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Perceptions of the Roles, Professional Development, Challenges, and Frustrations of High School Principals

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Perceptions of the Roles, Professional Development, Challenges,
and Frustrations of High School Principals

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Psychological and Social Foundations
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Dedication

This work would not have been possible without the support, encouragement and assistance of numerous individuals. First, family, friends, and colleagues wholly contributed to the successful completion of this academic journey. Most of all, I dedicate this to my wife, Laura, for her enduring love and support. This was a long and challenging road, and I never wavered, thanks to her patience and support. We both experienced personal sacrifices for the fulfillment of this degree program. She will always be my soul mate and the love of my life. I also dedicate this to my sons Drew and Nathan. They never knew the challenges I faced mentally while I attended classes and spent countless hours during weekends, all the while wishing I could instead spend quality time with them.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, professional development experiences that impacted their careers, and the challenges and frustrations they face when enacting their roles as high school leaders.

This qualitative study investigated perceptions of high school principals and addressed three research questions: (1) What are the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school leaders? (2) What professional development experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers? (3) What do high school principals perceive are their greatest challenges and frustrations?

Three in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with each of eight high school principals. The results were based on analysis by the researcher and the two expert panels. The high school principals perceived that they had a tremendous number of roles and responsibilities within their positions.

The roles and responsibilities that were identified with the greatest importance were: providing a safe learning environment, ensuring quality teachers and quality instruction, high accountability expectations for all and mandates, and leadership within the school and system. Professional development opportunities and personalized support systems were perceived to be vital to the success of the high school principal.

Principals in the study reported that both formal and informal professional development experiences were beneficial for their improvement as school leaders. The principals perceived that when they created relationships with mentors and established strong networks, they improved the likelihood of sustained support and success.

High school principals perceived the greatest challenges were management of time, balancing leadership and management of the school, and navigating the legislative mandates and accountability requirements.

High school principals perceived the greatest frustrations were issues related to time and legislative mandates dictated to them by the local, state, and federal systems. They faced constant pressures that could be directly tied to student achievement and accountability measures. High school principals need to be prepared to assume various roles. Further research may determine if roles and challenges identified by the eight participants mirror other states' results.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The principal's role as a school leader “has been viewed much more of an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs of artful leadership are expressed ultimately in its practice” (De Pree, 1989, p. 11). Dubin (2006) evaluated the principal as the critical person orchestrating the movements of all the players in the school. He stated

The principal makes the decisions that affect people’s lives, directs considerable sums of money, creates a climate that impacts the community, and projects the appropriate philosophy and practical vision that propels a school forward. The principal, in essence, is the critical player in balancing and promoting the progress of our society. (p. xiii)

The high school principal is expected to be a leader undertaking several roles. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) in their report, *The School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals*, conducted in-depth case analyses of eight highly developed inservice program models in five states focused on the roles of the principal and the array of professional tasks and competencies. They described the expectations of principals as people who must be “visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations/communication experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives” (Davis et al., 2005, p. 1).

In addition to these role expectations, principals are expected

to serve the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, state and federal agencies. As a result, many scholars and practitioners argue that the job requirements far exceed the reasonable capacities of any one person. (p. 4)

Problem Statement

Recent research on the perceptions of high school principals related to their roles, professional development, and challenges and frustrations within the position was inadequate. High school principals have been understudied compared to elementary and middle school principals. Current high school principals, in their role as school leaders, are asked to meet increasing numbers of managerial, curriculum, and instructional expectations and are critical to an effective school [Institute for Educational Leadership, 2003; National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 2000]. Fullan (2001) captured the perception of the current principalship

With the move toward the self-management of schools, the principal appears to have the worst of both worlds. The old world is still around with expectations to run a smooth school, and to be responsive to all; simultaneously the new world rains down on schools with disconnected demands, expecting that at the end of the day the school should be constantly showing better test results, and ideally becoming a learning organization. (pp. 138-139)

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, professional development experiences that impacted their careers, and the challenges and frustrations they face when enacting their roles as high school leaders. According to Portin and Shen (1998), principals are decentralized decision makers, while at the same time expected to comply with other managerial responsibilities. Portin and Shen (1998) stressed the changing nature of the

high school principalship warranted future study and attention, because the high school principal's roles continue to be central to the ongoing success of high schools. High school principals focused on prioritizing time, leading schools instructionally, and knowing how quality teaching benefits them and their schools. The researcher found similar results from the interviews with principals.

