trow's (1961) study suggested that those companies who groom successors experience a smoother transition and a higher rate of success in the short-term and long-term. This "successor-designate" is difficult to support in smaller

organizations leading to small companies looking outside for new and more talented successors (234). Trow (1961) also suggested that small companies procrastinate with respect to successors or lose their best talent to larger firms. There is a thread that resonates through the research indicating that administrative and managerial succession leads to organizational instability (Boeker, 1993; Fredrickson, 1988; Grusky, 1961; Grusky, 1963; Helmich, 1978; Whisler, 1960).

Effective leadership organizations are highly structured and departmentalized; they define roles and succession to promotion. Leadership is a ladder individuals climb as they move up through hierarchical structures. It should not be seen as a platform one steps up to and leaves all skills and knowledge behind. Promotion and leadership is a progression and a succession which one builds on to perform at a higher level.

- Succession is a process by which leader vacancies are filled. Succession is a complex highly involved process with effects altering the course of organizations. The long standing study of succession is substantial in its quantity and quality of research and researchers. Size of organization and position affect success. Inside or outside candidates are chosen for various reasons and those reasons affect how the succession is viewed by sub and super ordinate. Contextual issues vary between and amongst successions and those issues directly affect the succession. A common thread woven amid the research is how the organizations that plan for successorship experience a greater opportunity for a smooth transition.

## 1.6 ROLES OF PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANTS

Job analysis and the *Principles of Scientific Management* by Fredrick Taylor (1889) defined the roles of the principal as a manager (Campbell, 1969). They included time-study, piece rate, separation of planning and performance, scientific methods, managerial control, and function management. This is a very narrow view of management and dated; however, the activities and definition of each closely resemble the job description of assistant principal and some of the principal. Assistant principal's jobs often mirror that of the principal, yet they are still different (Marshall, 1992). These roles are set by a pattern of behaviors realized by history, organization, and function.

Many assistant's responsibilities lie in management duties such as student discipline, supervising teachers (defined as a systematic and objective process), proving instructional materials, policy and structure, and establishing teacher duty rosters (Barth, 1990; Marshall, 1992; Porter, 1996). Although job descriptions vary, most assistant principals perform common tasks nationwide (Marshall, 1992). Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, and McLeary's (1988) study of assistant principals' job responsibilities ranked student discipline, teacher evaluation, and student attendance as the top three. The same top three performance tasks were identified in a longitudinal survey study in both 1965 and 1987 by Pellicer. Many school employees, parents, and students believe the assistant to be the patroller of hallways and frequent visitor of classrooms for the purpose of decreasing student discipline simply with presence (Keesor, 2005). Keesor's 2005 study identified residual effects of the visibility to a decrease of student discipline issues – better understanding of content knowledge, teacher effectiveness, collaboration, and increased communication. Kessor (2005) also noted by decreasing the amount of time spent on student discipline there is an increase in job satisfaction. However, it is most commonly agreed



upon that assistant principals are still chief disciplinarians and all student issues resonate with this position (Barth, 1990; Marshall, 1992). A survey of the literature on assistant principals reveal there is an unclear definition for the position, and the role itself is unclear. Role conflict and ambiguity often find their way into the assistant principal's office. Because their role is often ill-defined and inconsistent, and their functions conflicting, they experience role conflict and role ambiguity (Marshall, 1992). Marshall (1992) stated that the multitude of tasks and confusion over authority and boundary cause many assistants to experience work overload, stress, and a lack of self-efficacy. Marshall continued citing a stagnation of professional development and significant personal life stress. A significant study from Calabrese and Adams (1987) cited assistants as more likely to be dissatisfied, alienated, and powerless than principals. Austin and Brown (1970) discovered a low level of satisfaction with being an assistant due largely to their negative job responsibilities and unclear job expectations. Barth (1990) listed reasons assistants and principals leave their positions in most order of their frequency— excessive time demands, stress, work load, desire for a change, lack of support from superiors, fatigue, legislative/legal, lack of teacher professionalism, student discipline, and student apathy(65). The position of an assistant principal is seen as a necessary rung (the bottom rung) in any administrator's career ladder (Marshall, 1992; Rodrick, 1986). How well the assistant principalship prepares them for the principalship is unclear.

“The principal is the key person in a high school administration” (Campbell, 1969, 225). His or her responsibility resonates in the building; however, the job responsibilities closely resemble that of the superintendent. They include instructional leadership, community relations, staff personnel, pupil personnel, facilities, and financial management (Barth, 1990; Campbell, 1969; Elmore, 2000; Pierce, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1996). He or she is the ultimate decision maker

and planner, and he or she is held accountable for the quality of instruction. The principal is the central figure in determining school and instruction quality (Barth, 1990). “Reading the literature on the principalship can be overwhelming, because it suggests that principals should work to embody all the traits and skills that remedy the defects of the schools in which they work” (Elmore, 2000, 14). “Society may be simply asking schools and principals to do too much” (Pellicer, 2003, 141).

Challenges identified by principals and organizations include societal issues impeding task completion and responsibility, accountability and high stakes testing concerns, inadequate funding for mandated programs, and poor public relations (Bottoms, 2001; Kaplan, 2005; NASSP, 2001; Pierce, 2003; Week, 2001). To meet those needs and shortcomings states and certifying institutions are adapting programs and preparation.

- Both management and leadership are essential to a school’s smooth operation. Assistant principal responsibilities are most often referred to as those of a middle manager rather than a leader. Principals roles are most often associated with those of leadership. Issues surround both the principal and his or her assistant clearly affect their ability to perform. Questions around the assistant principalship as proper training are common when moving into the principalship. Due mostly to position descriptions and functions, many researchers and practioners believe the training ground of assistant principals is inadequate preparation for those succeeding to a principalship. Assistant principals do gain a better understanding of the scope of the principalship and how a school systems functions. However, in terms of developing the skills and abilities necessary to function as a principal, they are never realized due to the nature of the position of an assistant principal.

## 1.7 PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION

Succession has and is studied in a number of venues – executive, managerial, administrative, military, and bureaucratic; each of these genres contributes to the definition of principal succession. When trying to correlate other organizational successor problems, influences, and issues surrounding selection of school principals, school administration researchers cite the aforementioned researchers as experts in the field of succession. Therefore, principal succession correlates to those other organizations with respects to issues surrounding succession such as organizational size, actions taken upon successor selection, planning or successor-delegate, reasons for and events surrounding succession, opportunities by newly selected successors, political implications, and successor personal charisma.

There is evidence to suggest that successors have no effect or even negative consequences on schools when successors are chosen due to poor planning, communication disruption, and disruptions in the decision-making processes (Hart, 1993). Additional, principal succession creates a period of “apprehension and fear of the unknown with high expectations being held” by teachers and district administrators (Weindling, 1987, 67). Miskel and Cogrove (1985) suggested that principal succession has little effect on the instructional process in schools because schools are highly structured institutions in which many principals are not as involved in the process of teaching and learning as they could be. Miskel and Cogrove also cited the “variety, brevity and fragmentation” of the roles of principals that keep them from instruction(88). Conversely, McCurdy (1983) and Ubben (2001) and Hart (1993)revealed that the most critical influence on a school is its principal. However, Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) stated strong outside successors who are programmatic and instructional leaders and who pay attention to student learning can greatly influence student learning in two ways: (1)

work with teachers with specific problems in their classroom and (2) focus on total organizational change (44). Having an outside perspective is seen as less of a threat and faculties allow these principals additional latitude (Bossert, 1982). According to Bossert et al (1982), as people move from position to position and school to school, they acquire fresh ideas and perspectives on “new” solutions to old school specific institutionalized problems. These outsiders must have a prescribed and thorough plan for them to be successful at transitioning into a new school or position (Miskel, 1985). This includes developing confidence, mechanisms for developing an understanding of how processes and programs function, and selecting and setting personal and collective school goals.

Principal impact felt by the school is so that the decision of succession should be carefully planned and considered. For those assistants who desire to move into a principalship, preparation and planning are significant to a successful first year, regardless of how they define success. Before successors become the principals they must first be selected. The selection of a principal has often been seen as being controlled by the “good’ol boy network” (Baltzel, 1983). With today’s high stakes testing, accountability, and the skills and knowledge requirements for performance, “good’ol boy network” is assumed to have passed. The principal selection process is an important decision and one usually made by the superintendent and his or her trusted administrators or those who they hold in high regard and who usually think along the same line as the superintendent (Hart, 1993; Miskel, 1985). The principal search process is one based on conventional wisdom and information found in professional journals and is carried out in three distant stages. First is the identification, recruitment, and solicitation of qualified individuals. The second is the review of the applications with a close examination of prior experience, preparation and end education, skills, and knowledge. The final part in the selection process is an

in-person interview using a predetermined and ad hoc list of scripted and non scripted questions in a structured manner by the decision makers, usually the superintendent, his or her other trusted administrators or teachers, and one or more board members (Anderson, 1993; Baltzel, 1983; Hart, 1993). A highly evolved screening process is often put in place to ensure the successor is familiar with and understands the roles, expectations, and responsibilities associated with the principalship (Miskel, 1985).

Occasionally a teacher moves directly to the position of principal; however, it is rare for this to occur in a high school setting. According to Miskel and Cogsgrove (1985) teacher candidates are chosen because they demonstrate some of the qualities of leadership, have a grasp on student discipline, volunteer, or are recommended for committees by their principal. Teachers are usually encouraged to seek certification and placed in roles of curriculum coordinator or assistant principals until they further prove themselves (Marshall, 1992; Miskel, 1985). According to Baltzer and Dentler (1983), and Marshall (1992) only after a trial period as an assistant will a patient and proven assistant principal get an opportunity at the principalship. Miskel and Cogsgrove also discussed problems with this type of vertical promotion in larger school settings. When several qualified inside successors are available many institutions, in an attempt to keep those qualified from becoming turned off or dissatisfied and leaving for other schools, hire an outsider in an attempt to keep those qualified candidates at the school. Since schools do not have formal training programs, a period of socialization is necessary for outside selections (Baltzel, 1983). When possible, for example in the case of retirement, the principal being replaced will serve as a mentor for a period of time prior to departure (Miskel, 1985). When deciding whether to hire an insider or an outsider a superintendent may look at the direction a particular school is headed. If they wish to change courses, an outside candidate is

often chosen because a superintendent may have more latitude in influencing the direction with an outsider (Baltzel, 1983; Miskel, 1985). According to Hoy and Aho (1973) outside principal successors “were less likely to be authoritarian, exhibited greater emotional detachment in difficult situations, had teachers more satisfied with their jobs, were seen as change agents, had faculties who were more loyal, participated in leadership development, and were seen as having greater influence with their superiors”(84).

The transition of a new school principal changes the dynamic of a school community. Succession principals’ mistakes are more noticeable and influential. Brock and Grady (1995) revealed that succession principals make three common mistakes: the amount of time necessary to adjust to change, the effect of change on all those involved in the school (parents, teachers, and students) and the personal costs of the principalship. Successful new principals usually seek out ways to smooth the transition for stakeholders and themselves. They may not be aware of the obstacles they could encounter or the rippling effect of their decisions on a school (Glickman, 2002). These principals may discover the staff is waiting for the new principal to legitimize their administration or “pass the test”(Blase, 2000). The principals must prove themselves to be worthy of followership.

Many school systems are now including mentoring programs for new principals (Franklin, 2005; Hart, 1993). Despite these mentorship opportunities succession principals are still struggling with the daunting task of school leadership and its multiplicity and simultaneousness of tasks, according to Franklin (2005). Franklin, Hart, Blasé, Glickman and others discussed the need for succession principals to reach out early and often to all people in all areas of the school, maintain an open-door policy, and focus on school atmosphere first.

- School leadership succession correlates to other organizational succession research in all relating contexts and categories. A new succession principal entering a school has an effect on all those who work and learn in a school. Apprehension and fear are common characteristics identified in the literature. Factors effecting a successful secession, the first year of a principalship, are vast and varied depending mainly on contextual issues. The succession selection process is stagnate and rooted in missteps; most notably the assistant acquiring the skills necessary for the principalship from his tenure as an assistant.

## **1.8 SOCIALIZATION**

Socialization is often an overlooked issue with respect to principal succession. Merton (1949) referred to socialization as simply “learning social roles”. Two leading researchers of socialization in schools, Duke and Greenfield, define socialization in two different and distinct ways - professional and organizational.

### **1.8.1 Professional**

Socialization as a professional deals with specialized knowledge and skill as well as professional ethics; whereas organizational socialization encompasses knowledge, values, and norms of specific organizations (Duke, 1984; Greenfield, 1985; Hart, 1993). It is important to note that a newly appointed successor’s socialization may be very different depending on whether promotion is from within or outside the organization, and if the appointment is their first of this specific kind (neophyte principal). As neophyte principals interact with other administrators and

principals they begin to internalize the job roles and norms generally accepted amongst their peers (Duke, 1987; Hart, 1993). This professional socialization can begin, as Duke (1984) suggested, as principals begin their careers as teachers, or may not start until their formal preparation programs, or will develop as they interact with other administrators. Marshall (1988) stated professional socialization is a combination of formal and informal training that varies from state to state and is highlighted by certifying universities at the criteria of government agencies. Marshall also contended that this professional socialization continues through encounters with other administrators and at professional workshops and seminars. Professional socialization can also be defined in terms of what Barth (2003) called craft knowledge; “craft knowledge is the collection of wisdom and insight one accumulates by showing up on the job(2)” Barth was careful to discriminate between craft knowledge and war stories. Craft knowledge is different in terms on what is done after an experience. It is a description of an experience followed by an analysis of the event to further gain an understanding of practice.

### **1.8.2 Organizational**

Organization socialization is often difficult to penetrate. This organization socialization often overpowers professional socialization (Bucher, 1977; Duke, 1987; Hart, 1993). Cultural and traditional influences may derail an attempt by a principal successor to be successful, carry out roles and responsibilities, or implement change (Sergiovanni, 1996). Peterson (2002) defined culture as “a set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, symbols and stories make up the persona of a school”(31). A school’s culture can greatly influence principal succession and organizational socialization (Hart, 1993; Peterson, 2002). The culture of a school is often synonymous with ethos, saga, and climate. Culture often shapes the way in which a school’s staff



think, act, react, and interact (Peterson, 2002). Negative school cultures can increasingly add to succession difficulties. Peterson (2002) suggested that a new principal's actions indicate what is valued and important to him or her, and further shape the school's climate or culture. He suggested that by nurturing and supporting what is already positive in a culture and not supporting negative aspects a new principal will find increased success. Smylie and Hart (1999) called this increasing social capital. Elements of social capital include social trust, channels for new information, norms, expectations, and sanctions. Social capital can be strong or weak, and positive or negative. Smylie and Hart stated that development of knowledge, skills, and an individual's intellectual capacity increases an instructional leader's ability to gain trust and increase credibility among a group regardless of size. Positive interactions produce qualitative elements crucial to principal leadership (Franklin, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Smith, 1989; Smylie, 1999). Smylie and Hart's research was clear to indicate by vaguely defining principal roles and responsibilities the relational aspects of principal leadership cause comparison deficiencies in their research.

Organizational socialization can shift roles learned during professional socialization (Bucher, 1977). Greenfield (1985) stated that organizational socialization and not professional socialization hinders a successor's effectiveness. Principals first need to be granted legitimacy through socialization by subordinates or superordinates before they can have any influence (Greenfield, 1985; Grusky, 1963; Hart, 1993). This is referred to as endorsed leadership, power of the collective over power of appointment (Greenfield, 1985; Scott, 1987). Endorsed leadership theory places organizational socialization above professional socialization. Greenfield (1985) and Scott (1987) agreed principals who are effective leaders must first be accepted and incorporated in work groups before they can have any organizational impact. Organizational

socialization binds members together into communities based on previous experiences that are stronger than formal structure or hierarchy (Blau, 1964). Blau (1964) stated authority alone will not necessarily ensure compliance. Compliance, Blau said, is voluntary for any collective; it is social constraints that apply pressure to conform or comply. Normative constraints are included within organizational socialization of succession. Conversely, MacPherson (1984) and Marrison (1983) stated that organizational and professional socialization occur simultaneously and neither is more or less important than the other. Their main argument is the newcomer to the principalship is learning and becoming acclimated to both professional and organizational socialization. Nonetheless, socialization is based squarely on personal relationships.

Blasé and Kirby's (2000) study of 1200 K-12 educators identified three key characteristics critical to interpersonal relationships: optimism, honesty, and consideration (or a concern for people). The NASSP's (2004) report of high school change *Breaking Ranks II*, agreed that understanding relationships, both formal and informal, influence a principal's effectiveness, and especially can influence change in a building. The report stresses that the building principal's purpose and focus is to provide leadership to the school and maintain a vision, direction, and focus on student learning. Friedkin and Slater (1994) listed five behaviors connected with effective school leaders: (1) monitor curriculum, (2) hold confidences with and in teachers, (3) being accessible to discuss issues, (4) make formal observations, and (5) seek teacher input. All these behaviors depend on a high degree of socialization.

Socialization in different places and under different circumstances elicits different norms and uncovers diverse succession issues, both contextual and cultural issues. Hart (1993) identified how the mix of people and groups within an organization affect the succession and socialization process. The mix of norms and formal structure directly affect the process by which

one moves into a new position. Simply by examining a person in a new position without looking at the tradition, history, and culture of a school and those whom the newly appointed person interacts with, one is unable to account for the dynamic the and unique qualities of that person (Blau, 1964; Greenfield, 1985). One simply loses perspective.

According to Duke et al (1984) and the *Transition to Leadership Project*, faculties' satisfaction and dissatisfaction of new principals was the most influential factor affecting their job. Principals could not simply lead or manage from the position of appointment or authority alone. New principals have to change and develop based on individual and group interactions. New leaders learn new roles based on inter and intra personal interactions (Burlingame, 1991; Burns, 1972; Duke, 1984). In addition, school leaders need to learn the attitudes, values, beliefs, and culture of specific school systems in order to gain acceptance in subordinate and superordinate roles (Hart, 1993; Murphy, 1988). Also, scarcity of human capital and formal positions affect job responsibilities and socialization issues. An example of this is in small school districts where a principal takes on additional responsibilities. Larger districts may have any combination of the following positions alleviating certain job responsibilities: Director of Curriculum, Athletic Director, Director of Secondary Education, Human Resource Officer, Special Education Liaison, or Pupil Personnel.

Trust and socialization of principal succession within specific contextual circumstances add another layer to new appointees. The level of trust among sub ordinates may influence succession. If the predecessor were a person who was trusted and well-liked, the level of trust for the successor may be in question. If the predecessor vacated under good terms with a long history or culture of trust and respect, then the person succeeding may be inclined to much of the same until otherwise proven differently (Kochanek, 2005; Merton, 1949). Whereas, if a person

recently replaced was perceived as distrustful or if the position was in constant turmoil or has experienced a lot of transience then that person succeeding may be not be trusted until proven trustworthy. This involves individual adjustments and adaptations to expectations of the group or subordinates.