Lyons (1999) conducted a study of 184 elementary and secondary principals. The principals participated in guided interviews conducted by graduate students to discover their perceptions about their roles and responsibilities. They included providing a safe environment and positive climate, fostering good teaching and learning, promoting positive parent and community communications with the school, hiring and developing an effective staff, and monitoring student progress.

The principal's position has become increasingly complex and stressful. The current focus on standards and accountability has prompted several changes within the principal's duties (Thompson, 2001). Fullan (2001) concurred and stated, "Principals should have no problem claiming their fair share of frustration, since the role of the principal has in fact become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear" (p. 137). The high school principal, according to Piltch and Fredericks (2005), experiences several role complexities dependent upon a number of variables at the local, state, and federal levels. The local level includes students, school staff members, parents, school board members, and community members. The federal and state level consist of legislation, mandates, special interests, and statutes.

Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie, and Hurwitz (1984) spent approximately 300 hours studying 26 elementary and secondary school principals in Chicago and stated

The principalship is a moving, dynamic occupation in almost a literal sense; the rhythm of the job, from arrival at the parking lot to the close of the business day, is typified by pace and movement, by frequent and abrupt shifts from one concern to another, and by excitement pervading any institution dealing with young people . . . the principal's job is different from other managerial positions because it is essentially an oral occupation, a job of talking. The principal governs the school mostly by talking with other people, usually one at a time, throughout the day. (p. 211)

Morris et al. (1984) described the job of the principal as open-ended, the job becoming what each principal wished to make of it. According to Zepeda (2003), school leaders are responsible to project and address the needs of schools, develop effective teacher leaders, hold steadfastly to the vision of the organization, garner and allocate resources, communicate progress, and support the people, programs, services, and activities implemented to achieve the school's vision. Mathews and Crow (2003) surmised that becoming aware of changing student populations and staying informed of rapidly changing information present challenges. Also, having to increase educational knowledge and accountability requirements, and facing escalating expectations that schools provide more services represent more challenges to school leaders.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school leaders?
2. What professional development experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers?

3. What do high school principals perceive are their greatest challenges and frustrations?

Rationale for the Study

According to Deal and Peterson (1994), principals have been called upon to balance their jobs, to build and enhance human relationships. This requires a leadership style that fosters relationships within the school, as well as between the school and its community. The mission and purposes of schooling are complex and school leaders face many challenges. Effective principals need both "technical competence and symbolic sensitivity to get the job done with dignity and grace" (Deal & Peterson, p. 10).

Perceptions of the roles of high school principals were studied, specifically with regard to the role perceptions of eight high school principals from a southeastern state. According to NASSP's (2000) study of principals, the high school principal's role has been changing. Beck and Murphy (1993) state, "the expectations of school leaders' behaviors, responsibilities, preferred organizational structures, relational strategies, and professional standards have been shaped by a diverse set of concerns and events making the principal's role a malleable one" (p. 4). Quinn (2002) reviewed NASSP's expansion of their study and contended the growing frustrations of the principal were:

increased job stress, inadequate school funding, balanced school management with instructional leadership, new curriculum standards and requirements, educating an increasingly diverse student population, shouldering responsibilities that once belonged at home or in the community, and possible termination if their schools didn't show instant results. (p. 1)

Zepeda (2003) described high school principals as effective managers and leaders of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They were classified by individual leadership styles, levels of expertise, and experiences in the position. Principals lead because school

systems expect principals to provide direction and guidance, and to make learning for everyone a top priority. Bottoms, O'Neill, Fry, and Hill (2003) published

Good principals are the key to successful schools: Six strategies to prepare more good principals. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) leadership goal is for "Every school to have leadership that results in improved student performance, and leadership starts with an effective school principal." (p. 1)

Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) described the principal's job as overwhelming, prompting the education leadership field to dedicate overdue attention and recognition to the critical role and mounting demands placed on school principals. Perceptions of the types of professional development that impact their careers, their perceived roles, and the challenges and frustrations principals face when enacting their roles as high school leaders were studied through interviews with current high school principals. This study may benefit current and future principals, superintendents, and school boards as they continue to experience the extensive leadership challenges at the high school principal level.

Conceptual Framework

In 1938, Barnard, while acting as the President of New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, wrote *The Functions of the Executive*, introducing his ideas on organizational theories and administrative thought. The book emphasized skills, judgment, stewardship, professionalism, and connected ethical and practical teachings. Barnard described the functions of the executive to include: maintaining a system of communication, sustained effectiveness, growth of the informal organization, motivating organization members, attracting talented people to the organization, and providing purpose and objectives. Owens (2004) considered Barnard as an expert on the relationships between formal and

informal organizations. The formal, or hierarchy of a system, complete with job titles and descriptions. The informal, or socially derived norms and job routines, often consists of networks and cultures embedded in the system. Owens (2004) also referred to Barnard's belief that organizations prospered only when managers had both human and technical skills. Barnard defined effectiveness as the accomplishment of job objectives. He also defined efficiency as the satisfaction of individual motives and the maintenance of morale. Andrews (1968) described his publication as the most thought-provoking book on organization and management ever written by a practicing executive leader. Andrews attributes the endurance of Barnard's teachings to his capacity for abstract thought, ability to apply reason to professional experiences, probability expertness in practice, and simultaneous exercise of the twin capabilities of reason and competence. According to Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1966), individuals in social locations behaved with reference to expectations. Gross et al. (1966) proposed that role expectations are partly a function of the positions an individual occupied and the expectations held for incumbents of these positions as they related to human behavior. Gross et al. (1966) described role expectation as an evaluative standard applied to an incumbent of a position. The organization members maintain certain standards or behavioral expectations. The district office staff expected the principal to supervise teachers and staff; and teachers and staff expected the principal to support them with their colleagues, students, and the parents.

Limitations

This was an exploratory qualitative study that collected interview data. The study may provide a perceptual lens of high school principals' roles, professional development

experiences and needs, and the challenges and frustrations they faced in their positions. Seidman (1998) stated the purpose of qualitative interviews is to present the experience of the people interviewed in compelling enough detail and in sufficient depth that those who read the study connect to that experience, learn how it was constituted, and deepen their understanding of the issues it reflected. The goal was to have rich, descriptive data that expressed the thoughts and experiences of the participants. A possible threat to credibility during the interview schedule process may have occurred due to principals being very busy professionals. Some participants prepared in advance for the interviews, and some did not. Another consideration may be that only eight current high school principals participated in the study and each was selected by their respective superintendent.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined in the context of the study. They are:

1. *Formal professional development.* Structured programs and trainings that often occurred with follow-up opportunities both within and outside the school district. For example, formal professional development experiences are often required for employment. Attendance and/or obtaining credits can be associated with formal training. Conferences and seminars are sought or required by the learner to improve job effectiveness.
2. *High school principal.* Leader of a public institution of learning which includes grades 9-12.