“Schools are tightly coupled around cultural themes” (Sergiovanni, 1990, 10). According to Kochanek (2005), social organizations, such as a schools, have a special properties to form professional and personal trust based relationships. Effective school organizations, according to Byrk and Schneider (1996), act as a social network. Effective schools, or social networks, emphasize the need to build trusting social relationships (Kochanek, 2005). Both Byrk and Schneider, and Kochanek discussed at length the need for principals to build trusting relationships with parents, students, and with especially teachers. Smylie and Hart (1999) defined trust as “the reliability and integrality of individuals in social situations” (423). Kochanek defined trust in schools through five characteristics demonstrated by school leaders: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness (71). Relational trust between principals and their staff emanate from the way in which they approach their work (Smylie, 1999). Smylie and Hart stated that social trust is fostered by dependable and facilitative support for their staff’s work. Still another way to promote social trust is through relinquishing control to staff members (Smith, 1989; Smylie, 1999). Hart (1993) referred to trying to fill the shoes of the predecessor as “Serial Socialization” and claims that the newcomer will experience a “disjunctive” socialization period (225). Kochanek (2005) suggested that succession principals should build trust slowly when seeking reform. She suggests “setting the stage for positive interactions” (19). By communicating frequently and balancing interests, including a new principal’s own interest, succession principals begin to develop trust or “set the stage”.

Kochneck suggested that new principals begin taking advantage of low risk interactions to build upon their communicative foundation. These “easy wins” would include low stress-social interactions that have a high probability of success, but also realize roles and some structure; examples include small group meetings or celebrative functions. After several successful low risk interactions trust should exist enough for neophyte principals to engage in higher risk interactions to push trusting relationships further. Kochnek (2005) suggested new principals keep risks low when vulnerabilities are high and then add opportunities for high risk interactions later as trust and comfort levels are more solidified.

Duke et al (1984) identified four attributes of socialization to roles of the principalship in a comprehensive study of principals’ first year: duration of socialization, preparation, relationships between expectations and job realities, and mechanisms of socialization. Duke and his counterparts established that socialization generally ends when a principal completes his or her first year. An overwhelming majority of the 32 principals identified in the Duke et al study identified informal orientations and experiences associated with their learning curve. They placed organizational relationships with (in order) teacher, assistants, and students as their primary concern and metric for success and influence. The principals’ interviews discussed confusion over job expectations, and cited unexpected “loneliness” and pressure. Notably, in Duke’s study, the surveyed principals placed “far less” importance on formal coursework and more on the informal socialization they experienced during their first year in the principalship. The following table is the liner progression of socialization.

**Table 4. Stages of Socialization**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Characteristic associated with the stage</b>
1. Encounter	Larger amount of social, organizational, and cognitive learning, a stressful period characterized by change, contrast, and surprise.
2. Adjustment	A period of organizational socialization; fitting in and discovering niche. Group dynamics unveil themselves and cultural assimilation begins.
3. Stabilization	Characterized by “Social Contracting” or negotiating roles. Professional and personal relationships with super ordinates and sub ordinates solidify, and comfort with job roles and responsibilities begin.

\*According to (Feldman, 1976; Hart, 1993; Merton, 1949; Miskel, 1985; Nicholson, 1987)

According to Rizzo, House, and Litzman (1970) role theory states that when behaviors expected are inconsistent, stress, dissatisfaction, and performance failure occur more frequently than when expectations are clear. Seeman (1953) found that many school executives’ potential sources of role conflict resulted in difficulty making decisions. How principals in new positions respond to those challenges and role changes may set a difficult course. In the 1984 Duke study of newly hired principals over two-thirds responded that their first year could be described as sink or swim. They indicated that job descriptions were vague at best and offered little guidance

for actual expectations. Duke et al found that informal processes and expectations dominated principals' first year experiences. These informal experiences included discovering norms and expectations from their predecessors, secretaries, other district principals, and the central office. Relationship and interrelationship issues can change with position and title. Due to differences in organizational definitions of roles and responsibilities between and among assistants and principals, conflict, stress, and effectiveness pose dilemmas for those studying principal succession. Through the identification of problem areas and statements from experienced principals, help is available for new principals to acquire and deploy leadership skills and knowledge in their role as instruction leader and building manager (Howard, 1996). Many recent studies indicate efficacy factors and job satisfaction of both principals and assistants. A few large public school systems have conducted principal mobility and satisfaction studies of their own employees. Regardless of these insider "trades" or if new ideas are infused into a school with an outsider, succession issues and socialization are major factors to the principalship.

Roberts and Wright (1992) discovered four areas where neophyte principals experience difficulty:

1. External problems – image, policy, parents, district-wide coordination, and decision-making
2. Internal problems – discipline, communication, prioritizing, and overload
3. Student management, instruction, resistant teachers, and lacking credibility among staff
4. Program development, evaluation of staff, community relations, parents, and team building

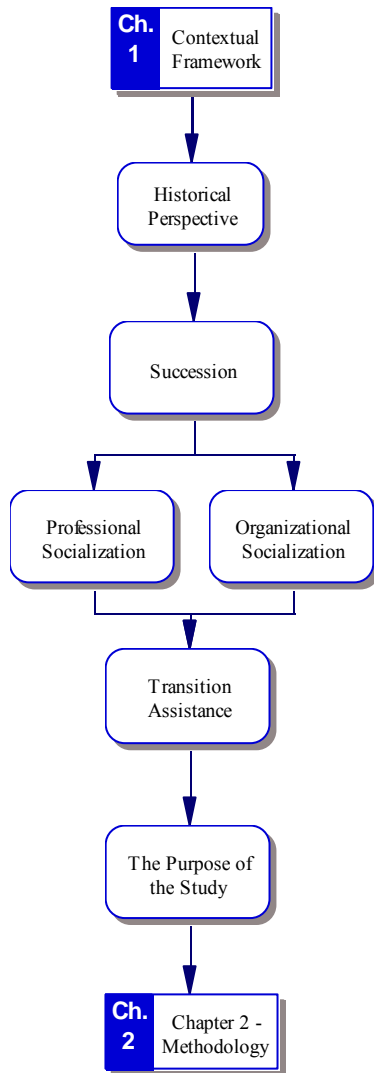
To combat these common problems Roberts and Wright (1992) offered suggestions for successful succession. Develop ongoing and meaningful mentor relationships for new principals; an increase in the understanding of the challenges and change process; and include working with experienced principals in “guided field experience” during the preparation process. Hall and Mani (1992), offered the following advice to succession principals: commit to continuity, focus on the development of a positive school climate, develop and prioritize strategies before school starts and staff returns, and place a strong emphasis on academics. This increased communication includes students. Without effective and early communication with students, succession principal will encounter increased difficulties and will not be seen as instructional leaders (Franklin, 2005). Beckerman (2005) revealed several avenues for new principals to focus their efforts for successful transition into a new building as a new principal. He suggests developing collegial attitudes, focusing on school climate, and collaborative decision-making. In addition, Ruddick, Day, and Wallace (1997) suggested focusing on student concerns and safety to foster a positive climate and allow students to achieve at high levels. Both Ruddick et al (1997) and Beckerman (2005) suggested focusing on communication in all avenues and medias to create this positive climate. This communication includes an often overlooked aspect of communication: active listening. Pellicer, in his book *Caring Enough to Lead* (2003), discussed how through moral leadership a principal creates a climate conducive to student learning, change, safety, and improvement. Taking time to talk with people genuinely out of concern, leading to serve, and putting people above institutional rules and regulations, a new principal can win dissidents over and smooth the transition. Pellicer also discussed how school leaders need passion and compassion to inspire those entrusted to their care. Without care or at least empathy a new principal may increase succession difficulties.



- Issues of socialization focus succession principals on two areas - professional and organizational. There is a flawed perception of professional socialization with respects to assistant and their tenure as preparation. This professional socialization is derived from their experiences, communications and interactions with other professionals, and their coursework. The most influential source of professional socialization differs according to each succession candidate. Organizational socialization rooted in culture, tradition, and trust is more powerful than professional socialization in terms of success of succession, as defined by a new principal's first year. Even the most prepared candidate in terms of professional socialization may struggle with succession due to challenges experienced with organizational socialization. Organizational socialization challenges are usually placed before professional socialization by succession principals. Transitional supports provided by the district influences the success of the succession in terms of both professional and organizational socialization. Suggestions for a successful succession are focused predominately on combating organizational socialization pitfalls.

## 1.9 SUMMARY & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following flow chart is included to clarify the study's conceptual framework and summary of chapter one.



**Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Flow Chart**

Since the inception of the principalship in the 1700s, building level principals and their assistants have preformed managerial tasks and supervised teachers and instruction. The challenges and events of the past two-hundred years have compounded public schools into

multifaceted and highly evolved institutions of bureaucracy. The role and responsibilities of the principal and assistant principal have developed and been redeveloped to meet demands and legislative impact on the American public educational system. It is the challenge of change, stress, and improving student outcomes that occupy a principal's thoughts, actions, and emotions. The job of the principal has always been important, but now due to the era of accountability and the turnover rate of building leaders, succession is essential to the success of school systems. By understanding the past, present situation and the issues on the horizon - theoretical, practical, and philosophical - the principal may evolve further as an instructional leader.

The idea of leader or instruction leader appeals to and intrigues many school researchers, pundits, and employees. Leadership theorists write about the ways a leader may improve his or her style or skills to better influence those that he or she leads. The quantity of leadership styles and theories are numerous. It is difficult to dispute the idea that effective principals are leaders rather than managers, nonetheless, the minutia of management are necessary. These unattractive management duties are often left to the assistant. Looking at the characteristics of effective school leaders and leadership theories, absent are management activities or traits. Effective school leaders invoke guidance, vision, communication, and collaboration to direct schools. As the role of building level leadership evolves and more principals become instructional leaders first and a managers second, opportunities for changing roles could correct some of the succession issues identified previously. Some researchers and practioners do not agree the assistant principal position as an appropriate training ground for the principalship. Even some principals believe the training ground is inadequate, and those in the roles may be under prepared. During an assistant principal's tenure, essential skills and knowledge necessary for the

principalship are not necessarily learned; elapsed are the teachings from graduate coursework and principal training. Despite Pennsylvania's university preparation programs adapting to address those demands, students seeking principal certification and university professors both agree that a gap in formalized instruction between the practical and theoretical exists (Hart, 1993). It is also argued that experience more than educational training influence succession success. A principal brings with him or her certain qualities from preparation programs, professional socialization, and prior teaching experiences. Prior training only affords assistants the opportunity to become a principal in title alone. Becoming a principal involves leadership development and professional development. The demands and pressures of the job may cause principals to revert back to the practice of administration and school management rather than focusing on instruction as their pre-service education insists (Hart, 1993; Porter, 1996).

Changes in the leadership of schools are frequent occurrences. Hart (1993) stated principals should prepare for "six to eight" leadership successions in their own careers (249). If a principal stays in one school for 15 – 20 years he or she is considered by some as a representation of the school community and an icon. Changes in the succession of school leadership are felt by not only those who work in these schools, but also those who succeed into the position as well as by those who do not, and those who leave. Each school succession issue has its own contextual issues surrounding succession at any position. A succession from within or from outside greatly affects the contextual issues surrounding succession. One could also presume that district size, staff support, demographics, and assistants also affect successorship.

Succession is a complex highly involved process with effects altering the course of organizations. The long-standing study of succession is substantial in its quantity and quality of research and researchers. Organizational socialization influences all decisions and non-decisions

of the successor. According to Hart (1993), as newly appointed principals encounter job responsibilities, critical relationships and interactions that are disordered and of the most important occur. These relationships and organizational culture and structure pose the greatest impasse on their road to succession (Hart, 1993; Porter, 1996; Smith, 1989). Assistant principals who move to the principalship in the same school, district, or other district without knowing what their challenges entail may experience conflict and role ambiguity. When an employee has the authority to make decisions, and he or she know his or her expectations and roles he or she will not rely on trial and error to decide. This sense of knowing translates into decreased stress, an increase in effectiveness, and successful job acquisition. The nature of systems, large or small, growth, stagnation, or population influences the contextual issues surrounding succession. One could surmise that in smaller systems succession is more difficult than larger. Also, recognition of complex factors, such as age, sex, race, and other demographics of the successor affect the succession path. Looking at patterns of succession, independent factors and promotion to higher levels of administration (assistant principal to assistant superintendent) could also affect succession.

Organizational socialization binds members together into communities based on previous experiences that are stronger than formal structure or hierarchy. Authority alone will not necessarily ensure compliance. Optimism, honesty, and consideration (or a concern for people) combined with understanding relationships, both formal and informal, influence a principals effectiveness to influence change in a building. Cultural and traditional influences may derail an attempt by a principal successor to be successful, carry out roles and responsibilities, or implement change (Sergiovanni, 1996). Elements of social capital include social trust, channels for new information, norms, expectations, change, and sanctions. Effective school systems

emphasize the need to build trusting social relationships and the need for principals to build trusting relationships with parents, students, and most especially teachers. Criteria affecting organizational socialization include assimilation, change, culture, and role awareness.

Socialization as a professional or professional socialization deals with specialized knowledge and skill, as well as professional ethics, whereas organizational socialization encompasses knowledge, values, and norms of specific organizations (Duke, 1984; Greenfield, 1985; Hart, 1993). Professional socialization can begin as principals begin their careers as teachers, or may not start until their formal preparation programs, or will develop as they interact with other administrators. Professional socialization is a combination of formal and informal training that varies from state to state and is highlighted by certifying universities at the criteria of government agencies. Criteria affecting professional socialization are three-fold: knowledge, skills, and preparation.

Transition assistance provided to first year succession principals is instrumental to help them meet organizational and professional challenges. Contextual issues involved in succession are most frequently noted in the literature as posing different types of challenges. Size of organization and position affect success. Internal or external candidates are chosen for various reasons. The role size of the manager and organizational size impact succession and performance. The smaller organizations regardless of size feel greater effects of managerial succession stating that the succession is not simply in position. Larger districts may have any combination of supporting positions alleviating certain job responsibilities. This is an indicator of contextual and support system challenges. Despite these support systems and opportunities, succession principals are still struggling with the daunting task of school leadership.

Informal processes and expectations dominate a principal's first year experiences. These informal experiences include discovering norms and expectations from their predecessors, secretaries, other district principals, and the central office. Relationship and interrelationship issues can change with position and title. Roberts and Wright (1992) presented the suggestion of successful succession by developing ongoing and meaningful mentor relationships for new principals, by increasing the understanding of the challenges and change process and working with experienced principals during the succession process. There are several avenues for new principals to focus their efforts for successful transition into a new building. Suggestions include developing collegial attitudes, focusing on school climate, and collaborative decision-making. Criteria affecting transition assistance include assimilation into the system, contexts, role awareness in the organization, and the support systems in place.

This study investigates those challenges, responses, and the importance of socialization in public high schools and the context of principal succession in specific context (same school or different district) as well as how these contexts affect succession. Additionally, investigation into transition assistance is also studied. The concern is not the rationale for the candidates' reasons to change positions or schools or districts; rather to focus on the succession, as defined as the first year. The purpose of the study is to assist districts in providing better transition assistance, and to better prepare those principals who wish to have a smooth and successful first year. By showing patterns or themes of concerns, clustering responses, counting, seeing plausibility for connectedness, organizing descriptive statistics, comprising a common list of challenges and by highlighting areas of need, general conclusions will be drawn in a reasonable path involving complex problems.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The following flow chart depicts how the methodology chapter will unfold. It is included to add clarity to the chapter's organization.

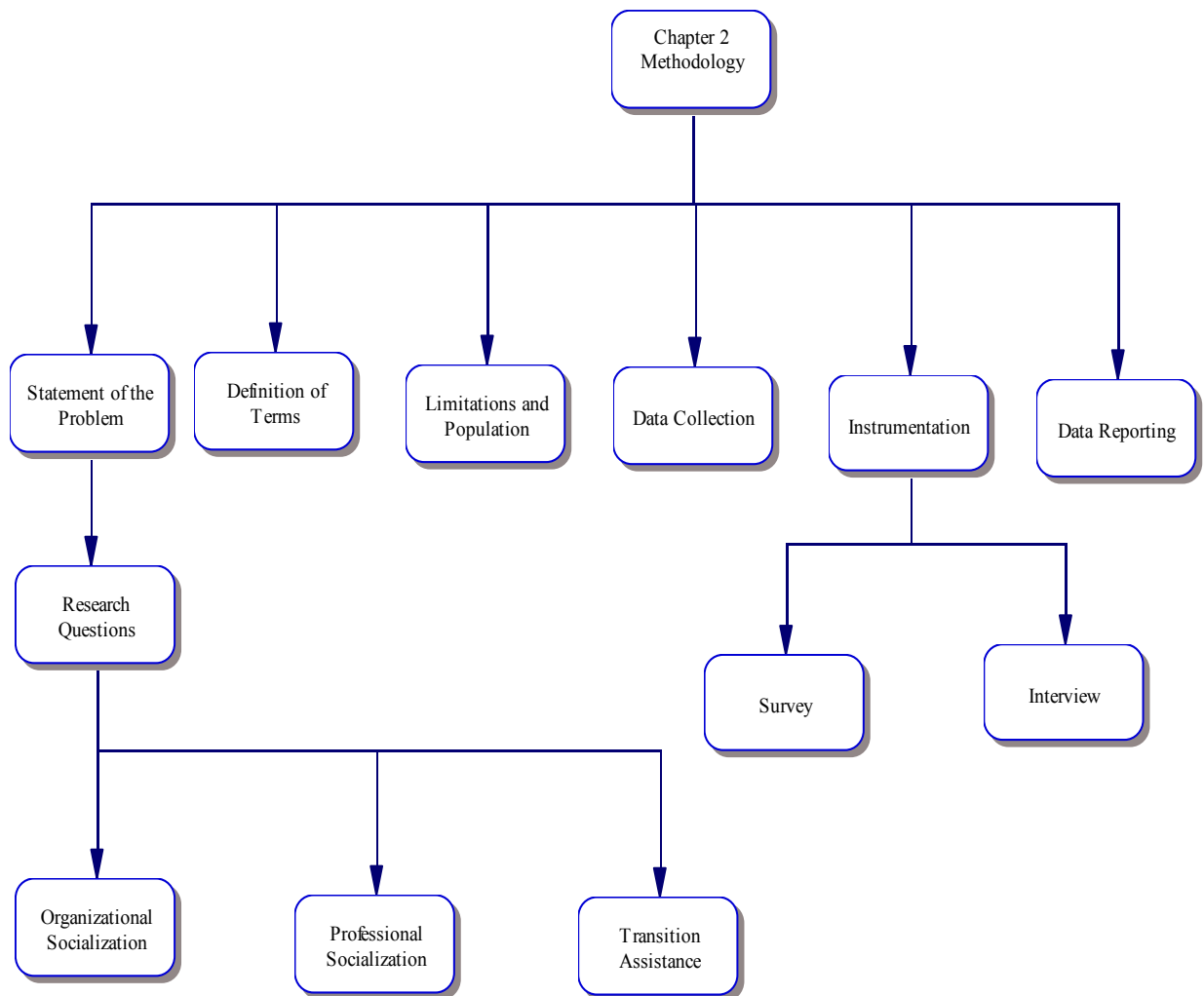


Figure 3. Chapter 2 Flow Chart



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In spite of what is known about school leadership and job responsibilities of both principals and assistant, as well as, some of the history behind the principalship, questions still remain unanswered regarding succession to the principalship. There is a notable amount of literature that suggests and even urges school districts and certifying universities to ensure that principals are effective instructional leaders with skills and knowledge rooted in instructional practices. However, the natural and systematic succession of principals coupled with job responsibilities and practical experiences do not allow many principals to move into these positions with a great degree of success. Nor do principals necessarily desire to be instructional leaders of their building. This is evident with additional stress and responsibilities thrust upon principals in the twenty-first century. The job of the principal has always been important, but now due to the era of accountability and Pennsylvania's principals turnover rate of nearly 8 percent annually, building leader succession is essential to the success of school systems.