3. *Informal professional development.* Non-structured or short training experiences associated with a specific purpose. These experiences are not usually formally acknowledged and are often dependent on the individual's specific situation.
4. *Mentoring.* The process of guiding and sharing the ups and downs of the job with a former high school principal. The ups and downs of the job as well as the joys, challenges, and frustrations in a trusted person who provides a sounding board and support system in a nonthreatening environment.
5. *Professional development.* Title IX, Part A, Section 9101 of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) defined professional development as an increase of knowledge or skill through study, travel, research, workshops or courses, sabbaticals, internships, apprenticeships, residencies or work independently, or with mentor(s). Professional development experiences that had a career impact on principals were classified as formal and informal.
6. *Roles.* The skill areas and responsibilities needed for the high school principal position.
7. *Role expectations.* The accountable skill and responsibility areas necessary for the high school principal. Others anticipate that high school principals will perform in specific ways within the accountable areas.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 described and outlined the exploratory study of principal leadership and the perceptions of the roles, challenges, and frustrations of high school principals. The professional development of high school principals was also studied. This chapter

contained the problem, purpose, rationale for the study, research questions, conceptual framework, limitations, definitions, and summary and organization of chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing literature investigating perceptions of high school principals. Topics that were researched provided the researcher with evidence to make connections and draw conclusions about the themes established, upon completion of the interviews. An overview of principal leadership, roles of the high school principal, professional development and high school principals, and the challenges and frustrations of the principalship were outlined and researched.

Chapter 3 includes the study design, problem, purpose, research questions, participants and procedures, ethical considerations, instruments, and the high school principal interview protocol schedules. The research questions were presented along with the corresponding interview questions that provided necessary qualitative data.

Chapter 4 includes the results of the study, focusing on the data derived from three interviews conducted with each of the eight high school principals. Included in this chapter were the transcription data, the themes, and findings for each research question.

Chapter 5 includes the summary, conclusions, implications, as well as, recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study was to investigate current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, the professional development experiences that impacted their careers, and challenges and frustrations principals face when enacting their roles as high school leaders. This chapter examines principal leadership, the roles of the high school principal, professional development of the high school principal, and the challenges and frustrations of the high school principal. The chapter ends with a summary and synthesis of the literature.

Principal Leadership

The literature review relating to principal leadership began with Murphy (1992) emphasizing that the contemporary school principal acts like a “leader” or the facilitator and visionary of the school, rather than simply the director of initiatives and school operations. Leithwood et al. (1992) described instructional leaders as “leading from the front or the middle of the band” and the leader as “leading from the back of the band” (p. 6). The principal’s job is to focus the staff and the students on instructional goals, working with the end result in mind.

Goldberg (2001) synthesized the responses from 43 interviews with educational leaders including principals, superintendents, teachers, researchers, and politicians; he found leaders share five common role behaviors. First, leaders inspired and guided

others, providing the support and inspiration to make a difference. The second role behavior leaders exhibited was courageousness in their work, because leaders need to recognize and embrace change and create a following from others. The third role behavior described leaders having strong social consciousness toward the haves and have-nots. The fourth behavior role described leaders as having a central, steady focus on the issues and challenges within the system; rigor, excellence, and long-term career work mark the leader in education. The fifth role was described as the possession of situational mastery of various environments. Goldberg concluded that in reality no two schools, or leadership environments, were the same.

Numerous authors including Bennis (2003), Goldberg (2001), and Lambert et al. (2002) described four basic roles of the principal. The principal is considered the “leader of leaders” and the cultivator of shared leadership. Principals also construct the shared purpose and vision. They establish people within the organization who understand their role(s) and how to grow within the system. Finally, they train staff to gather and interpret data to improve the effectiveness of the organization.

Owens (2004) included several of the above authors’ principal roles, but he primarily focused on instructional leadership roles. The principal is responsible for maintaining many different roles within the position. Principals reviewed student data, focusing on their progress in knowledge and skill areas. The principals ensure that students have the best possible learning environment. They emphasized the importance of full commitment toward school improvement initiatives. Principals instill positive attitudes and behaviors of school personnel and students. The leader of the school also

ensures that everyone in the school to take responsibility for the successes or failures of its students.

Davis et al. (2005) and Keller (1998) shared the views of the previous authors regarding the strong influences school leaders have on student achievement, effective teacher development, and effective organizational planning. Davis et al. merged the importance of these three aspects of the principal's roles and focused on the development of a deeper understanding of how to manage the curriculum in creative ways to promote student learning, support teachers, and develop the ability to transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students.

DiMartino and Miles (2006) reported on high school principals of Breakthrough High Schools throughout the United States. Breakthrough High Schools is a cooperative initiative between NASSP, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the MetLife Foundation. Each school met the selection criteria by having at least 40% of students eligible for free and reduced-priced meals. Schools had to present their effective use of collaborative, shared leadership; professional learning communities; student and staff leadership development; personalization, which includes attention to all students, mentoring, and school/community connections; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Access to rigorous coursework for all students, differentiated instruction with multiple assessments, data-based decision making, and opportunities for career development can be found in these schools also.

Since 2002, more than 25 high schools have been identified and showcased for their exemplary efforts and results using the above criteria. The emphasis is on collecting and analyzing school data, participating in extensive phone interviews to verify the data,

and conducting site visits to all of the schools that appeared to meet the criteria. From 2004 through 2006, a total of 25 schools from rural, urban, and suburban communities were identified that had grappled with low expectations and student underperformance. The initiative discovered that each school created a “road map” leading their students to high achievement, graduation, and postsecondary education. The best practices being pervasively used in these schools were shared with other high schools to assist them in their school improvement process. The analysis of Breakthrough High Schools found that their principals facilitated professional development for their teachers, encouraged staff collaboration, and personalized the learning experience for all students.

A variety of networks have been created. These include E-Lead, which was developed as a free online resource offering states and districts information about how to provide better professional development for principals. E-Lead is a partnership of the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University and the Institute for Educational Leadership (2009). Similar to E-Lead, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) School Leadership Initiative, which connected SREB leadership academies and universities from across the region, promoted collaborative work toward improvement of leadership preparation and development for school leaders. The State Leadership Academy Network combined the work of school districts and six leadership academies that addressed how school leaders “are tapped, trained, certified and supported as school teams focus on improving learning and student achievement” (p. 3). The State Leadership Academy Network Framework summarized five critical success factors for principals that described all three areas. The first, owning the vision, describes high expectations for all, sharing the vision and purpose across the organization, and strategic

thinking by the school's leaders. Second, data are used to drive organizational change for the better. The principal assists the leadership of the school to determine the needs of the students and monitors instruction and assessment through the use of student, teacher, and school data. Third, the school is organized to emphasize and improve teaching and student learning. The principal focuses on providing increased learning time for students, communicating with all stakeholders, building effective teacher teams, enabling pervasive technology throughout the school, and establishing focused and sustained professional development for teachers. Fourth, principals maximize the leadership and effectiveness of teachers, staff, and students on their campuses. Their focus is on personal values, understanding others, leading a problem-solving culture, modeling and encouraging creativity, and communicating effectively. Finally, principals demonstrate a passion for learning and build a school focused on personalized learning.

Principal leadership is crucial to the long-term success of a school. As the above research and authors suggest, the principal must be competent and experienced with many different roles and expectations in the position. The principal positions for both elementary and secondary schools have many commonalities. Although all levels of schools and principals contend with the pressures of increased roles and expectations, today's high schools seem to be the national target for criticism. High schools have state-mandated testing just as the elementary and middle schools. High schools also have graduation and drop-out rates, student access to, and successful completion of, advanced coursework, and industry certifications in various technical and trade occupations to contend with for school grade calculations.

Roles of the High School Principal

The literature studied relating to the roles of the high school principal began with Barnard (1938) and his original suggestion that the role of the principal was to accomplish the goals of scientific management and organizational systems management. He recognized and stressed the importance of commitment to purpose with organized activities. Using Barnard as a *springboard*, the National Center for School Leadership (Blasé, 1987) identified the key roles of effective principals as defining and communicating the school's educational mission, coordinating curriculum, supervising and supporting teachers, monitoring student progress, and nurturing a positive learning climate. This served to organize the principal and assist with prioritizing the goals of the principal and the school.