Based on the review of the literature, succession parameters are categorized into two broad categories: professional socialization (knowledge, skills, preparation) and organizational socialization (culture, assimilation, change, and role awareness). A series of challenges and responses faced by newly appointed principals are categorized by responses, tracking the speed at which they have succeeded, accounting for their experiences and background, differentiating between assimilation from outside the district to promotion from within, determining importance of criteria, and understanding of socialization type. The transitional supports provided by a district are also important succession specific criteria. Transitional assistance criteria are defined in the literature as assimilation, support systems, contexts, and role awareness. The study's

research questions were designed to limit and specify the study's purpose, and are linked to the two succession categories.

This study entailed an examination of role ambiguity and conflict, challenges and expectations, and realities of high school principals moving from assistants to building level principals. This investigation attempted to identify the challenges high school assistant principals encountered when assuming a principalship. The purpose of the study was to better identify the greatest challenges for new principals to improve student learning and further building progress when moving into a principalship, as well as assist school districts to create better transition for new building level leaders.

## **2.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

How do organizational and professional socialization issues influence succession and job acquisition of first year principals as they succeed from one level of leadership to another?

### 2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is the importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals?
  - 1.a. In what ways do external or internal candidates differ with job acquisition?
2. What is the importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals?
  - 2.a. To what extent do first year succession principals find their pre service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position?
3. What types of transition assistance do school districts provide first year succession principals, and how adequate is the assistance?
  - 3.a. What insights do succession principals gain from experiences of their first year, and what advice do they provide future succession principals?

### 2.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Assistant Principal** – Also known as a Vice Principal, assistant principals refer to a professional employee who is next in authority to the principal.

**High School** – For the purpose of this study, a high school is a Pennsylvania public secondary school serving students in grades 9, 10, 11, 12 or any combination thereof offering coursework serving students in their final years of publicly funded education. These schools report graduates to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Job Acquisition** – The rate at which principals adjust to aspects and roles of the position - political, emotional, social, and contextual; also involves skills, abilities, and knowledge necessary to perform duties.

**Principal** – Chief administrator of the school, this person is ultimately responsible for the operation of a building, student learning, and building employees, professional, non-professional, and para-professional.

**Principal Succession** – Filling a vacancy left by a vacating principal when retirement, death, promotion, or firing occurs. For the purpose of this study succession principals are first year principals.

**Socialization** – This refers to the skills, knowledge, and personal interactions necessary to conduct and complete one's job responsibilities; simply stated, learning social roles.

**Organizational Socialization** – Hierarchy, tradition, history, and culture of a school system.

**Assimilation** – For the purpose of this section of this study, assimilation refers to the social process whereby an individual gradually adopts or is absorbed by the customs and attitudes of the prevailing group (faculty and staff, subordinates, superordinates).

**Change** – Become different in essence; losing one's original nature.

**Culture** – Comprised of a set of norms, values, and beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and stories that make up the persona of a school system.

**Role Awareness** – The cognizant ability to know what is needed to fulfill the various aspects of job descriptions, duties, and expectations in order to avoid critical situations.

**Professional Socialization** – Specialized knowledge and skill, as well as, professional ethics and preparation.

**Knowledge** – The awareness and understanding of facts, truths, and information gained in the form of experience or learning.

Examples include actions and strategies of teaching, organization of classroom experiences, providing for diverse learner needs, evaluation and implementation of programs, administering, managing, supervising, performing, and supporting education or training.

**Preparation** – The cognitive process concerning one's actions leading to skilled behavior in response to actions that ready an individual to respond to events. Includes all formal and informal training, experiences, and learned behavior.

**Skills** – For the purpose of this study, skills refers to acquired measurable behaviors (i.e. technological, communicative, analytical), and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to particular situations necessary to do the job (i.e. programming, budgeting, financial analysis, data/statistical analysis)

**Succession** – The process by which key officials are replaced.

**Trust** – The reliability and integrality of individuals in social situations.

**Transition Assistance** – Defined in terms of context and information a successor needs to know to perform; also what supports and professional development activities a school district provides to address concerns; pre-service preparation also addresses this issue.

**Assimilation** – For the purpose of this section of this study, assimilation refers to the social process whereby a group or individual gradually adopts or is absorbed by the customs and attitudes of the prevailing group (school system, support system, colleagues).

**Contexts** – The set of conditions, facts and factors, or circumstances that surround a situation or event, which may include the economic, political, social, historical, cultural, or institutional factors that shape the way employees understand the events of a school system.

**Support Systems** – The network of facilities and people who interact, interrelate, and network in formal and informal contexts for support and assistance both communally and individually.

## **2.5 STUDY LIMITATIONS & SAMPLE**

By overestimating the study of a formal leader in his or her leadership position the possibility to over emphasize the one person impact on an organization occurs. If this occurs, it is possible that factors affecting succession are missed. To combat overemphasis, the study was not looking at effectiveness as measured by others or assessment; rather, the focus was on self-evaluation and programmatic influences on the principalship. This study provided a reflective look at the first year of a current principalship of a first year succession principal. This investigation examined

principals in a mixed method methodology who have moved into a principalship from an assistant principal position in the same school and a different school in a different district shortly after completion of their first year as principal.

The researcher contacted the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals for assistance with gathering a sample. Both of the organizations were helpful; however, they informed the researcher they do not collect or compile this type of data and did not know how the researcher could collect the information desired. Due to the data not being collected, tracked or known further illustrates the point that a study of this kind has yet to be done.

Those principals identified were sent a general survey questionnaire instrument. On the researcher-constructed-survey-instrument, respondents replied to specific demographic questions and career questions, educational preparation, as well as job responsibility, support systems, and questions about expectations. Additional data was generated from an interview from a smaller sample. This follow-up interview was controlled (context issues) and took into account the willingness of principals to participate in a more in-depth interview. The goal was to obtain ten percent of total responders for the interview. The assumption made was that the survey instruments reached the respondents intended and was answered and returned by the intended person. The information collected was limited by the amount of time and effort of those who completed the instruments. The following table indicated which survey instrument was used to answer each research question.

**Table 5. Methodology Selection**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Survey</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>1</b>	X	X
<b>1.a</b>	X	
<b>2</b>	X	X
<b>2.a</b>	X	X
<b>3</b>	X	X
<b>3.a</b>	X	X

## **2.6 PROCESS & DATA COLLECTION**

### **2.6.1 Step 1**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education was able to furnish the researcher a list of 2004-2005 Pennsylvania secondary school principals. This list was cross referenced with the January 2006 current secondary principal list. The 2004-2005 list contained 829 names and the current 2005-2006 list contained 698 names. The researcher excluded any matches and obtained a list of 126 new names. These new names acted as a working list of possible newly hired succession principals. The list had contained names of all secondary school principals. To further discriminate and acquire only high schools principals, the researcher used the Pennsylvania Department of Education website to input the individual names into the Education Names and Addressed (EdNA) database. With the EdNA database the researcher identified each succession principal by school type - middle school, junior high school, intermediate school, junior/senior



high school, or high school. The number of identified high school principals was eighty five (85). On January 18, 2006 the researcher called every eighth name on the list to verify the accuracy of the sample population. All of the ten principals contacted were first year succession principals. The group of eighty five (85) identified high school principals served as the survey population for the study. According to the data reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education via the EdNA database 653 schools reported public graduates during the 2004-2005 school year. The number of schools reporting graduates (653) divided by the number of first year principals (85) provided the percent of first year succession principals of total principals. The percent of first year succession principals of total high school building principals was 7.7 percent.

### **2.6.2 Step 2**

On May 1, 2006, the survey instrument was mailed to the entire eighty five (85) member population sample. Based on the satisfactory response rate of 41.2% the decision to continue was made.

### **2.6.3 Step 3**

Following the satisfactory response rate on the survey questionnaire, respondents who agreed to the follow-up interview provided additional information about their succession. Twelve percent or 10 participants from the identified 85 person population participated in the interview portion of the study. Based on this satisfactory response rate the decision to continue was made.

#### **2.6.4 Step 4**

The survey and interview results were compiled and analyzed by the researcher according to the Instrumentation and Research Question Association table (figure 2.3) to answer the study's research questions. The research questions were used to report on the series of challenges, responses, and importance of identified criteria by newly appointed principals, as well as, transitional assistance provided by the districts.

From the results and by showing patterns or themes of concerns, use of descriptive statistics, clustering responses, counting, seeing plausibility for connectedness, and by highlighting areas of need, general conclusions were drawn in a reasonable path involving complex problems.

### **2.7 INSTRUMENTATION**

The mixed methodology of this study involves an entire population survey and a follow-up interview of several survey participants. The use of a survey identifies challenges, importance of criteria, supports, and insights of succession principal in high schools across Pennsylvania. Its use is justified to strengthen the researcher's ability to make generalizations from a diverse and large population taking into account the necessity to complete the study in a timely fashion. The use of an interview provided follow-up questioning to be asked and supplied additional insight into more complex questions about specific challenges and emotional responses, and allowed for open ended responses from participants. The interviews filled in gaps in the study which could not be answered completely by the survey instrument. They provided breadth and depth to the study. Both methods are an appropriate and often used technique for questionnaires measuring

insights, opinions, and observations. The survey allowed the researcher to quantify responses of the population; where as, the interview provided qualitative information and quantifiable results.

The questions are ingrained with information and key concepts gained from the review of literature. The survey and interview questions were sent to ten (10) Pennsylvania principals as part of a pilot study. Additionally, the instrumentation was reviewed by the Dr. Rubenstein of University of Pittsburgh's Department of Measurement and Evaluation. Based on the feedback, the instruments were modified to increase readability, reliability, validity, clarity, and return rate.

The University of Pittsburgh's Institutional Review Board has granted permission to conduct this research and the use of the mentioned research instruments on April 13, 2006 in accordance with the necessary research integrity and human subject research documentation.

- Survey Questionnaire (Appendix B)
- Telephone Interview Questions (Appendix C)

The following Research Question and Instrumentation Association table provides the logical and rational sequence for which questions on the survey or interview addressed each research question.

**Table 6. Research Question & Instrumentation Association**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Criteria Identified in Review of Literature</b>	<b>Survey Instrument Questions</b>	<b>Interview Instrument Questions</b>	<b>Number of Total Questions</b>
1) What is the importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals?	Culture Assimilation Change Role Awareness	1-10	1,2	14
a) In what ways do external or internal candidates differ with job acquisition?	Culture Assimilation Change Role Awareness	50		1
2) What is the importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals?	Knowledge Skills Preparation	12-21	5,6	12
a) To what extent do first year succession principals find their pre service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position?	Knowledge Skills Preparation	11,22-25,49	3,8	7
3) What types of transition assistance do school districts provide first year succession principals, and how adequate is the assistance?	Assimilation Support Systems Contexts Role Awareness	26-43	4	19
a) What insights do succession principals gain from experiences of their first year, and what advice do they provide future succession principals?	Knowledge Role Awareness	44-48	7,9,10,11,12	10

## 2.8 DATA REPORTING

The data collected was analyzed and reported according to the research questions.

### 2.8.1 Research Question 1

What is the importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals?

The answers provided in survey questions 1-10 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-A Great Deal of Attention, 4-Considerable Attention, 3-Some Attention, 2-Little Attention, and 1-Almost No Attention. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the issues the most critical issues were identified. The rationale for identification of the values, descriptive statistics, and ranking was to recognize the most critical issues and indicate inequality among issues to help principals and districts focus on succession influences and challenges. These issues were compared to the criteria of research question 2.

The open-ended interview questions 1, 2, 5, and 6 provided insights into aspects of the principalship which are more complex and could not be quantified easily into packaged answers. These questions were designed not to lead interviewees into scripted answers. The answers provided are listed in the appendix at the end of the study. However, for purposes of drawing general conclusions the interview responses are logically grouped and reported according to frequency and socialization criteria for the purpose of identifying what aspects of succession were indicated by the majority.

### **2.8.2 Research Question 1.a.**

In what ways do external or internal candidates differ with job acquisition?

Question 50 dealt with candidate origin. By discriminating between internal and external successors the researcher was able to report differences and similarities of the two groups. The data from internal candidates and external candidates also allowed the researcher to identify and compare data collected about socialization challenges and transition assistance to the entire population. Rationale for this information was to provide specific contextual influences for internal and external succession.

### **2.8.3 Research Question 2**

What is the importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals?

The answers provided in survey questions 12-21 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Helpful, 4-Helpful, 3-Somewhat Helpful, 2-A Little Helpful, and 1-Almost No Help. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the criteria the most critical criteria were identified. The rationale for identification of the values, descriptive statistics, and ranking was to recognize the most critical criteria and indicate inequality among criteria to focus principals and districts on succession influences and challenges. These criteria were then compared to the criteria of research question 1.

The open-ended interview questions 5 and 6 provided insights into aspects of the principalship which were more complex and could not be quantified easily into packaged answers. These questions were designed to not lead interviewees into scripted answers. The

answers provided are listed in an addendum at the end of the paper. However, for purposes of drawing general conclusion they were logically grouped and reported according to frequency and socialization criteria.

#### **2.8.4 Research Question 2.a**

To what extent do first year succession principals find their pre service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position?

The answers provided in survey questions 11 and 22 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Important, 4-Important, 3-Somewhat Important, 2-Little Importance, and 1-Almost No Importance. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the criteria the most critical criteria were identified. The rationale for identification of the values, descriptive statistics, and ranking was to recognize the most critical criteria and indicate inequality among criteria to help principals and districts focus on pre service influences. This information was further compared socialization type (organizational and professional) to identify importance of university coursework and training.

The answers provided in survey questions 23-25 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Helpful, 4-Helpful, 3-Somewhat Helpful, 2-A Little Helpful, and 1-Almost No Help. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the background aspects the most critical aspects were identified. The grounds for identification of the values, descriptive statistics, and ranking were to distinguish the most critical aspects and influences of principal preparation and transition. The answers to each question identified how helpful school experience, service as an assistant principal, and coursework compared to each other and influences succession.

Answers provided by survey question 49 identify the length of time a respondent worked as a certified public school employee prior to assuming a principalship. This information was organized by descriptive statistics and ranked. The rationale for this question resides in further defining preparation, and was used in conjunction with other questions.

The open-ended interview questions 3 and 8 provided insights into aspects of the principalship which were more complex and could not be quantified easily into packaged answers. These questions were designed not to lead interviewees into scripted answers. The answers provided are listed in an addendum at the end of the paper. However, for purposes of drawing general conclusion they are logically grouped and reported according to frequency.

### **2.8.5 Research Question 3**

What types of transition assistance do school districts provide first year succession principals, and how adequate is the assistance?

Survey answers 26-28 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Helpful, 4-Helpful, 3-Somewhat Helpful, 2-A Little Helpful, and 1-Almost No Help. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the support systems the most critical support systems were identified. The grounds for identification of the values, descriptive statistics, and ranking were to distinguish the most critical aspects and influences of the support systems. The answers to each question identified how helpful each system was to succession issues.

Survey questions 29-43 identified specific types of supports a district provided a principal. The respondents first indicated whether or not a specific support was provided. If a specific support was not provided, the respondent identified if they desired the support. By



organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the support systems the most commonly provided supports and most desired supports were identified.

The open-ended interview question 4 provided insight into levels of anticipated support provided. This question was designed to illicit more complex responses which could not be easily packaged. This question was designed not to lead interviewees into scripted answers. The answers provided are listed in an addendum at the end of the paper. However, for purposes of drawing general conclusions they were logically grouped and reported according to frequency.

### **2.8.6 Research Question 3.a**

What insights do succession principals gain from experiences of their first year, and what advice do they give future succession principals?

Survey answers 44-48 ask respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement regarding expectations. Answers were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree. By organizing the descriptive statistics of each question and ranking the statements about expectations the researcher was able to draw conclusions about principal expectations.

The open-ended interview questions 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 provided insights into aspects of the principalship that did not have anticipated answers. These answers varied dramatically. These questions were designed not to lead interviewees into scripted answers. The answers provided are listed in the appendix at the end of the study. However, for purposes of drawing general conclusions they were reported by frequency and cross referenced to previous questions in logical patterns. The rationale for asking these questions was to assist future succession principals with their succession year.

## 2.9 SUMMARY

The study's conceptual framework narrows the history, present situation, and future possibilities around concepts and contexts of the Pennsylvania principalship. The function and responsibilities of the principalship have developed and been redeveloped to meet the challenges of impacts and influences on the American public educational system. Identified throughout the information presented was the strand of socialization and its influence on the position of principal. Organizational socialization binds members together into communities based on previous experiences that are stronger than formal structure, hierarchy, and authority. Professional socialization is the combination of formal and informal training that varies from state to state and is highlighted by certifying universities under the criteria of government agencies. The methodology selected allowed the researcher to identify which criteria previously identified was most relevant to transitioning principals. It also afforded opportunities to make connections from the results of the instrumentation to the review of literature. To this end, the researcher had compiled a list of eighty five (85) succession principals to serve as the study's population. This population identified the professional and organizational socialization challenges, responses, and importance to succession principals, as they completed their first year of service that inhibited job acquisition or influenced success. This population completed a researcher constructed survey. Those who completed the survey may have decided to opt-in to a follow-up interview. The survey and interview results allowed the researcher to make generalized conclusions and answer the previously mentioned research questions. Through analysis of the research questions the study's aims were met.

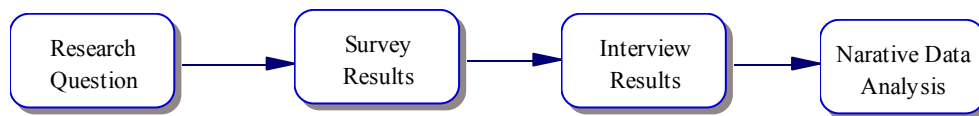
In Chapter 3 the data is analyzed and reported according to the research questions. Procedures used for data analysis and reporting include organizing descriptive statistics,

comparison, and qualitative accounts. Chapter 4 includes a summary of findings, conclusions, and implications for practice.

### 3.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to assist school districts in providing better assistance to first year principals, and to better inform succession principals so they can more easily assume the principalship. This study identified the perceptions and reflections of current first-year principals in Pennsylvania, and recognized specific factors and influences of the principalship based on the review of literature. To carry out the study, principals responded to research questions through interviews and surveys. The information in this chapter is disaggregated and aggregated by research questions and answered by specific survey and interview questions as identified in Research Question & Instrumentation Association table 6 listed in Chapter 2.

The layout of each section in Chapter 3 follows the same pattern. The research question is first stated then followed by a table containing the significant results from the survey instrument. The significant results of the interview questionnaire are reported next, first grouped by a frequency table then followed by specific and noteworthy interviewee comments. Finally, a narrative depiction and analysis of all data gathered provides a summary of the information and relates it back to the research question. Figure 4 may help to clarify the layout of each Chapter subheading.



**Figure 4. Research Report Layout**

### 3.1 RETURN RATES

A total of 85 principals were identified as potential first-year principals. This group represented the entire population for the study. The 85 potential first-year principals were mailed a participant packet including a cover letter, an initial survey questionnaire, and opt-in interview postcard. The number of usable surveys returned in the study was 35 or 41.2 percent. The number of interviews conducted was 10 or 11.8 percent. All of the respondents who agreed to participate in the interview were not interviewed due to time constraints and necessity. The respondents included in the study were interviewed based on a randomized selection process. The principals interviewed were eager to assist with the study, and received no compensation.

**Table 7. Return Rate**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Total surveys sent	85	100
Total surveys returned	41	48.2
<b>Surveys included</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41.2</b>
Not principals (excluded)	3	3.5
Were Not Previously Assistants (excluded)	3	3.5
Total interview postcards sent	85	100
Total interview postcards returned	20	23.6
<b>Interviews conducted</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11.8</b>

### 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What is the importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals?

Table 8 identifies the top ranked means of the survey responses to the questions concerning the amount of attention and importance of specific organizational socialization influences. The answers provided in this survey section were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-A Great Deal of Attention, 4-Considerable Attention, 3-Some Attention, 2-Little Attention, and 1-Almost No Attention.

**Table 8. Socialization Issues Prioritized**

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	3. Communication and listening skills	4.46	.906
2	10. Establishing trust	4.34	.765
3	2. Consensus building	4.03	.618
4	5. Conflict resolution	4.03	.707
5	6. Interpersonal relationships	3.97	.875

Interview questions 1 and 2 were also used to identify issues surrounding organizational socialization transition issues. The following tables (9, 10, 11, and 12) organize and report data from interview questions 1 and 2. They are clustered and ranked according to frequency. Table 9 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 1: How did the staffs', students', and community's perceptions of your predecessor influence your assimilation?

**Table 9. Perception and Assimilation**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Positive, Predecessor well respected, Smooth transition	4
2	Positive, Welcomed arrival	2
2	Negative, Predecessor well respected, Change difficult for staff	2
2	Negative, Trust issues	2

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal B stated, “Expectations were for things to continue the way they always have.” Principal D said, “The staff was distrustful of me.” The responses of Principals B and D point out how the predecessor’s influence and condition in which relationships were left may complicate a succession. The comments of Principal C illustrate a different picture: “I made an effort to be more receptive. I made the building more welcoming and changed the front office staff.” Principal E stated, “I had to work hard. The person leaving was a pillar of the community - well respected. This is a small school and all the previous principals went to high school here, taught here, and then became the principal.” The issues of predecessor perception display the importance of climate and culture upon arrival. The interviewed principals’ responses suggested that succeeding a well-respected principal eased the transition to their own principalship. The interview results agree with Kochanek and Merton as cited in the review of literature saying that the stakeholders may inherit interpersonal relationships from their predecessors. Not having to address challenging issues of trust or poor faculty-principal relationships allowed the new principals to focus their efforts on other responsibilities.

Table 10 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 2: Upon assuming the position of principal what were your expectations of staff relationships and interactions with you? How did the reality compare to your expectations?

**Table 10. Expectations and Support**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	As expected, Supportive	5
2	As expected, Staff guarded	4
3	Not as expected, Unsupportive, Staff guarded	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal B responded by saying, “Support from staff was as expected. There were some trust issues.” Similarly Principal D said, “The relationships were icy. I expected cooperation and did not get it.” Both Principal B and D continued discussing what Blase referred to as the “passing the test.” In the previous examples teachers were waiting for the principals to prove their worth and to establish credibility or to legitimize their administration. Conversely Principal I stated, “I had the expectation that the staff, departments, and I would interact as a team. The staff has met and exceeded my expectations. They were receptive to new ideas and plans.” The interpersonal relationship skills and benefit of being an internal candidate allowed Principal I to more quickly assimilate into her new position.

**3.2.1 Research Question 1 Analyzed**

Organizational socialization influences all decisions and non-decisions of the successor. A new principal entering a school has an effect on all those who work and learn in a school. Apprehension and fear are common characteristics identified with succession in the review of literature. Factors affecting the first year of their principalship varied depending mainly on



contextual issues such as: culture, climate, and past experiences. The top ranked means in table 8 identify areas where the principal participants focused their attention to ease their assimilation to the school and smooth their transition to the position. The principals gave “considerable attention” to communication and listening, establishing trust, consensus building, conflict resolution, and interpersonal relationships. The highest mean of 4.46 is associated with communication and listening.

As a succession principal assumes his or her role, the transition and actions surrounding the transition are focused on organizational issues of socialization. Expectations and perceptions of stakeholders in and around the school affect the successor’s first year. Sixty percent of the interviewed principal discussed their arrival as positive due to the staff, student, and community’s perception of the principalship due to the success of their predecessor. Only twenty percent of the respondents discussed succession on negative terms due to their predecessor. Similarly, support and expectations from the stakeholders were reported by the respondents as expected. Of the ninety percent responding that expectations were as expected, 56 percent indicated support occurred in an encouraging manner.

### **3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 1.A**

In what ways do external or internal candidates differ with job acquisition?

Tables 11 and 12 identify the top ranked means of each specific survey section for external candidates, internal candidates, and the entire sample. Complete survey responses are listed in the study’s appendix. For the purposes of conciseness, only the survey answers with the greatest disparity are listed to highlight varying answers. Tables 13 and 14 identify the top

ranked means of each specific survey section. Responses were compared to the survey responses of principals who were external and internal candidates with the least disparity for purposes of conciseness.

**Table 11. Candidate Answers: Greatest Disparity Q 1- 28 and 45-48**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Survey Section</b>	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>All Survey Respondents</b>	<b>Internal Candidates Only</b>	<b>External Candidates Only</b>
7	Organization Socialization	Political, social, and cultural impacts	3.43	3.67	2.90
11	Organizational Socialization Preparation	How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.57	3.42	3.90
19	Professional Socialization	Student growth and development	4.11	4.25	3.82
25	Preparation/Experience	Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.62	4.70	4.45
27	Role Transition/Support	Teaching Professionals or Faculty	4.23	4.50	3.64
45	Expectations	Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	4.06	4.21	3.72

**Table 12. Candidate Answers: Supports Provided/Desired: Greatest Disparity Q 29-43**

Frequencies (Percents)	All Survey Respondents				Internal Candidates				External Candidates			
	Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
32. Cultural assimilation	2 (5.7)	33 (94.3)	9 (25.7)	24 (68.6)	0 (0)	24 (100)	2 (8.3)	22 (91.7)	2 (18.2)	9 (81.8)	7 (63.6)	2 (18.2)
36. Induction	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	15 (42.9)	11 (31.4)	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9.1)	4 (36.4)
37. In-service training	20 (57.1)	15 (42.9)	10 (28.6)	5 (14.3)	16 (66.7)	9 (37.5)	5 (20.8)	4 (16.7)	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	5 (45.5)	2 (18.2)
40. Orientation	7 (20)	28 (80)	15 (42.9)	13 (37.1)	2 (8.3)	22 (91.7)	10 (41.7)	12 (50)	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	1 (9.1)	5 (45.5)
41. Personal evaluation	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)	10 (28.6)	2 (5.7)	18 (75)	6 (25)	5 (20.8)	1 (4.2)	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9.1)

**Table 13. Candidate Answers: Least Disparity Q 1- 28 and 45-48**

Question No.	Survey Section	Survey Questions	All Survey Respondents	Internal Candidates Only	External Candidates Only
2	Organization Socialization	Consensus building	4.03	4.04	4
14	Professional Socialization	Managing professional non-professional school employees	4.03	4.13	3.82
22	Professional Socialization Preparation	How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.63	3.54	3.82
23	Preparation/Experience	Graduate coursework or university training	3.77	3.79	3.73
26	Role Transition/Support	Central Office Personnel	4.11	4.17	4
44	Expectations	The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	3.97	4	3.91

**Table 14. Candidate Answers: Supports Provided/Desired: Least Disparity Q 29-43**

Frequencies (Percents)	All Survey Respondents				Internal Candidates				External Candidates			
	Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
30. Collegial support	25 (71.4)	10 (28.6)	6 (17.1)	4 (11.4)	18 (75)	6 (25)	2 (8.3)	4 (16.7)	8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)	3 (27.3)	0 (0)
33. District principal meetings	26 (74.3)	9 (25.7)	6 (17.1)	3 (8.6)	19 (79.2)	5 (20.8)	3 (12.5)	2 (8.3)	7 (63.6)	4 (36.4)	3 (27.3)	1 (9.1)
35. Goal setting	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)	11 (31.4)	1 (2.9)	17 (70.8)	7 (29.2)	6 (25)	1 (4.2)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)	0 (0)
39. Mentor	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	17 (48.6)	9 (25.7)	5 (20.8)	19 (79.2)	11 (45.8)	8 (33.3)	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	6 (54.5)	1 (9.1)
43. None Provided	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

### 3.3.1 Research Question 1.a. Analyzed

School leadership succession is a complex and involved process. Its effects alter the course of schools. Each principal succession has its own contextual issues surrounding the succession. Internal or external candidates are chosen for various reasons. A succession from within or from outside greatly affects the contextual issues surrounding succession. To provide depth to issues involving organizational socialization issues, the respondents' answers were disaggregated by path to the principalship - internal or external candidate. This section is included to illuminate issues surrounding organization and professional socialization in general and provide specific advice for those internal or external candidates, as well as to provide insight to districts hiring principals.

For the purposes of conciseness the ranked means with the greatest and least disparity of each survey section are included in this chapter; more complete results appear in the appendix.

By examining the greatest and least disparity of each ranked mean for internal, external, and all respondents differences, issues important to each specific candidate's route are illuminated.

**Greatest Disparity:** External candidates more heavily rely on their coursework than experiences when dealing with issues of organizational socialization and professional socialization. They also encounter more difficulty with both issues of organizational and professional socialization. They have indicated less support and assistance from stakeholders and less transition assistance from central office than internal candidates. External candidates desired more support than internal candidates from central office with respect to cultural assimilation, induction, in-service training, orientation, and their evaluations. Internal candidates were most comfortable with all supports provided, and they desired few additional supports from the central office. However, the external principals did not receive the same level of support from the staff and faculty of their new schools. An example of this is Principal D's (external candidate) response to interview question 2 saying, "I expected cooperation and did not get it." Internal candidates also relied more heavily on their past experiences and term as an assistant principal than external candidates.

**Least Disparity:** Both internal and external candidates expressed similar rates of satisfaction with their preparation of professional socialization and comments concerning coursework. Additionally, support from central office remained constant throughout the survey responses. The data reported and analyzed for research question 1.a. correlates with the information identified in the review of literature for succession.

### 3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What is the importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals?

Table 15 identifies the top ranked means of the survey responses to the survey questions concerning how helpful and important specific areas of professional socialization influences were to respondents. These areas were assigned a numeric value according to the amount of attention given to each issue. The answers provided in this section were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Helpful, 4-Helpful, 3-Somewhat Helpful, 2-A Little Helpful, and 1-Almost No Help.

**Table 15. Professional Socialization Issues**

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	15. Principles of teaching and learning	4.29	.658
2	13. Managing student discipline	4.14	.765
2	18. School law and human resource issues	4.14	.733
4	19. Student growth and development	4.11	.758
5	12. Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation	4.09	.887

Interview questions 5 and 6 were analyzed in a manner to answer and address research question 2: professional socialization issues. Table 16 displays the distribution of clustered responses regarding question 5: Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that you implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?

**Table 16. My Transition Strategy**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Transition Strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Increase communications, Small meetings	3
1	Status Quo	3
3	No, None	2
4	Specific program (Pride and Promise)	1
4	Goal planning	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal A discussed the strategy he applied to ease his transition: “Summer department meetings at my home or at school helped to make connections and increase communications.” Principal C stated, “I created a high school vision and goals, and presented this to staff to clarify expectations.” Conversely Principal E reported, “I came in January with the idea I was going to change nothing, and I won’t change anything until next year.” The three opposing views and strategies were indicated by the principals as successful for their specific situation and succession. The review of literature did not necessarily indicate any singular strategy for succession due to the diverse and varying circumstances surrounding building climate and culture. Smylie and Hart’s research indicated by vaguely defining principal roles and responsibilities that the relational aspects of principal succession may cause comparison deficiencies in research.

Table 17 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 6: Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that others implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?

**Table 17. Imposed Transition Strategy**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Transition Strategy</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Specific program (Project 720, technology, town development model, Book review framework)	4
2	No, None	3
3	Guidance, goal setting	2
4	Weekly meetings	1

### **3.4.1 Research Question 2 Analyzed**

Professional socialization is a combination of formal and informal training that varies from state to state and is highlighted by certifying universities due to criteria of government agencies. Professional socialization focuses on specialized knowledge, skill, and ethics not specific to any one organization, but to the professional in general. Professional socialization can begin as principals begin their careers as teachers, or may not start until their formal preparation programs, or when they interact with other administrators. The top ranked mean in table 15 identify areas the principal participants focused their attention to ease their assimilation to the school and smooth their transition to the position. The principals gave “considerable attention” to principles of teaching and learning, management of student discipline, issues of school law and human resource, student growth and development, and curriculum design and program implementation. The highest mean of 4.29 is associated with principles of teaching and learning.

The self-imposed transition plan and the plan mandated from the central office are often key factors during the successor’s first-year. The principals interviewed provided varying answers as to specific programs mandated from central office and programs implemented by the successor to smooth the transition. Interview question 5 was designed to identify a specific



program or strategy learned from the realm of professional knowledge and training. However, this was not the response indicated. Thirty percent of the interviewees indicated small meetings or individual communications were helpful to their transition, and thirty percent indicated their plan was to hold the status quo for the year allowing time to fully understand the issues of the building. Only one interviewee indicated he utilized a specific program during the first year to transition to the position. Thirty percent of respondents provided organization socialization methods revolving around organizational issues to ease the transition. Conversely, forty percent of respondents indicated central office imposed a specific program on the position during the first year. Greenfield and Scott's research indicated principals who are effective succession leaders must first be accepted and incorporated in work groups before they can have any organizational impact regardless of programmatic influences.

The results from the survey indicate no single area of professional knowledge is considerably more important to succession. The top five means of the responses have a range of .4. The results allow for a ranked response but do not clearly indicate any single area of focus to facilitate a smooth transition. The results from the interview indicate a diverse array of programs and methods of easing the transition to building principal. The collective responses of questions 5 and 6 indicate contextual issues affect which methods may provide the smoothest transition. One specific example illustrates this best. Principal A, an external candidate, works in a large urban district with a vast central office and a multitude of stakeholders and interest groups. He experienced a multitude of programs imposed on his building, including a new contract, building project, project 720, and a new reading initiative. Compare this to Principal E, who was an internal candidate appointed in January by new superintendent who was acclimating a board experiencing four new members. He and the central office decided to maintain the status quo for

the remainder of the school year. The survey and interview results parallel the review of literature by indicating organizational issues are more important to a successful succession than professional socialization issues. Notable school socialization researchers Duke, Greenfield, and Hart agree the most influential source of professional socialization differs according to each succession candidate, and that organizational socialization rooted in culture, tradition, and trust is more powerful than professional socialization in terms of success of succession. Even the most prepared candidate in terms of professional socialization may struggle with succession due to challenges experienced with organizational socialization.

### 3.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 2.A

To what extent do first year succession principals find their pre-service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position?

The following captions display the distribution of responses by principals regarding graduate training and preparation around issues of professional and organizational socialization on the survey instrument. The answers provided in survey questions 11 and 22 were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Important, 4-Important, 3-Somewhat Important, 2-Little Importance, and 1-Almost No Importance.

Question (organizational socialization)	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.57	1.112

Question (professional socialization)	Mean	Standard Deviation
22. How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.63	.973

Table 18 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding questions 23, 24, and 25: How helpful/useful were the following aspects of your background in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal? The answers provided in this section were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Very Helpful, 4-Helpful, 3-Somewhat Helpful, 2-A Little Helpful, and 1-Almost No Help.

**Table 18. Respondent Background**

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Background Aspects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	25. Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.62	.690
<b>2</b>	24. Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)	4.51	.781
<b>3</b>	23. Graduate coursework or university training	3.77	1.00

Table 19 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding survey question 49: How many years have you worked as a certified public school employee?

**Table 19. Years of Employment**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	More than 15	13	37.1
<b>2</b>	Between 6 – 10	11	31.4
<b>2</b>	Between 11 – 15	11	31.4
<b>4</b>	5 years or less	0	0

Interview questions 3 and 8 were also used to identify issues associated with background, training, and preparation. They were clustered and ranked according to frequency. Table 20 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding question 3: Upon

assuming the position of principal, were there any aspects of the role you believed you were not adequately prepared?

**Table 20. Preparation Not Adequate**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Management issues (construction, budget, etc)	4
2	Interpersonal interactions	3
3	Master Schedule	2
4	Nothing	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal C stated she was well prepared for her new role stating, “No, I was groomed for the position.” A follow up question identified that she was well prepared clinically but the time spent working with her predecessor enabled her to easily assume the new position. An unexpected answer came from Principal D who simply stated, “they way *we* do things at XYZ school.” Principal D continued identifying cultural and traditional inter-workings of the building creating constant barriers to change. The results of this question further strengthen the argument that cultural and traditional influences may derail an attempt by a principal successor to be successful, carry out roles and responsibilities, or implement change regardless of professional knowledge.

Table 21 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 8: How has your pre-service training or professional experiences prepared you for the principalship?

**Table 21. Preparation Identified**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Experience most helpful	5
2	Pre-service training good, but experience more helpful	2
2	Coursework not helpful	2
3	Very Little	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Many of the principals answered this question similar to Principal A: “Experience is the best teacher.” Opposing the frequent answers Principal G stated, “In theory it had a lot of value, but actually the position requires more common sense. I was well prepared for the nuts and bolts things, but the social interactions and interpersonal aspects needed to be hit harder in my coursework.”