Lyons (1999) agreed with Prestine (1991) that principals were considered the managers and leaders of relationships in schools. To accomplish this, the principal-led networks developed collaborative, participatory staff and teams. Daresh and Playko (1992) expanded Prestine's views and described the principal's work as complex with a wide range of demands and expectations. Daresh and Playko (1992) described principals as managers who must develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage a school. Some skills are learned through formal training while others were learned through on-the-job training.

Fullan (2006) agreed with Prestine and Daresh and Playko's views of the principal as a cultivator of relationships and stated, "Schools are complex adaptive systems that undergo self-organization during educational change" (p. 154).

Beck and Murphy (1993) conducted extensive research on the changes in the principal's roles by each decade from the 1920s until the 1990s. Their descriptions utilized metaphors to explain each decade and can be found in Table 1 below. Although the descriptions were unique to each decade, transition to a new decade did not mean that previous roles "disappeared." Role descriptions and their emphases appear to be based on underlying events and philosophies of the times.

Starting in the 1920s, Beck and Murphy described the principal's role as a *Values Broker*, whereby principals' roles emphasized values. School leadership is portrayed as a lofty, essential mission during this time period. The 1930s brought a shift of the principal's role to that of a *Scientific Manager*. The emphasis became the 'how' of administration. The principal, or "school executive" became the expert in finance, curriculum and instruction, school reports, and business management. In the 1940s principals became known as *Democratic Leaders* for their renewed emphasis placed on values. Specifically, the concepts of democracy, equality, patriotism, and human relations defined the era. The 1950s became known for the *Theory-Guided Administrator* role description and principals were encouraged to exercise authority and work through hierarchical structures. As the 1960s began, the principal became known as the *Bureaucratic Executive*. During this era, principals were compared to military leaders for their keen ability to make decisions, take action, and exercise their command within the position. The 1970s categorized principals as *Humanistic Facilitators* because they were responsible for maintaining the school through proper administration and management of people and of things. This era emphasized social connections with the

Table 1

Historical Role and Description of the Principal by Decade

Decade	Metaphorical Phrase	Description of Principal
1920s	Values Broker	Principal accepts and promotes values
1930s	Scientific Manager	“The school executive” and business expert
1940s	Democratic Leader	The emphasis on values resurfaces
1950s	Theory-Guided Admin.	Hierarchical authority
1960s	Bureaucratic Executive	Principals as military leaders
1970s	Humanistic Facilitator	Principals responsible to maintain school
1980s	Instructional Leader	Teaching and learning top priorities
1990s	Community Connector	Restructuring movement

Source: Beck & Murphy (1993)

human-side of employees emphasized. As principals of the 1980s, they were commonly known as *Instructional Leaders*, because of their emphasis on teaching and learning. Their chief priority was student achievement and development of quality teachers. Beck and Murphy concluded their analysis of the historical roles of the principal with the 1990s and the principal as the *Community Connector*. The 1990s theme was prompted by the changing social dynamics in society and the importance of family and communities becoming more involved in the schools.

From another perspective, Petersen's (1999) qualitative study investigated five instructionally focused California superintendents who emphasized the essential leadership roles/functions of their school principals. The four essential roles/functions were identified as articulating the instructional vision, creating an organizational structure supporting the vision, assessing and evaluating personnel and instructional programs, and adapting to the organization. His study revealed that the school principals are perceived to have an influential job and the power to create a culture for the organization to follow.

Bloom (1999) described the roles of principals as difficult, disparate, and vital. These roles included education professor, teacher supervisor, budget manager, counselor, local politician, social worker, disciplinarian, visionary, assistant custodian, and bureaucrat. Bloom's views of the principal provided a baseline for other authors to address principal roles. Ferrandino (2000) also expanded the description of the high school principal to include such roles as social worker, nurse, counselor, fundraiser, psychologist, community activist, disciplinarian, teacher, marketer and Internet expert, school manager, and instructional leader.

Ferrandino proposed that “Clearly the role of the principal has changed and expanded. It’s time to redefine that role, to update it” (p. 1). Bloom’s and Ferrandino’s lists shared eight common roles, but differed slightly. Bloom described the principal as an education professor, politician, and assistant custodian, while Ferrandino noted that principals also served as nurses, fundraiser sources, and psychologists.

Sherman (2000) included the additional principal roles of police officer and cheerleader. He summarized Bloom and Ferrandino’s role descriptions by saying

Research tells us that principals are the linchpins in the enormously complex workings, both physical and human, of a school. The job calls for a staggering range of roles: psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, PR director, coach, and cheerleader. The principalship is both lowly and lofty. In one morning, you might deal with a broken window and a broken home. A bruised knee and a bruised ego. A rusty pipe and a rusty teacher. (p. 2)

Thompson (2001) shared similar views as Bloom and Ferrandino and Sherman regarding the roles of principals. Thompson highlighted principals as problem solvers, effective communicators, and supportive leaders of all stakeholders.

The studies and research of the above authors led to including Lyons’s (1999) study of 194 principals perceptions about their roles in elementary and secondary schools. In Lyons’s study, graduate students of educational leadership programs interviewed the principals with no delineation between specific classification between schools. The principals explained their school structures, which included their visions and how they connected to the schools’ goal processes, priority plans, and procedural processes. The study identified 13 job roles and responsibilities that included rewards and frustrations as a principal. See Appendix A for Lyons’s complete list of these roles and responsibilities. Three additional roles that varied from previous roles studies were

staying current on teaching and learning, admitting that they did not know everything and identifying a mentor and developing a network for support.

Blase and Blase (1999) expanded the list of roles of effective principals to include routine classroom walkthroughs. The result of the classroom walkthroughs increased principal visibility, which communicated interest and engagement of the school's daily operations. It also provided opportunities for the principal to interact and support teachers and students. This was the first study that included this activity as a role.

Based on a survey completed by 43 principals who were members of Education World, an online education resource, Hopkins (2000) discovered that principals exhibited 10 principal leadership behaviors. Within this list, three leadership behaviors have not yet been mentioned in the literature within the study. These previously unmentioned behaviors included displaying a sense of humor and enjoyment of their occupation, serving as role models for students and staff members, and offering kindness and criticism for students and staff. The other seven behaviors described by Hopkins were previously mentioned by other authors in this study. The entire 10 principal leadership behaviors are listed in Appendix B.

Butler (2000) detailed the advocacy of the Principals' Center at Harvard for dividing the principal position into two leaders at every school. The Center suggested both an instructional and an administrative principal. The instructional principal would account for student achievement, curriculum and technology, and the maintenance of staff. The administrative principal would be responsible for plant management including capital improvements, transportation, and food and nutrition. The eight participating schools in this study operated under a traditional, one-principal model. Butler's

description of Harvard's split principal position separating the functions of the principal into two positions creates different sets of challenges for each principal leader.

Tirozzi (2001), Executive Director of NASSP, suggested that principals must be school leaders. They must possess the requisite skills, capacities, and commitment to lead in all facets of the management of the school. As school leaders, principals must be developers and leaders of curriculum, instruction, and assessment strategies. Thus, a principal must be both a manager and a leader. Tirozzi (2002) described the demands of the 21st century principal and stated "School leaders today are tackling tough curriculum standards, educating an increasingly diverse student population, shouldering responsibilities that once belonged in the home or in the community, and then facing termination if their schools do not show instant results" (p. 2).