**3.5.1 Research Question 2.a. Analyzed**

Research question 2.a. examined issues of background (experience and training) and socialization. Survey question 11 and 22 measured respondents’ answers as to the importance of coursework in preparing principals to handle issues of professional and organizational socialization. Respondents’ mean answers were 3.57 for organizational issues, and 3.63 for professional socialization issues; both equating to the level of “somewhat important” and important.” Also indicated in survey responses were three questions concerning the importance of coursework, years experience as an assistant, and years of experience not as an assistant principal. The ranked means of the answers first indicate years as an assistant with a mean rank of 4.62 as most important, followed by years experience not as a principal with a ranked mean of 4.51, and then graduate coursework with a ranked mean of 3.77. The scale for these questions

has five as very helpful, 4 as helpful and 3 as somewhat helpful. In the review of literature, questions related to the assistant principalship as proper training are common when moving into the principalship. Due mostly to position descriptions and functions, many researchers (Hart, 1993; Marshall, 1992; Stein, 2003) and practitioners believe the training ground of assistant principals is inadequate preparation for those succeeding to a principalship. However, according to the survey results the principals felt largely that their term as an assistant principal was the single most helpful aspect of their succession. The clustered interview results on table 21 indicate seventy percent of respondents felt their experience was most helpful and more helpful than their coursework – all respondents were assistant principals for at least three years. A void between coursework or training and workplace demands exists in the recent (late 1990s and 2000s) principal preparation literature of Barth, Elmore, Smith, and Piele. This study concurs with this body of research literature. Assistant principals do gain a better understanding of the scope of the principalship and how a school systems functions. However, in terms of developing the skills and abilities necessary to function as a principal, they are thought never to become realized due to the nature of the position of an assistant principal.

Also reported in this section are the years of experience of each participant. It is important to note 68.5 percent of survey respondents have more than ten years of public school experience and all were assistants prior to their succession. Table 20 indicates interview respondents' answers as to preparation that was not adequate. Sixty percent of those respondents' answers highlighted issues categorized as professional knowledge included in professional socialization. Three indicated issues categorized as interpersonal or organizational issues. One respondent indicated there was nothing for which she was not adequately prepared.

### 3.6 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What types of transition assistance do school districts provide first year succession principals, and how adequate is the assistance?

Table 22 presents supports that are sometimes provided to first year principals. In this section of the survey respondents were asked first to indicate whether each support was provided; and secondly, for the supports that were NOT provided they were to indicate whether they desired to have them. This table is not ordered in any manner related to a ranking of values.

**Table 22. Supports Provided and Desired**

Supports	Provided		Desired	
	Frequency (Mean Percents)		Frequency(Mean Percents)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
29. Administration meetings	33(94.3)	2(5.7)	2(5.7)	0(0)
30. Collegial support	25(71.4)	10(28.6)	6(17.1)	4(11.4)
31. Conferences or workshops	30(85.7)	5(14.3)	3(8.6)	2(5.7)
32. Cultural assimilation	2(5.7)	33(94.3)	9(25.7)	24(68.6)
33. District principal meetings	26(74.3)	9(25.7)	6(17.1)	3(8.6)
34. District tour	15(42.9)	19(54.3)	7(20)	13(37.1)
35. Goal setting	23(65.7)	12(34.3)	11(31.4)	1(2.9)
36. Induction	9(25.7)	26(74.3)	15(42.9)	11(31.4)
37. In-service training	20(57.1)	15(42.9)	10(28.6)	5(14.3)
38. Local principals association	23(67.5)	12(34.3)	8(22.9)	4(11.4)
39. Mentor	9(25.7)	26(74.3)	17(48.6)	9(25.7)
40. Orientation	7(20)	28(80)	15(42.9)	13(37.1)
41. Personal evaluation	23(65.7)	12(34.3)	10(28.6)	2(5.7)
42. Professional organization affiliation	27(77.1)	8(22.9)	7(20)	1(2.9)
43. None Provided	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Interview question 4 was also used to identify issues associated with support provided. Responses were clustered and ranked according to frequency. Table 23 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 4: How did your anticipated level of support compare to the amount of transition assistance and support from the central office?

**Table 23. Support and Assistance**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Great support/assistance	4
2	Enough support/assistance	3
3	Not enough support/assistance or wrong kind of support	3

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Surprisingly Principal B stated, “I received zero transition assistance. My first day I walked into the office and there was a folder on my desk with student detention hours owed and a huge set of keys. It’s a small district everybody knows everybody. The superintendent was morally supportive, but not professionally supportive.” Similarly Principal F said, “Not as much as I thought there could have been. We (principals in general) don’t need constant support, but the little things make a difference.” Principal G said, “The new superintendent and new board struggled to mesh. I did not expect a lot of support so it wasn’t really an issue.” The majority of answers sounded like Principal J who stated, “I feel very blessed. I am given a decent amount of space and am guided by three ex-principals in the central office. This is the best scenario that I have ever experienced. They have never played the blame game.”



### **3.6.1 Research Question 3 Analyzed**

Transition assistance provided to first year succession principals is instrumental in helping principals meet organizational and professional challenges. Included in their transition is how contextual issues pose different types of challenges. An example of this is district size as an indicator of contextual and support system challenges. Informal processes and expectations dominate a principal's first year experiences. These informal experiences include discovering norms and expectations from their predecessors, secretaries, other district principals, and the central office. Relationship and interrelationship issues can change with position and title. There are many avenues on which first-year principals may focus their efforts for a successful transition into a new building. The review of literature indicates it is the responsibility of the central office or district to support the successor in his or her position.

The interview results indicate that seventy percent of the respondents stated central office provided great support and assistance or enough support and assistance. Only thirty percent of respondents reported support lacking or the wrong kind of support was provided. The survey section identifying transition support provided was designed to first record the support provided and then to record supports desired that were not provided. The results indicate the most common supports provided were administrative meetings (94.3 percent), conferences or workshops (85.7 percent), and professional organization affiliation (77.1 percent). The results also indicated supports not provided but desired. The most common responses were mentor (48.6 percent), induction (42.9 percent), and orientation (42.9 percent). From the survey and interview results of the study it is reasonable to say the supports systems in place and provided from the central office are adequate for secession principals. The survey results are confirmed by the principal interviews stating that support was enough; many even indicated less would be better.

### 3.7 RESEARCH QUESTION 3.A

What insights do succession principals gain from experiences of their first year, and what advice do they give future succession principals?

Table 24 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding their level of agreement to the statements 44 – 48 concerning clarity of expectations. Survey answers 44 – 48 asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement regarding expectations. Answers were assigned a value ranging from 5 to 1 as follows: 5-Strongly Agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree.

**Table 24. Clarity of Expectations**

Mean Rank	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	45. Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	4.06	.838
2	44. The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	3.97	1.12
3	46. I received an accurate job description.	3.69	1.05
4	47. I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.	3.60	1.22
5	48. The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.	3.14	1.17

Interview questions 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were also used to identify issues around expectations, clarity, and challenges and responses. They were clustered and ranked according to frequency. Table 25 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding question 7: What aspect of the principalship provided you with the most challenges? In what ways did you combat these challenges?

**Table 25. Principal Challenges**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Solutions to Challenge</b>
1	Interpersonal, personnel	5	Sought out help from others
2	Academic	3	Pulled people together, communication
3	Management	2	Devoted additional time

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal B stated, “Attendance, discipline, and general day-to-day operation of the building” provided the most difficulty. He continued saying, “the county principals association provided assistance with collegial support and informal mentorship.” Principal C said, “Time constraints and expectations; high expectations from parents for their kids to succeed academically” was a continuous challenge she struggled to control. Principal E’s answer was not surprising; however, it indicates how non-academic issues continue to challenge the principalship: “Athletics. I did not have many dealings with coach-parent relationships and athletics in general.” To adapt to the challenge of management and athletics issues Principal E said, “I belong to a principal’s consortium with 16 neighboring school districts. I was amazed when we spent the first hour of a two-hour meeting on PIAA rules and regulations.”

Table 26 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 9: What do you see as the prime difference between your previous position and the principalship?

**Table 26. Prime Succession Difference**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Accountability, responsibilities	5
2	Solitude with decisions	2
2	Delegating	2
4	Discipline	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal A discussed a more empowering/supporting approach stating, “I had to learn how to let others solve problems and support their decisions”. Most of the answers were similar to that of Principal C: “The axe falls here, accountability.” Principal D said, “As an assistant principal you were consulted on for decisions. As the principal the buck stops here”. Similarly Principal E stated, “The buck stops here. There is no one else to turn to.” The unencountered concept of *the* final decision maker was unequivocally the most common answer.

Table 27 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 10: A reflective look at your first year provides you with an opportunity to define critical incidents and defining moments of your succession. Describe the most critical incident of your first year.

**Table 27. Critical Incidents**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Interpersonal interaction	4
2	School wide issue, event	3
3	None	2
4	Meetings	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Many of the principals provided answers to this question associated with their response to a highly public event. Principal A’s answer is one such event: “In March, a female student made claim (later found to be fraudulent) of being the victim of a major crime. The school took an introspective look at safety. We came together in a unique a profound way.” Principal J is another example of highly public event: “A prep rally for winter sports in February. I permitted it to occur for the first time in years. Students planned and prepared. A fight broke out in the crowd. It was a disaster. Everything calmed down five minutes later. Instead of canceling it, I let

the pep rally continue. I praised the 90 percent of the students who behaved themselves.” Principal D stated, “I was unsure of procedures, specifically discipline issues. Teachers did not confront me head on when I followed wrong school protocol and norms. They talked in faculty lounge swaying the majority of teachers and undermining my authority.” The researcher expected answers similar to Principal D’s interpersonal relationship issue focusing more on the organization socialization aspect of the succession. Forty percent of the answers were of this nature.

Table 28 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 11: When accepting a new position in the future, what questions will you ask?

**Table 28. Questions To Ask**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Accountability, responsibilities	5
2	Professional development	2
3	Expectations of my in the first year	1
3	What is the direction the district headed	1
3	Budget issues	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

There was little information in literature pertaining to what would you have asked at an interview could you turn back the clock or will you ask next time. This section provides insight into a reflective look at what succession principals were not prepared to address or areas of significant challenge. Principal A quickly stated, “What type of support program, professional development, are you going to provide me?” Principal G answered similarly saying, “What opportunities for professional development? How imperative is it that I live in the community? How vested is the school district in technology?” Principal I asked questions of various varieties:

“What kind of support could I expect from central office and board? What does the teaching contract look like, and are there any labor issues? Could I take a tour while school is in session?” Principal D’s comments were most common: “I would like to know a lot more about the staff and accountability. How is the staff evaluated? How am I going to be evaluated? Accountability and expectations of all involved?” Fifty percent of the responses were similar, but the other fifty percent varied greatly.

Table 29 displays the distribution of clustered responses by principals regarding interview question 12: What advice would you give first-year succession principals?

**Table 29. Advice Offered**

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Identified Criteria</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Ask for help	4
2	School first and district second	2
2	Keep an open mind	2
3	Preparation	1
3	Be aware of stress	1

**Significant Interview Responses:**

Principal D stated, “Do not have your mind set on how you want things done. Wait one year for any major changes and then set goals.” Principal I said, “The principal is a tough job. First year principals need to be careful they don’t look at things from their previous schools advantage point. Leave comments like, ‘this is the way we did things at xyz school’ at home. Assess the first year; do not shake it up too early.” Principal E stated, “Use the people in your building. You are not the most knowledgeable person in your building with regards to all issues. You need to know the background.” Similarly Principal J affirmed, “Reach out to staff. Make as few unilateral decisions alone as possible.”

### 3.7.1 Research Question 3.a. Analyzed

Research question 3.a. is a lessons learned section of the study. Its purpose is to add depth to the study through structured survey statements and opened interview questions. The survey section associated in the study is represented in table 24 and addressed issues of clarity and expectations of decisions and job description. The results from the survey indicate any succession principal can expect central office performance will be reasonable, support will be as anticipated, job descriptions will be accurate, and role ambiguity will not exist. Results of this section did show some variation with survey statement 48 – *the transition to building principal was more difficult than I expected*. Survey respondents' ranked mean indicated a level of 3.14 or *neutral*.

The interview questions were designed to elicit uninhibited responses from the interviewees. Table 25 indicates aspects providing the most challenges and how the challenges were combated. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated organizational issues providing the most challenging aspects of their first year. The other fifty percent was split, with three principals indicating management issues and two citing academic affairs. This question splits all responses in half; fifty percent are organizational issues and fifty percent are professional issues. Similarly, Table 27 identifies critical issues and their occurrence; half of the respondents indicated issues around organizational socialization and half involve issues of professional socialization. Two of the respondents did not reply.

Having recently completed their succession year, the principals interviewed had their first year fresh in their minds. Table 26 displays the prime difference between being an assistant and being a principal. Fifty percent of the respondent indicated accountability and responsibility. Two others identified solitude of decision making was difficult. The results of the final two interview questions dealt with questions to ask of future employers (question 11) and advice to

offer new succession principals (question 12). Similar to question nine, Table 26 displayed sixty percent of principals' answering with issues of accountability, responsibility, and expectations. When asked to offer advice to a succession principal beginning his or her journey, forty percent replied to ask for help. Other notable responses included two principals reminding principals to advocate for their school first, and two principals reminded succession principals to keep an open mind.



## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The following flow chart depicts how Chapter 4 will unfold. It is included to add clarity to the chapter's organization.

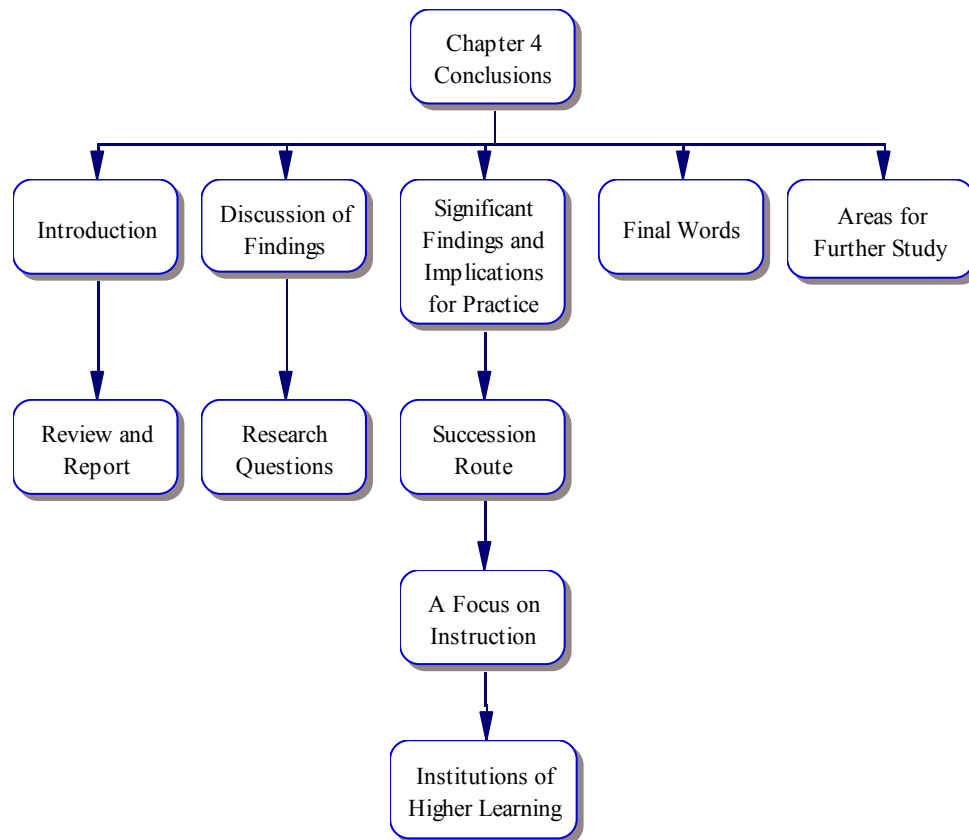


Figure 5. Chapter 4 Flow Chart

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to add to the existing literature concerning principal succession and socialization; provide assistance for districts in providing better support for first year principals; and to better inform succession principals about the challenges they should expect to encounter. The study's goals were accomplished by answering the research questions providing the following information:

1. importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals;
  - 1.a. differences in external or internal candidates' job acquisition;
2. importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals;
  - 2.a. extent to which first year succession principals find their pre-service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position;
3. transition assistance provided to first year succession principals, and adequacy of the assistance; and
  - 3.a. insights of succession principals from experiences of their first year, and advice they would provide future succession principals.

The conclusions and implications for practice reported in this final chapter are based upon the responses provided by first year principals working in Pennsylvania public high schools. The study's results were compiled and reported in Chapter 3; the complete results appear in the study's appendix. The following final chapter presents the analyzed results and the study's conclusions.

## 4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.2.1 Research Question 1

What is the importance of organizational socialization influences for first year succession principals?

Organizational socialization issues and challenges addressed in this study correlate well with the existing organizational succession research in all relating contexts and categories. The study's results affirm the existing research with regard to the importance of organizational socialization skills and their predominate importance on success in the succession year. Researchers, such as Sergiovanni, Ubben, Elmore, and Fullan, believe a new leadership style is necessary to advance school systems into the accountability era. This new era includes a blend of management and leadership skills as the previously cited researchers identified as a common strain of leader characteristics and skill sets: specifically a proactive vision of the future, communication amongst constituents, strong ties toward instructional practices, and an importance placed upon interpersonal relationships. The data related to Research Question 1 indicates that as a succession principal assumes his or her role the transition and actions surrounding the transition are more focused on organizational issues than professional issues. This is explicitly stated in the literature review and is clearly identified in the study's data. Most notably in the study's survey data are the principals top meaned answers to questions 1-10 and 12-21 in which they identify communication and listening skills(4.46) and establishing trust(4.34) as the most important aspects of their first year. Additionally, principals stated they focused most of their attention to these pursuits. All responses indicate the top two areas of importance were areas of organizational socialization. Additionally, when the candidates were

disaggregated by succession route in the instrumentation sections, the survey results were more frequently and similarly rated by all principals around issues of organization socialization. Another significant finding of the survey results indicate a higher cumulative ranked mean of the organizational socialization section (39.19) when compared to the professional socialization section (38.54).

The data related to Research Question 1 also indicates a benefit for succession principals to be cognizant of their predecessor's perception with respect to district and community stakeholders. The results indicate the climate and perception of the predecessor influenced how stakeholders viewed the position of building principal. The interviews also describe more or less a challenge to assimilation due to this perception. Examples include predecessors not being receptive to new ideas, keeping the lid on the school and hiding in their office, being a pillar of the community, coasting into retirement, and being involuntarily transferred. The majority of principals experienced a positive assimilation due to a smooth transition between the successor and predecessor, or a welcome change of the old guard. Research Question 1 identified the importance of soft skills to the principalship, and how the pursuit of a successful succession and improved educational outcomes were encumbered by a deficiency of organizational socialization skills.

#### **4.2.2 Research Question 1.a.**

##### In what ways do external or internal candidates differ with job acquisition?

Each school leader succession has its own contextual issues surrounding the succession of internal or external candidates. Research Question 1.a. clarified issues surrounding organization and professional socialization in general and provided specific advice for those

internal or external candidates and for the hiring districts. The study's results affirm the existing research with regards to the differences among succession and socialization of internal and external candidates due to context and situation. The study has also provided new information specific to principalship route and supports desired.

Significant in the study was the discovery of how external candidates relied more heavily on their coursework than experiences when dealing with issues of organizational socialization and professional socialization. The comparison of disaggregated candidate survey answers to questions 11 and 21 clarify this finding. The external candidates indicated coursework was more important for their succession than internal candidates for both organizational and professional socialization. Similar responses to survey questions 24 and 25 concerning prior experience indicate internal candidates valued their tenure as assistant principals and their previous public school experience more than external candidates who relied more heavily on their coursework. Even though external candidates indicated they relied more heavily on their coursework, both internal and external candidates expressed a similar rate of satisfaction with their preparation of professional socialization and comments concerning coursework: external candidates indicated a 3.79 mean rank and internal candidates indicated a 3.73 mean rank.

The comparison of candidates and type of socialization presents an interesting picture of importance. On the survey sections analyzing organizational and professional socialization, external candidates' cumulative mean responses totaled 38.51 for organizational socialization and 38.35 for professional socialization. Internal candidates cumulative mean responses totaled 39.32 for organizational socialization and 34.94 for professional socialization. Table 30 provides clarification.

**Table 30. Internal and External Results for Socialization**

	<b>Organizational Socialization</b>	<b>Professional Socialization</b>
Internal Candidates	39.32	34.94
External Candidates	38.51	38.35

The study's results confirmed both internal and external candidates focused more of their attention on issues of organizational socialization as the literature review suggested. New information provided by the study suggests that external candidates focused more attention to professional socialization than internal candidates.

Supports provided by districts and desired by principals display interesting results. Principals responded to their level of agreement with specific statements concerning central office clarity of expectations. Internal candidates indicated the transition was not more difficult than expected, and that the level of support from central office was reasonable and as anticipated. Internal candidates also reported 55 percent more supports than external candidates. Internal candidates also desired 26 percent more supports than external candidates. However, external candidates indicated a higher level of anticipated difficulty with the transition and a lower level of agreement about central office expectations and support, despite their desire to have additional support from central office. External candidates desired more support than internal candidates from central office with respect to cultural assimilation, induction, in-service training, orientation, and their evaluations. Internal candidates desired more supports from central office with respect to mentor, orientation, professional organization affiliation, local principals association, and induction. Important in the data is the diverse support needs of successor specific routes, and overt issues related to each.

### 4.2.3 Research Question 2

What is the importance of professional socialization influences for first year succession principals?

Professional socialization focuses on specialized knowledge, skills, and ethics not specific to any one organization, but to the profession in general. The study's results affirm the existing literature of Duke, Bucher, Beckerman, Hart, and Peterson by indicating organizational issues are more important to a successful succession than issues of professional socialization. This is clear in section 4.2.1 where results indicate a slightly higher cumulative ranked mean of the organizational socialization section (39.19) compared to the professional socialization section (38.54). The range of the two sections indicates both are relatively equal in importance to the overall development of a succession, and a principal should not focus entirely on a single aspect of socialization. Significant to the professional socialization data analyzed is how the professional socialization section is stratified. The current literature calling for principals to be leaders of teaching and learning issues is evident. The principals indicated the most important area of focus was that of principles of teaching and learning. This indicates principals are cognizant of their main purpose as the leadership researchers affirm: to supervise the quality of instruction and student development. However, the additional results from the survey indicate student management and school law are issues still affect the position, and relegating much of the principals time to management duties.

The survey results display little guidance in designing specific programs to implement to ease succession transition. However, sixty percent of the principals and seventy percent of the districts had a succession plan in place. These plans differed from principal to principal and district to district, but a transition plan did exist. Almost a third of the principals interviewed

assumed the position suddenly due to an unforeseen event causing the successor and district to be caught unprepared. In each case this unpreparedness led to the principal maintaining the status quo and the district supporting the successor as best they could. Only in one case did a successor have no clearly defined plan of action or specific plan. The results from the interview and survey indicate a diverse array of programs and methods of easing the transition to building principal. Research Question 2 indicates principals have a solid grasp on role responsibilities focusing on issues of professional knowledge, and that they are not providing as much time or effort on professional socialization when compared to organizational socialization affairs.

#### **4.2.4 Research Question 2.a**

To what extent do first year succession principals find their pre-service certification, training, experiences, and education useful when proceeding to their new position?

The study's results affirm the existing research with regards to principal preparation and professional training. Respondent's survey answers concerning the importance of coursework and experience in preparing principals to handle issues of professional and organizational socialization vary. Principals' responses to survey questions 23, 24, and 25 indicate the degree of help or use of specific avenues of professional development and gathering professional knowledge have been of benefit. The principals' responses to how helpful their graduate coursework was to their succession accrued a mean of 3.77 or helpful. The principals' responses to how helpful their school experience was to their succession accrued a mean of 4.52 or very helpful. The principals' responses to how helpful their tenure as an assistant principal was to their succession accrued a mean of 4.62 or very helpful. When asked to indicate how important principal training and graduate coursework was in preparing them to address challenges of



professional socialization, the principals signify a level of importance with a corresponding mean of 4.07 or helpful. The interview results reported in Chapter 3 depict a vivid picture as to principal preparation. The data strongly suggests that prior experience was significantly more helpful during their succession year than coursework in terms of succession preparation. The majority of principals interviewed were seasoned educators with 68.5 percent of them serving in public education for more than ten years, and all of the interviewees serving as assistant principals for at least three years. When presented with the open-ended question about pre-service preparation, the principals, without prompting, compared their coursework to experience. In 100 percent of the interviews each principal indicated their prior experience was more helpful than coursework. When asked a follow-up question about their time as an assistant principal, 100 percent of the principals said service as an assistant principal was more helpful than years of other service.

The study's results agree with the body of research that believes the training ground of assistant principal is adequate preparation for those succeeding to a principalship. The respondents mostly agreed with the statement that their expectations of the position became "real" during their succession year. The principals did gain a better understanding of the scope of the principalship and how a school system functions due directly from their service as an assistant. The survey and interview results indicate experience, specifically as an assistant principal, to be more helpful than coursework during the succession year. Principals have indicated the challenges and expectations are known and the training is adequate, but the rigor of the position and the demands still exist. The study's data suggest that a principal's prior experience and training adequately addressed issues of professional socialization.

### 4.2.5 Research Question 3

What types of transition assistance do school districts provide first year succession principals, and how adequate is the assistance?

The study's results add to the existing research with regards to the types of supports provided and desired by succession principals. Transition assistance provided to first year succession principals is instrumental in helping them meet organizational and professional challenges. Included in their transition is how contextual issues pose different types of challenges to different successor routes. Section 4.2.2 addressed how supports provided and desired differ with the different successor routes – internal or external candidates. This study affirms the existing literature that informal processes and expectations dominate a principal's first year, and that experience, relationship, and interrelationship issues are of the most challenging to principals. And, all principals desired support from the central office to address these challenges. The most frequent supports provided by central office to principals were: administrative meetings, professional organization affiliation, and conferences or workshops. These types of supports are most closely associated with professional socialization. The most frequently desired supports were: induction, orientation, and mentor. These types of supports are most closely associated with organizational socialization.

From the survey and interview results of the study it is reasonable to say the systems in place and supports provided by the central office are adequate for succession principals when asked directly. Indirectly, principals are conflicted about the supports, and many new principals are hesitant to ask for assistance since it may be taken as a sign of weakness or afford those on the hiring committee an opportunity to second guess the appointment. The types of supports desired focus on the organizational socialization side of succession. The study's data indicates

school districts should evaluate how and by what means they are supporting their new principals to assist with their succession. Additional types of supports are necessary based on route and demographic information. It behooves hiring districts to survey neighboring districts and intermediate units for specific regional direction.

#### **4.2.6 Research Question 3.a**

What insights do succession principals gain from experiences of their first year, and what advice do they give future succession principals?

This section added depth to the study through structured survey statements and open ended interview questions. This section provided recordable and recognizable pitfalls and opportunities for succession principals. The results from the survey indicate that the principals agreed that central office expectations were reasonable; however, the transition to building principal was still more difficult than expected. The pressures and challenges of the position did not necessarily come from the central office or evaluating supervisors, the challenges derived from stakeholders at the building level. The principals agreed the level of support from central office was as anticipated, their job description was accurate, and they understood their decision making boundaries. The mean score of 3.14 or neutral indicted the principals were conflicted about their agreement to the statement: *The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.* It is reasonable to surmise that general expectations were met and few overwhelming surprises existed during the succession year. One hundred percent of the surveyed principals attributed the ability to overcome the building level challenges to their pre service experiences and tenure as an assistant principal.

The interview data indicated organizational issues such as, inter personal relationships and personnel conflicts provided the most challenging aspects of their first year as the review of existing research professed. The interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships experienced by a succession principal may vary dramatically. An example of personal conflict cited in the interviews included coach-parent arguments or teacher-student conflicts where the principal acted as mediator. Interpersonal relationship issues centered on one-to-one (or small group-principal) conflicts, issues of trust, or staff misunderstanding are generalities cited in the study. To overcome these challenges the successors used varying strategies such as: allocating additional time, pulling people together, or seeking help from others. The interviews also indicated critical issues will occur during the succession year. These critical issues act as defining moments which may catapult the successor from building manager to school leader. The critical event may be either organizational or professional depending on contextual issues and happenstance. The event may be either interpersonal, intrapersonal, or occur within the confines of a large group.

Interestingly, in the study's survey and interview research was the prime difference between principal and assistant. The principals indicated the level of accountability and responsibility was greatly manifested with their principalship. The principals identified they would ask future potential employers detailed questions about accountability, responsibility, and expectations. These comments implicitly signify they were not wholly prepared to handle the challenges of the position, and were unaware of all the principalship entailed.

## **4.3 SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **4.3.1 Succession Route**

Succession is the process by which leader vacancies are filled. And, succession is a highly complex process with effects altering the course of organizations and people. The long standing study of succession is substantial in its quantity and quality of research and researchers. Size of the organization and position of succession affect success. Internal or external candidates are chosen for various reasons and those reasons affect how the succession is viewed by sub and super ordinates. Contextual issues vary between and among successions and those issues directly affect the succession. In this study of Pennsylvania principal succession, the results have mirrored and validated that of the previous researchers of school leaders' succession and the research on socialization and succession in the private industry.

Positioning a newly hired successor for success is in the best interest of a school district. The review of literature clearly states the principal is the most influential and important person in a school. According to the study's data, an effective succession begins before the newly chosen candidate arrives. Implicit in the interview data is the success of a candidate who is both internal and groomed for the position. Speaking specifically from efficiency of transition, internal candidates who have worked closely with their predecessor prior to succession experience the smallest learning curve. These candidates most easily assume the position and experience the least amount of challenge. This does not take into account effective leadership and school success, only successful succession. Depending on the direction a district is positioned, an external candidate could be a better choice. When deciding whether to hire an insider or an outsider, a district may look at the direction a particular school is headed. If the district wishes to

change courses, an outside candidate is often chosen because they have more latitude in influencing school direction. If this is the case, providing this candidate with additional organizational supports should be a priority. Additionally, external candidates indicated they relied more on their formal coursework and graduate training than internal candidates. When hiring external candidates, formal education, training, coursework, and certifications, as well as, certifying universities should be more closely scrutinized by district hiring committees. It is also significant to note external candidates desire additional supports in the form of mentors, and orientation or induction, and cultural assimilation.

School leaders deciding where and when to assume a principalship should examine all aspects of the position before taking the leap to chief school official. There are different issues and areas of greater importance of focus depending on candidate route to office. External candidates should take additional care to ensure a district and school matches what it is they are looking for in a new position. Simply being offered a principalship is not necessarily reason enough. Asking a considerable number of questions around the contextual issues of the succession, accountability, and expectations, a candidate is more informed thus more prepared. In the same way an external candidate decides on a principalship, internal candidates need to weigh the pros and cons of working in the same building with the same staff and students. Issues around the position changes, and staff perception and assumptions can greatly affect the succession both positively and negatively. When a principal succeeds from the assistant principal position they move with positive and negative presumptions about job roles and descriptions.

The level of supports and support systems for each succession route differ sharply. Transitional supports provided by the district influence the success of a principal's succession in terms of both professional and organizational socialization. The information gathered and

analyzed to answer this question suggests a successful succession principal focus predominately on combating organizational socialization pitfalls. It is in a districts best interest to be cognizant of which socialization side to focus supports. Districts should provide additional supports in the way of cultural assimilation, mentor, and orientation. The data indicates a move away from conferences and workshops as a means of professional development would prove beneficial.

#### **4.3.2 A Focus on Instruction**

The review of literature indicates the paradigm of the principalship has shifted; however, the role of principal still entails managing the logistics of hundreds of students and staff, supervising instruction, and proving quality education. The move from manager to instructional leader is realized by the “new breed” of principals and highlighted by legislation, cultural changes, and increased non-public school competition.

Perhaps the most promising data appearing in the study is the focus on instructional leadership by succession principals. In a year marked by uncertainty, managerial challenges, and important personal connections the principals indicated they spent “considerable attention” on the principles of teaching and learning. Of all the professional socialization issues related to succession, principles of teaching and learning received the highest mean rank. Renowned modern school leadership researchers, such as Elmore, Pellicer, Sergiovanni, and Tycak as well as succession researchers such as Hart, Miskel, and Cogsgrove, indicate the paradigm must shift and principals need to move away from middle management and move towards instructional leadership to shape schools into communities of learning, raise standardized test scores, and progress public education confidentially into the twenty first century. The data presented in this study indicates the position of principal has indeed transformed. Playing a vital role in this

transformation are the institutions of higher learning in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education that certify principals. The ISLLC and the Pennsylvania Department of Education have made a commitment to ensure that principals are highly qualified to lead schools by using the ISSLC as its guidelines for school leaders. The goal of the CCSSO and the ISLLC of “enhance the quality of educational leadership throughout the nation’s schools” is being realized in Pennsylvania high schools. The study also revealed opportunities for universities to better prepare principals.

### **4.3.3 Institutions of Higher Learning**

Issues of socialization focus succession principals on two areas - professional and organizational. There is a flawed perception of professional socialization with respect to assistant principals and their tenure as preparation. This professional socialization is derived from experiences, communications and interactions with other professionals, and their coursework. The most influential source of professional socialization differs according to each succession candidate. The data indicates professional socialization issues addressed through coursework was adequate. Rooted in preparation and experiences are opportunities for succession principals to advance their socialization skills, the not-so-obvious skills often proving the most useful. Indicated throughout the data in Chapter 3, the principals indicated a need to devote more time and effort on organizational socialization issues, namely communication and listening skills, interpersonal interactions, conflict resolution, climate and culture issues, and trust. The data reported regarding socialization coursework was lacking. The data reveals that years of public school service, tenure as a teacher and principal, and coursework focus on the professional side of socialization. The



disregarded roles of organizational leadership are often neglected leaving principals not wholly prepared.

The position of assistant principal is still a significant stepping stone to the principalship carrying with it important responsibilities as an integral player in the high school office. The position is two-fold in its composition: assist the principal in his or her responsibilities and learn the craft of instructional leadership. The theoretical instruction obtained from certificating universities combined with the on-the-job training an assistant gains from the position is valuable. According to the review of literature, some researchers and practitioners do not agree the assistant principal position is an appropriate training ground for the principalship. One hundred percent of principals agreed their years as an assistant was the most valuable preparation variable for the principalship. The study's population reported their years experience as an assistant as the highest mean rank of 4.62 or a very helpful with their succession. The data indicated the assistant principal role was instrumental in the successor's professional development and aided transition to the building. As an assistant principal works with the unattractive duties of his or her role, grooming and mentorship of the individual is instrumental in retaining valuable assistants and preparing an internal successor. It was also reported that the assistant be engaged with important aspects of instruction, building level leadership, and teaching and learning issues to prepare them for the responsibility shift. The experiences an assistant principal gains compliment the theoretical coursework completing professional preparation for the principalship.

University coursework and preparation which exist around issues of teaching and learning and "the nuts and bolts of school leadership" are vital. The principals reported they were prepared to handle the administration of the school and the leadership of the staff and students.

According to the data, certifying universities have provided principals with adequate training and skill sets, professionally. Revealed is a new opportunity for certifying institutions of higher education. The data gathered from the study indicate overwhelmingly, in every instance, that experiences are more important than university coursework. This provides an opportunity for universities to produce more prepared principals through structured experiences. One avenue is through increased instruction in areas of socialization. Another area is to provide opportunities for credit hours and supervised practicum experiences to help serve the principal candidates by bridging the gap from the theoretical to the practical. This is the same gap some researchers claim exists. To define specific experiences in specific settings would prove extremely valuable for succession principals. Carefully structured principal practicums could prove highly beneficial to prepare principals for their experiences, and provided several mentor relationships. These mentorships could prove useful prior to succession, and could serve as a resource for principals in future years. Creating an interconnected network of master principals and succession principals could also allow for an exchange of ideas and strategies in school leadership. Hiring districts are aware principal preparation programs do not produce principals with equal skill sets. The demand for the most prepared school leader may increase principal placement and the institutional reputation of colleges and universities.

#### **4.4 FINAL WORDS**

As cited in the review of literature and confirmed by the study, organizational socialization rooted in culture, tradition, and trust is more powerful than professional socialization in terms of a successful succession. The study's results confirm this also to be the case with a sample of

principals from Pennsylvania. Even the most prepared candidate in terms of professional socialization may struggle with succession due to challenges experienced with organizational socialization. The results from the study's participants indicate that concerns around issues of organizational socialization had a greater impact and caused principals more problems than their ability to handle the professional aspects of the position. Clearly indicated in the study was the importance of contextual issues surrounding principal succession. Issues not necessarily given consideration before accepting a position may not have been closely calculated by principals accepting a principalship. These issues include interpersonal relationships, trust, predecessor vacancy, district and school direction, internal or external candidacy, culture, climate, tradition, accountability, and expectations.

The review of literature and study's results clearly indicate that it is advantageous for a succession principal to be cognizant of the impact of organizational socialization issues. The data indicated the training ground of assistant principal and university coursework is adequate to address issues of professional socialization. The study also signified organizational socialization areas of succession are lacking in principal preparation. This contributes to overall gaps in principal preparation. The issues a principal cannot outwardly see or anticipate will create the most challenges. Challenges such as inter and intrapersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and establishing trusting relationships was a significant theme of the survey responses. The research legitimized that notion that job stressors are heightened in the first year, and even the most prepared and experienced candidate was not fully prepared for all challenges. A reconfiguring of college and university preparation programs would prove useful to combat the growing demands of the principalship. Despite the challenges and often arduous road to succession principal and veteran principal, the excitement and passion for the position continues to magnetize educators to

the principalship. Preparing principals to meet the demands of an unseen and unknown future continues to challenge those who desire a principalship, those who hire and support principals, and those who certify principals.

#### **4.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The study has added to the body of existing research, and its findings have agreed with much of the literature and disagreed in a few areas. Significant findings involving certification, support, and challenges have been identified. The following concepts are recommendations for further study involving principal succession and socialization in Pennsylvania and other public education institutions.

1. Research succession experiences in middle, intermediate or elementary schools.
2. Research similarities and differences of specific demographic groups of principals and/or districts.
3. Research principal mentorship, induction, and orientation programs.
4. Research professional socialization influences in the years following succession.
5. Research involving the relationships between succession principals as instructional leaders, orchestrators of organizational socialization issues, and managers of status quo.
6. Research specifically designed to study internal and external successions.
7. Research involving principals who have not experienced the position of assistant principal.
8. Research involving preparation for instructional leadership.

9. Research different formal preparation and certification programs.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM STANDARDS

Standard 1	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
Standard 2	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
Standard 4	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Standard 5	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SURVEY INTRODUCTION LETTER**

May 1, 2006

Dear Principal:

You have been identified as a first-year principal from two lists provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Congratulations on the completion of your first school year as a High School Principal!

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your participation in my dissertation research study involving first year high school principals in Pennsylvania. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Sue Goodwin and the University of Pittsburgh. This study investigates socialization of Pennsylvania high school principals in specific contexts, as well as how these contexts affect transition to the role of high school principal. It is hoped that findings of the study will make it possible for districts to provide better transition assistance, and to better prepare those principals who wish to have a smooth and successful first year.

Your participation will provide the most important source of information needed for this study. Please take 10 minutes to complete the attached survey and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope provided. I am graciously asking you complete and return the survey within 7 days. There is no need to provide any contact information as all respondents' answers are recorded and reported confidentially. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

An important aspect of the study is a brief follow-up interview. The interview should require a 10-15 minute dialogue. The interview is voluntary, and all participants and reports of participants' responses will remain confidential. I am the only person analyzing and recording the data and promise to maintain confidentiality and not identify any participants or institutions. The interview will not be recorded using any audio devices. You may choose to only complete the survey. If you wish to participate in the interview, return the enclosed postcard with your name and telephone number separate from the survey.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about this study. You may also contact Dr. Sue Goodwin at 412-648-2798 or [sgoodwin@pitt.edu](mailto:sgoodwin@pitt.edu). The results of the study will be provided to participants in an executive summary upon request.

Thank you in advance for your participation, it is greatly appreciated.  
Genuinely,

Timothy S. Glasspool  
[tglasspool@wiu.k12.pa.us](mailto:tglasspool@wiu.k12.pa.us)

## APPENDIX C

### SURVEY

How much attention did you give to the following issues as a first year principal? (Check one descriptor per issue)

	<b>Issues</b>	<b>A Great Deal of Attention</b>	<b>Considerable Attention</b>	<b>Some Attention</b>	<b>Little Attention</b>	<b>Almost No Attention</b>
1	Acceptance from staff, students, and community					
2	Consensus building					
3	Communication and listening skills					
4	Community relations					
5	Conflict resolution					
6	Interpersonal relationships					
7	Political, social, and cultural impacts					
8	Role conflict and role ambiguity					
9	Staff resistance to and acceptance of change					
10	Establishing trust					



		<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Little Importance</b>	<b>Almost No Importance</b>
11	How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?					

How helpful/useful was your background (knowledge, skills, and experiences) in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal? (Check one descriptor per area)

	<b>Area</b>	<b>Very Helpful</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful</b>	<b>A Little Helpful</b>	<b>Almost No Help</b>
12	Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation					
13	Managing student discipline					
14	Managing professional non-professional school employees					
15	Principles of teaching and learning					
16	School business, management, facilities, and budget					
17	School health and safety					
18	School law and human resource issues					
19	Student growth and development					
20	Supervision and evaluation of employees					
21	Tools of assessment and data analysis					

		<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Little Importance</b>	<b>Almost No Importance</b>
22	How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?					

How helpful/useful was the following aspects of your background in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal? (Check one descriptor per background aspect)

	<b>Background Aspects</b>	<b>Very Helpful</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful</b>	<b>A Little Helpful</b>	<b>Almost No Help</b>
23	Graduate coursework or university training					
24	Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)					
25	Prior experience as an Assistant Principal					

Indicate how helpful/useful each support system was in facilitating your transition to the role of principal? (Check one descriptor per support system)

	<b>Support Systems</b>	<b>Very Helpful</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful</b>	<b>A Little Helpful</b>	<b>Almost No Help</b>
26	Central Office Personnel (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School Psychologist, etc...)					
27	Teaching Professionals or Faculty					
28	Building Level Personnel (Assistant Principal(s), School Resource Officer, Guidance Counselors, Dean of Students, Para-Professional Staff, etc...)					

Listed below are supports that are sometimes provided to first year principals. First, indicate whether each support was provided. Second, for the supports that were NOT provided indicate whether you desired to have them.

	Supports	Provided		Desired	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
29	Administration meetings				
30	Collegial support				
31	Conferences or workshops				
32	Cultural assimilation				
33	District principal meetings				
34	District tour				
35	Goal setting				
36	Induction				
37	In-service training				
38	Local principals association				
39	Mentor				
40	Orientation				
41	Personal evaluation				
42	Professional organization affiliation				
43	None Provided				

Indicate your level of agreement to the statements below regarding clarity of expectations. (Check one descriptor per statement)

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
44	The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.					
45	Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.					
46	I received an accurate job description.					
47	I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.					
48	The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.					

49. How many years have you worked as a certified public school employee?

- 5 years or less     
 Between 6 – 10     
 Between 11 – 15     
 More than 15

50. Were you an internal or external candidate?

- Internal     
 External

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### **Section 1-Anticipated**

1. How did the staff's, student's, and community's perceptions of your predecessor influence your assimilation?
2. Upon assuming the position of principal what were your expectations of staff relationships and interactions with you? How did the reality compare to your expectations?
3. Upon assuming the position of principal, were there any aspects of the role you believed you were not adequately prepared?
4. How did your anticipated level of support compare to the amount of transition assistance and support from the central office?

#### **Section 2 - Actual**

5. Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that you implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?
6. Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that others implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?
7. What aspect of the principalship provided you with the most challenges? In what ways did you combat these challenges?
8. How has your pre-service training or professional experiences prepared you for the principalship?
9. What do you see as the prime difference between your previous position and the principalship?

#### **Section 2 - Advice**

10. A reflective look at your first year provides you with an opportunity to define critical incidents and defining moments of your succession. Describe the most critical incident of your first year.
11. When accepting a new position in the future, what questions will you ask?
12. What advice would you give first-year succession principals?

## APPENDIX E

### MEAN SURVEY RESPONSE BREAKDOWN

	<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>All Survey Respondents</b>	<b>Internal Candidates Only</b>	<b>External Candidates Only</b>
1	Acceptance from staff, students, and community	3.94	3.83	4.18
2	Consensus building	4.03	4.04	4
3	Communication and listening skills	4.46	4.54	4.27
4	Community relations	3.71	3.67	3.81
5	Conflict resolution	4.03	4	4.09
6	Interpersonal relationships	3.97	4	3.90
7	Political, social, and cultural impacts	3.43	3.67	2.90
8	Role conflict and role ambiguity	3.64	3.77	3.27
9	Staff resistance to and acceptance of change	3.64	3.38	3.91
10	Establishing trust	4.34	4.42	4.18
11	How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.57	3.42	3.90
12	Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation	4.09	4.13	4
13	Managing student discipline	4.14	4.05	4.25
14	Managing professional non-professional school employees	4.03	4.13	3.82
15	Principles of teaching and learning	4.29	4.34	4.26
16	School business, management, facilities, and budget	3.51	3.46	3.52
17	School health and safety	3.49	3.40	3.52
18	School law and human resource issues	4.14	4.25	3.90
19	Student growth and development	4.11	4.25	3.82
20	Supervision and evaluation of employees	4.03	4.08	3.90

21	Tools of assessment and data analysis	3.17	3.10	3.36
22	How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.63	3.54	3.82
23	Graduate coursework or university training	3.77	3.79	3.73
24	Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)	4.51	4.54	4.45
25	Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.62	4.70	4.45
26	Central Office Personnel (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School Psychologist, etc...)	4.11	4.17	4
27	Teaching Professionals or Faculty	4.23	4.50	3.64
28	Building Level Personnel (Assistant Principal(s), School Resource Officer, Guidance Counselors, Dean of Students, Para-Professional Staff, etc...)	4.29	4.38	4.09
44	The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	3.97	4	3.91
45	Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	4.06	4.21	3.72
46	I received an accurate job description.	3.69	3.86	3.27
47	I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.	3.60	3.71	3.36
48	The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.	3.14	3.04	3.36

## APPENDIX F

### SUPPORTS PROVIDED/DESIRED MATRIX

Frequencies (Percents)	All Survey Respondents				Internal Candidates				External Candidates			
	Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired		Provided		Desired	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
29. Administration meetings	33 (94.3)	2 (5.7)	2 (5.7)	0 (0)	24 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (81.8)	2 (18.2)	2 (18.2)	0 (0)
30. Collegial support	25 (71.4)	10 (28.6)	6 (17.1)	4 (11.4)	18 (75)	6 (25)	2 (8.3)	4 (16.7)	8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)	3 (27.3)	0 (0)
31. Conferences or workshops	30 (85.7)	5 (14.3)	3 (8.6)	2 (5.7)	22 (91.7)	2 (8.3)	0 (0)	2 (8.3)	8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)	3 (27.3)	0 (0)
32. Cultural assimilation	2 (5.7)	33 (94.3)	9 (25.7)	24 (68.6)	0 (0)	24 (100)	2 (8.3)	22 (91.7)	2 (18.2)	9 (81.8)	7 (63.6)	2 (18.2)
33. District principal meetings	26 (74.3)	9 (25.7)	6 (17.1)	3 (8.6)	19 (79.2)	5 (20.8)	3 (12.5)	2 (8.3)	7 (63.6)	4 (36.4)	3 (27.3)	1 (9.1)
34. District tour	15 (42.9)	19 (54.3)	7 (20)	13 (37.1)	9 (37.5)	15 (62.5)	2 (8.3)	13 (54.2)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)	0 (0)
35. Goal setting	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)	11 (31.4)	1 (2.9)	17 (70.8)	7 (29.2)	6 (25)	1 (4.2)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	5 (45.5)	0 (0)
36. Induction	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	15 (42.9)	11 (31.4)	4 (16.7)	20 (83.3)	10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9.1)	4 (36.4)
37. In-service trainings	20 (57.1)	15 (42.9)	10 (28.6)	5 (14.3)	16 (66.7)	9 (37.5)	5 (20.8)	4 (16.7)	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	5 (45.5)	2 (18.2)
38. Local principals association	23 (67.5)	12 (34.3)	8 (22.9)	4 (11.4)	17 (70.8)	7 (29.2)	5 (20.8)	2 (8.3)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	3 (27.3)	2 (18.2)
39. Mentor	9 (25.7)	26 (74.3)	17 (48.6)	9 (25.7)	5 (20.8)	19 (79.2)	11 (45.8)	8 (33.3)	4 (36.4)	7 (63.6)	6 (54.5)	1 (9.1)
40. Orientation	7 (20)	28 (80)	15 (42.9)	13 (37.1)	2 (8.3)	22 (91.7)	10 (41.7)	12 (50)	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	1 (9.1)	5 (45.5)



41. Personal evaluation	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)	10 (28.6)	2 (5.7)	18 (75)	6 (25)	5 (20.8)	1 (4.2)	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	1 (9.1)
42. Professional organization affiliation	27 (77.1)	8 (22.9)	7 (20)	1 (2.9)	17 (70.8)	7 (29.2)	7 (29.2)	0 (0)	10 (90.9)	1 (9.1)	0 (0)	1 (9.1)
43. None Provided	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

## APPENDIX G

### COMPLETE SURVEY RESPONSES

How much attention did you give to the following issues as a first year principal?

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3. Communication and listening skills	4.46	.906
2	10. Establishing trust	4.34	.765
3	2. Consensus building	4.03	.618
4	5. Conflict resolution	4.03	.707
5	6. Interpersonal relationships	3.97	.875
6	1. Acceptance from staff, students, and community	3.94	.906
7	4. Community relations	3.71	1.017
8	8. Role conflict and role ambiguity	3.64	1.010
8	9. Staff resistance to and acceptance of change	3.64	.886
10	7. Political, social, and cultural impacts	3.43	1.119

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.57	1.112

How helpful/useful was your background (knowledge, skills, and experiences) in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1	15. Principles of teaching and learning	4.29	.658
2	13. Managing student discipline	4.14	.765
2	18. School law and human resource issues	4.14	.733
4	19. Student growth and development	4.11	.758
5	12. Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation	4.09	.887
6	14. Managing professional non-professional school employees	4.03	.857
6	20. Supervision and evaluation of employees	3.63	.954
8	16. School business, management, facilities, and budget	3.51	.919
9	17. School health and safety	3.49	.993
10	21. Tools of assessment and data analysis	3.17	1.165

<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
22. How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.63	.973

How helpful/useful was the following aspects of your background in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Background Aspects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	25. Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.62	.690
<b>2</b>	24. Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)	4.51	.781
<b>3</b>	23. Graduate coursework or university training	3.77	1.00

Indicate how helpful/useful each support system was in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Support Systems</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	28. Building Level Personnel	4.29	.926
<b>2</b>	27. Teaching Professionals	4.23	.843
<b>3</b>	26. Central Office Personnel	4.11	1.13

Listed below are supports that are sometimes provided to first year principals. First, indicate whether each support was provided. Second, for the supports that were NOT provided indicate whether you desired to have them.

Supports	Provided		Desired	
	Frequency (Mean Percents)		Frequency(Mean Percents)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
29. Administration meetings	33(94.3)	2(5.7)	2(5.7)	0(0)
30. Collegial support	25(71.4)	10(28.6)	6(17.1)	4(11.4)
31. Conferences or workshops	30(85.7)	5(14.3)	3(8.6)	2(5.7)
32. Cultural assimilation	2(5.7)	33(94.3)	9(25.7)	24(68.6)
33. District principal meetings	26(74.3)	9(25.7)	6(17.1)	3(8.6)
34. District tour	15(42.9)	19(54.3)	7(20)	13(37.1)
35. Goal setting	23(65.7)	12(34.3)	11(31.4)	1(2.9)
36. Induction	9(25.7)	26(74.3)	15(42.9)	11(31.4)
37. In-service training	20(57.1)	15(42.9)	10(28.6)	5(14.3)
38. Local principals association	23(67.5)	12(34.3)	8(22.9)	4(11.4)
39. Mentor	9(25.7)	26(74.3)	17(48.6)	9(25.7)
40. Orientation	7(20)	28(80)	15(42.9)	13(37.1)
41. Personal evaluation	23(65.7)	12(34.3)	10(28.6)	2(5.7)
42. Professional organization affiliation	27(77.1)	8(22.9)	7(20)	1(2.9)
43. None Provided	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Indicate your level of agreement to the statements below regarding clarity of expectations.

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	45. Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	4.06	.838
<b>2</b>	44. The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	3.97	1.12
<b>3</b>	46. I received an accurate job description.	3.69	1.05
<b>4</b>	47. I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.	3.60	1.22
<b>5</b>	48. The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.	3.14	1.17

49. How many years have you worked as a certified public school employee?

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	More than 15	13	37.1
<b>2</b>	Between 6 – 10	11	31.4
<b>2</b>	Between 11 – 15	11	31.4
<b>4</b>	5 years or less	0	0

50. Were you an internal or external candidate?

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	Internal	24	68.6
<b>2</b>	External	11	31.4

## APPENDIX H

### INTERNAL CANDIDATE SURVEY RESPONSES

How much attention did you give to the following issues as a first year principal?

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3. Communication and listening skills	4.54	.509
2	10. Establishing trust	4.42	.717
3	2. Consensus building	4.04	.690
4	5. Conflict resolution	4	.780
5	6. Interpersonal relationships	4	1.02
6	1. Acceptance from staff, students, and community	3.83	1.00
7	4. Community relations	3.77	1.05
7	8. Role conflict and role ambiguity	3.77	1.09
9	7. Political, social, and cultural impacts	3.67	1.20
10	9. Staff resistance to and acceptance of change	3.38	.824

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.42	1.21

How helpful/useful was your background (knowledge, skills, and experiences) in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	15. Principles of teaching and learning	4.34	.721
2	13. Managing student discipline	4.05	.847
2	18. School law and human resource issues	4.05	.737
2	19. Student growth and development	4.05	.794
5	12. Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation	4.03	.850
6	14. Managing professional non-professional school employees	4.03	.797
7	20. Supervision and evaluation of employees	3.98	.974
8	17. School health and safety	3.94	.859
9	16. School business, management, facilities, and budget	3.86	.955
10	21. Tools of assessment and data analysis	3.70	1.27

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
22. How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.54	1.10



How helpful/useful was the following aspects of your background in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Background Aspects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	25. Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.77	.518
<b>2</b>	24. Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)	4.54	.833
<b>3</b>	23. Graduate coursework or university training	3.79	1.06

Indicate how helpful/useful each support system was in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Support Systems</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	27. Teaching Professionals	4.50	.722
<b>2</b>	28. Building Level Personnel	4.38	.970
<b>3</b>	26. Central Office Personnel	4.17	1.24

Listed below are supports that are sometimes provided to first year principals. First, indicate whether each support was provided. Second, for the supports that were NOT provided indicate whether you desired to have them.

Supports	Provided		Desired	
	Frequency (Mean Percents)		Frequency(Mean Percents)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
29. Administration meetings	24(100)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
30. Collegial support	18(75)	6(25)	2(8.3)	4(16.7)
31. Conferences or workshops	22(91.7)	2(8.3)	0(0)	2(8.3)
32. Cultural assimilation	0(0)	24(100)	2(8.3)	22(91.7)
33. District principal meetings	19(79.2)	5(20.8)	3(12.5)	2(8.3)
34. District tour	9(37.5)	15(62.5)	2(8.3)	13(54.2)
35. Goal setting	17(70.8)	7(29.2)	6(25)	1(4.2)
36. Induction	4(16.7)	20(83.3)	10(41.7)	10(41.7)
37. In-service training	16(66.7)	9(37.5)	5(20.8)	4(16.7)
38. Local principals association	17(70.8)	7(29.2)	5(20.8)	2(8.3)
39. Mentor	5(20.8)	19(79.2)	11(45.8)	8(33.3)
40. Orientation	2(8.3)	22(91.7)	10(41.7)	12(50)
41. Personal evaluation	18(75)	6(25)	5(20.8)	1(4.2)
42. Professional organization affiliation	17(70.8)	7(29.2)	7(29.2)	0(0)
43. None Provided	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Indicate your level of agreement to the statements below regarding clarity of expectations.

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	45. Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	4.21	.833
<b>2</b>	44. The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	4	1.22
<b>3</b>	46. I received an accurate job description.	3.86	1.03
<b>4</b>	47. I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.	3.71	1.20
<b>5</b>	48. The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.	3.04	1.20

49. How many years have you worked as a certified public school employee?

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	More than 15	13	54.2
<b>2</b>	Between 6 – 10	6	25
<b>2</b>	Between 11 – 15	5	20.8
<b>4</b>	5 years or less	0	0

## APPENDIX I

### EXTERNAL CANDIDATE SURVEY RESPONSES

How much attention did you give to the following issues as a first year principal?

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3. Communication and listening skills	4.27	.786
2	10. Establishing trust	4.18	.874
3	1. Acceptance from staff, students, and community	4.18	.603
4	5. Conflict resolution	4.09	.539
5	2. Consensus building	4	.447
6	9. Staff resistance to and acceptance of change	3.91	.944
7	6. Interpersonal relationships	3.90	.302
8	4. Community relations	3.81	.981
9	8. Role conflict and role ambiguity	3.27	.786
10	7. Political, social, and cultural impacts	2.90	.700

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. How important was your graduate coursework in providing guidance with the issues in questions 1-10?	3.90	.831

How helpful/useful was your background (knowledge, skills, and experiences) in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

Mean Rank	Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	13. Managing student discipline	4.25	.522
2	15. Principles of teaching and learning	4.26	.504
3	12. Knowledge of curriculum design and program implementation	4	1.00
4	18. School law and human resource issues	3.90	.701
4	20. Supervision and evaluation of employees	3.90	.944
4	21. Tools of assessment and data analysis	3.90	.944
7	19. Student growth and development	3.82	.603
7	14. Managing professional non-professional school employees	3.82	.981
8	16. School business, management, facilities, and budget	3.52	.874
8	17. School health and safety	3.52	1.21

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
22. How important was your graduate coursework in preparing you in the areas listed in questions 12-21?	3.82	.603

How helpful/useful was the following aspects of your background in the following areas in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

Mean Rank	Background Aspects	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	25. Prior experience as an Assistant Principal	4.45	.441
1	24. Prior years of school experience (not as an administrator)	4.45	.688
3	23. Graduate coursework or university training	3.73	.905

Indicate how helpful/useful each support system was in facilitating your transition to the role of principal?

Mean Rank	Support Systems	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	28. Building Level Personnel	4.09	.831
2	26. Central Office Personnel	4	.894
3	27. Teaching Professionals	3.64	.809

Listed below are supports that are sometimes provided to first year principals. First, indicate whether each support was provided. Second, for the supports that were NOT provided indicate whether you desired to have them.

Supports	Provided		Desired	
	Frequency (Mean Percents)		Frequency(Mean Percents)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
29. Administration meetings	9(81.8)	2(18.2)	2(18.2)	0(0)
30. Collegial support	8(72.7)	3(27.3)	3(27.3)	0(0)
31. Conferences or workshops	8(72.7)	3(27.3)	3(27.3)	0(0)
32. Cultural assimilation	2(18.2)	9(81.8)	7(63.6)	2(18.2)
33. District principal meetings	7(63.6)	4(36.4)	3(27.3)	1(9.1)
34. District tour	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	5(45.5)	0(0)
35. Goal setting	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	5(45.5)	0(0)
36. Induction	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	1(9.1)	4(36.4)
37. In-service training	4(36.4)	7(63.6)	5(45.5)	2(18.2)
38. Local principals association	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	3(27.3)	2(18.2)
39. Mentor	4(36.4)	7(63.6)	6(54.5)	1(9.1)
40. Orientation	5(45.5)	6(54.5)	1(9.1)	5(45.5)
41. Personal evaluation	5(45.5)	6(54.5)	5(45.5)	1(9.1)
42. Professional organization affiliation	10(90.9)	1(9.1)	0(0)	1(9.1)
43. None Provided	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

Indicate your level of agreement to the statements below regarding clarity of expectations.

<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1</b>	44. The level of support provided by the Central Office was as I anticipated.	3.91	.943
<b>2</b>	45. Central Office performance expectations were reasonable.	3.72	.786
<b>3</b>	47. I was aware of decision making boundaries, and where my authority began and ended.	3.36	1.29
<b>3</b>	48. The transition to building principal was more difficult than I anticipated.	3.36	1.12
<b>5</b>	46. I received an accurate job description.	3.27	1.01

49. How many years have you worked as a certified public school employee?

<b>Frequency Rank</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1</b>	Between 11 – 15	6	54.5
<b>2</b>	Between 6 – 10	5	45.5
<b>3</b>	5 years or less	0	0
<b>3</b>	More than 15	0	0

## APPENDIX J

### INTERVIEW RESPONSES

#### Section 1-Anticipated

- 1) How did the staff, students, and community's perceptions of your predecessor influence your assimilation?
  - a) (internal candidate) I was a known quantity in the district. It has been a goal of mine to succeed into the principalship. I was very comfortable with my predecessor and I transitioned smoothly. The faculty has been satisfied with me. I never heard anyone say, "I wish Mr. XX was here, he did it better than you." Positive comments all around.
  - b) (external candidate) A lot. She was here for 12 years and involuntarily moved. Expectations were for things to continue the way things they always have.
  - c) (internal candidate) My predecessor was seen as not receptive to staff ideas. I made an effort to be more receptive. I made the building more welcoming and changed the front office staff. New motto was: "We are here to serve."
  - d) (external candidate) Negative impact. They "liked" my predecessor. Any changes I wanted to make they did not like. The staff was distrustful of me.



- e) (external candidate) I had to work hard. Person leaving was a pillar of the community - well respected. This is a small school and all the previous principals went to high school here, taught here, and then became the principal.
- f) (external candidate) Predecessor was good, but the staff was looking forward to a new and closer relationship. The transition was smooth.
- g) (internal candidate) The former principal and I worked closely prior to his departure. I am a member of the community, and knew he was going to retire. He took early retirement and passed stuff onto me, but I was not being groomed for the position. There were several others on staff who also wanted the position.
- h) (external candidate) Predecessor was at retirement age and held the lid on the place. He took the path of least resistance. The perception was that he never left the office all day, and that paradigm was thought to exist. My focus was to get out in hallway and community. I held town meetings, created user friendly websites, and met with individuals and groups to conduct PR for the building.
- i) (internal candidate) I was in the middle school in the district for several years so I was already in the system. My predecessor established a positive atmosphere in the system. The students were respectful, teachers took care of business, and the building ran relatively well. I have been in the system for 30 years. My predecessor left because he had an opportunity to work in the district where he live and his kids attended. So the opportunity to make a smooth transition did not really exist.
- j) (external candidate) In many ways. I have a lot of respect for my predecessor. We both believed in participative management. Towards the end of his term, it became more like other peoples' time in the office. He delegated too many responsibilities. We both sang

the same tone, but at a different pace. I had to pull in the reins and received some backlash from the staff.

- 2) Upon assuming the position of principal what were your expectations of staff relationships and interactions with you? How did the reality compare to your expectations?
  - a) I was as expected from all involved. I crossed over from the other district high school to my current position.
  - b) Support from staff was as expected; although, there were some trust issues. Being visible was the key. People came with concerns, and I addressed those concerns. The teachers' main concerns were attendance, tardies, and discipline.
  - c) Already good relations as I was their assistant for 6 years. I received good feedback from staff. I had a good base and built on it.
  - d) The relationships were icy. I expected cooperation and did not get it.
  - e) Taught 18 years and spent 4 years as the dean of students, I was quasi-administration. I began to form relationships with teachers, and I viewed my position as a facilitator.
  - f) I controlled the interactions and dismantled many staff barriers.
  - g) Staff relations and acceptance was as I expected. I worked in the school for 10 years so I had friends and enemies. Over the past year, I have rectified many decisions and interpersonal relationship issues.
  - h) My expectation was to come in and have a fair and firm hand while trying to move away from the backstabbing agendas, politics, and driven regimes. I had an open door policy with students, staff, and support staff.
  - i) I had the expectation that the staff, departments, and I would interact as a team. The staff has met and exceeded my expectations. They were receptive to new ideas and plans.

- j) Low expectations, figuring I can't go wrong with that.
- 3) Upon assuming the position of principal, were there any aspects of the role you believed you were not adequately prepared?
- a) Construction aspect, multi-million dollar construction projection. I was not trained for decisions at this level.
  - b) Scheduling.
  - c) No, there was a smooth transition. I was groomed for the position.
  - d) I was not prepared for, "they way we do things". Discipline issues were difficult to understand. Not fully prepared for the culture issues. Lack of communication.
  - e) Budget issues.
  - f) When you are in the pilot seat the view is different. The overall management of professionals.
  - g) I was not ready for interactions with the school board and administration. Political climate of community was on a down swing. I did some significant PR for the high school. I did reports to the board to keep them informed. New superintendent and 7 new board members in past 2 years made this difficult.
  - h) I have been urban and rural settings, I wasn't prepared to have a lot of things dictated to you. In XX (school system) you are not a leader you are a manager. I was not ready to have my intuitive and ambition obstructed.
  - i) I have been in the system so long there was not much I was not prepared to handle. High school principal is different from middle school assistant in that there are more responsibilities; i.e. athletics, organizations, cheerleading, etc... Less hands on in high

school due to wide array of activities and initiatives, you must delegate some of the responsibilities.

- j) Yes, master scheduling. I always had a piece, but not the whole thing; what a bear. It set us back at the beginning of the year.
- 4) How did your anticipated level of support compare to the amount of transition assistance and support from the central office?
- a) New superintendent not necessarily acceptant of new principal. The new superintendent already had someone else picked out. I was looking to move out of district if I did not get hired as the principal. I was offered a central office job. The other candidate withdrew their name now putting me in line for the position.
  - b) Zero transition assistance. My first day I walked into the office and there was a folder on my desk with student detention hours owed and a huge set of keys. Small district everybody knows everybody. Superintendent was morally supportive, but not professionally supportive.
  - c) Great support from central office.
  - d) Little support, started mid-year. No one is to blame, it is a small district.
  - e) I received overwhelming support from the central office.
  - f) Not as much as I thought there could have been. We don't need constant support, but the little things make a difference.
  - g) New superintendent and new board struggled to mesh. I did not expect a lot of support so it wasn't really an issue.
  - h) New superintendent and new principal. XX(the district) does what ever they want. Not much transition assistance in areas of need, but a lot of directives to be carried out.

- i) Level of support from central office is excellent and as expected.
- j) I feel very blessed. I am given a decent amount of space and am guided by three principals in the central office. This is the best scenario that I have ever experienced. They have never played the blame game.

### Section 2 - Actual

- 5) Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that you implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?
- a) There was a lot thrown at us (building level administrative team - 4 assistants plus a dean to help). Success attributed to teamwork on tasks such as master schedule, building project, etc... A long time assistant stayed despite not being hired. Summer department meetings at my home or at school helped to make connections and increase communications. Football team's success helped bring new people together.
  - b) I handled discipline in a more consistent fashion than my predecessor.
  - c) Nothing specific. Created a high school vision and goals, and presented it to the staff to clarify expectations.
  - d) No.
  - e) Came in January with the idea I was going to change nothing, and I won't change anything until next year.
  - f) Pride and Promise concepts. The high school office personalities' permeated throughout the staff. It isn't just one program. "Phone calls home".
  - g) Not really. Focused on making it through the year, I started in February.

- h) Created department chairperson for teamwork. Centralized Deans and School Police to make substations around the building. This helped with communications and smooth operation of the school.
  - i) The approach I took was to observe, and see how things were working. Wait and observe before I made any adjustment.
  - j) Used the department chairs as leaders along with the High Schools That Work program. I took many of their suggestions that have been road blocked in the past to solidify their value. Yes, they worked.
- 6) Did any undertakings, programs, approaches, or strategies that others implemented help to make your transition more successful? What were they and how did they help?
- a) Central office technology push and new technology program. New information had to be communicated in an effective manner. Project 720 initiative, despite not being chosen to participate by PDE. However there was some micro-management. Major change in administrative staff rotation. Superintendent does not include me in all decisions, “this is what I was thinking about doing what do you think”. My input was an afterthought.
  - b) Guidance leadership program and bell schedule adjustment.
  - c) Nothing.
  - d) No.
  - e) Former principal moved to central office. Before he left he set me up for success.
  - f) District was open to whatever I wanted to do. I was required to come up with personal goals and school goals. These goals were reviewed and combined with district goals to guide us for the year. This was very helpful.

- g) Not really. Both the superintendent and I were new, and we had to adjust. We did have weekly meetings.
  - h) Towne development model helped to some degree.
  - i) Not really. I could have used a little more direction from the central office.
  - j) Book review framework and K-12 program implementation. I was not ready to tackle this my first year. Central office wanted to do it K-12, so I had no choice.
- 7) What aspect of the principalship provided you with the most challenges? In what ways did you combat these challenges?
- a) Increasing the rigor in our academic curriculum. Trying to meet with teachers to put best teachers in front of the most challenging students. Focusing on observations and providing better supervision with respects to instruction.
  - b) Attendance, discipline, and general day-to-day operation of the building. County principals association provided assistance with collegial support and informal mentorship.
  - c) Time constraints and expectations. You start with 10 hour day and then add evenings. High expectations from parents for their kids to succeed academically. There are always discipline issues.
  - d) Getting the staff together and working toward acceptance. Tried to elicit support in faculty meetings.
  - e) Athletics. I did not have many dealings with coach-parent relationships and athletics in general. I belong to a principal's consortium with 16 neighboring school districts. I was amazed when we spent the first hour of a two-hour meeting on PIAA rules and regulations.

- f) Mandates from NCLB. You cannot sit still with curriculum; it requires constant tweaking. Communicate with my staff.
  - g) This year it seemed to be staffing issues. Two teachers required degrees of discipline due to negative behaviors.
  - h) Staffing was extreme challenge. Also access to student data.
  - i) Dealing with students and parents who are struggling with specific issues and getting them on board. Finding time for teacher evaluation and supervision was a challenge.
  - j) Remaining focused on instruction. Personnel issues and time it takes to address those issues in the proper manner.
- 8) How has your pre-service training or professional experiences prepared you for the principalship?
- a) Experience is the best teacher. Leadership training in graduate program. More leadership training. Take time to make decisions.
  - b) Coursework not adequate. Experience most helpful.
  - c) As an assistant for 6 years I did more than just discipline. Coursework was not helpful.
  - d) All principal training and coursework was worthless. Experience in the business world, and my MBA was helpful.
  - e) Rather well. Budget training not enough. My experience was more helpful.
  - f) Tremendously. Theory and practice all hit at the perfect time for me.
  - g) In theory it had a lot of value, but actually the position requires more common sense. I was well prepared for the nuts and bolts things, but the social interactions and interpersonal aspects needed to be hit harder in my coursework.
  - h) Very little.



- i) The program I went through was pretty good. Having been in the classroom for so many years I had a great deal of insight into instruction.
  - j) It has all lead into it. My experiences have better prepared me for the position.
- 9) What do you see as the prime difference between your previous position and the principalship?
- a) I was an assistant principal at a grade level. Biggest thing was to make sure I allowed my assistants an opportunity to solve problem first. I needed to learn not to say “I’ll take care of it.” I had to learn how to let others solve problems and support their decisions
  - b) I was an assistant principal. Not having anyone to bounce ideas off of. I relied on the county principals association for support and insight.
  - c) The axe falls here. Accountability.
  - d) As an assistant principal you were consulted on for decisions. As the principal the buck stops here.
  - e) The buck stops here. There is no one else to turn to.
  - f) Responsibility.
  - g) Discipline issues.
  - h) I moved from an affluent area to urban school setting. Biggest difference for me was safety and population. The job responsibilities from moving from an assistant to a principal were staggering. It was my responsibility to “put paper to people”.
  - i) Variety of responsibilities.
  - j) Time and the level of problems.

### Section 3 - Advice

10) A reflective look at your first year provides you with an opportunity to define critical incidents and defining moments of your succession. Describe the most critical incident of your first year.

- a) In March, a female student made claim (later found to be fraudulent) of being the victim of a major crime. School took an introspective look at safety. We came together in a unique a profound way.
- b) Confronting/discussing issues with specific staff members at meetings. Cafeteria disruption resulting in my restraining a student. Later discussed with staff and students as handling the situation appropriately.
- c) Nothing really. Staff meeting up front in beginning of year.
- d) Unsure of procedures, specifically discipline issues. Teachers did not confront me head on when I followed wrong school protocol and norms. They talked in the faculty lounge swaying the majority of teachers and undermining my authority.
- e) Firing of a coach. Very obvious that a kid was being singled out for punishment and opportunities were withheld.
- f) No. Instituted so many changes I cannot single-out one incident.
- g) The personnel issues were a turning point in the school year. I demonstrated to staff that I will do the right thing and see it through.
- h) My involvement to the community at a rally. We incorporated over two thousand people throughout the community.
- i) Communication with students and staff early on. This set the pace for the first year.

j) A pep rally for winter sports in February. I permitted it to occur for the first time in years. Students planned and prepared. A fight broke out in the crowd. It was a disaster. Everything calmed down five minutes later. Instead of canceling it, I let the pep rally continue. I praised the 90 percent of the students who behaved themselves.

11) When accepting a new position in the future, what questions will you ask?

- a) What type of support program and professional development are you going to provide me?
- b) I will ask more about the circumstances surrounding my predecessor's departure. What are your expectations of me for my first year?
- c) What is the direction the district wants to go, and how does the community view this direction?
- d) I would like to know a lot more about the staff and accountability. How is the staff evaluated? How am I going to be evaluated? Accountability and expectations of all involved?
- e) How much money can I get? Budget issues and questions about school business.
- f) How many contract days are there? What is my input and responsibility in areas outside the high school?
- g) What are the opportunities for professional development? How imperative is it that I live in the community? How vested is the school district in technology?
- h) I will ask questions around suspension data, access to technology, student information system, and hierarchy of building level leadership. What does the master schedule look like?

- i) What kind of support could I expect from central office and the board? What does the teaching contract look like, and are there any labor issues? Could I take a tour while school is in session?
- j) I will ask questions about site based management and my limits and expectations. Personnel procedures and support from central office.

12) What advice would you give first-year succession principals?

- a) Take care of the school first (students, staff, and parents first); central office programs and district goals are second. You can be a team player as you advocate for your school.
- b) Look at the organization and ask for advice. Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to ask your staff for advice. Reflect on you decisions.
- c) "Get out while you can." You have got to keep things into perspective. Big issues must be hit head on, all-the-while take time to walk away. Think and rethink your big decisions. Think about how your decision will affect the staff and students.
- d) As you arrive, do not have your mind set on how you want things done. Wait one year for any major changes and then set goals.
- e) Use the people in your building. You are not the most knowledgeable person in your building with regards to all issues. You need to know the background.
- f) Make sure you are ready.
- g) Don't take the job home with you. Leave the stressors at school. Don't take the job too seriously, it is important but...
- h) Try not to do anything yourself. Delegate and monitor your staff.
- i) The principal is a tough job. First year principals need to be careful they don't look at things from their previous school's advantage. Leave comments like, this is the way we

did things at XX, at home. Assess the first year; do not shake it up too early. Shared leadership and teaming lead to opened-minded thoughts and actions.

j) Reach out to staff. Make as few unilateral decisions alone as possible.

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