Alvy and Robbins (2004) focused their work primarily on new principals who entered the field and adapted to their new roles at varied speeds and in different ways. Their approach was unique because they addressed the roles based on stages of professional development. They characterized the three stages as the anticipatory stage, the encounter stage, and the insider stage. Principals in the anticipatory stage develop expectations of their new roles in the new organization. Principals are working through a state of leave-taking, moving mentally from the old approaches, and realizing and accepting new roles. The researchers found that what new principals noticed and how they reacted to roles measured their level of success during the encounter stage. Additionally, these principals should understand that teachers, students, and parents need to be recognized and celebrated for their numerous accomplishments. Principals should expect anything to happen and feel like they have been prepared to deal with the

challenges and frustrations within the position. The goal of principals was to reach the insider stage by the end of their first year. How well leaders progressed in the cultures and contexts of their principalship determined their abilities to respond and consequently meet challenges associated with these positions.

Blaydes (2004) believed that principals who could successfully lead schools of the 21st century must reveal passion and serve as dedicated leaders with strong work ethics. They must also be knowledgeable of learning theories, child development, and current research; they should also have the ability to work successfully with people. According to Blaydes, principals who make classroom visits enhance teachers' motivation, self-esteem, sense of security, and morale. Effective principals use these visits to monitor instruction and provide helpful, critical feedback to teachers.

The *Quick-Reference Handbook for School Leaders* was developed by the Ontario Principals Council (2005). This handbook outlined the roles of the principal by statute and by specific districts' terms and conditions of employment. Specifically, this guide highlighted and focused on responsibility guidelines, student safety, and student instruction as the primary roles for principals, which are three of the major components related to some of the previous references.

1. Responsibility Guidelines
 - a. Maintain order and discipline
 - b. Manage instruction and discipline of students
 - c. Report neglect of duty or infraction of school rules

2. Student Safety
 - a. Ensure that safety procedures are followed at all times
 - b. Report child abuse if reasonable suspicion exists
 - c. Proper care of students and property
3. Student Instruction
 - a. Supervise instruction in school
 - b. Evaluate students for specific programs
 - c. Arrange for alternative activities for students when necessary.

The reference guide includes 10 additional roles and responsibilities. They are student supervision, staff supervision, staff evaluation, staff cooperation, school administration, access to school, building maintenance, community, school advisory group, and reports to the district. See Appendix C for more details of the listed roles and responsibilities of the Ontario Principals' Council.

Harris (2007) conducted a study of 35 award-winning principals to discover what they considered their best leadership practices. The principals were all honored for their outstanding leadership and had earned National Distinguished Principal awards, or their schools had been identified as high-performing schools. The analysis of their responses yielded over 100 different best practices that fell into the categories of leadership, campus culture, collaboration and communication, effective instructional programs, school improvement planning, and at-risk programs. The categories of principal roles with best practices for each of these categories according to Harris (2007) can be found in Appendix D. Harris (2007) framed all of the best leadership practice responses within these three succinct ideas: we, not me; people, not programs; and students, not schools.

Mathews and Crow (2003) proposed four future principal roles. The first is the traditional role of the principal remaining in place where leadership is defined by the influences and actions of the principal. A second option is the elimination of today's school principal. The third calls for teachers and community partners to manage and run schools. The fourth is the changing of the principal's role to a business-manager role with teachers responsible for the instructional leadership in schools. The current atmosphere continues to create more and more complex roles for the principal, with a more comprehensive leader expected by schools.

Today's principals need to still be effective managers of teachers and staff, but they also must now be experienced instructional leaders. The additional role of instructional leadership prompts high demands for both assessment and program development. These roles have evolved during the last 10-20 years due to increased responsibility for everyone, including the school principal.

Professional Development and the High School Principal

The literature studied relating to professional development of the high school principal began with identifying the research and school districts supporting the importance and necessity for relevant and applicable professional development for principals. The position of the high school principal continues to evolve and requires diligence regarding training and expertise in the field. The mounting pressures faced by high school principals and the expansion of the roles within the position make professional development critical to the principal.

The Educational Testing Service's (ETS)(1998) publication, *Professional Development for School Principals*, stated that effective professional development for

administrators needed to be long-term and planned. A comprehensive plan focused on student achievement, with job-embedded experiences involving reflective practices and opportunities to work, discuss, and problem solve with peers was presented as an ideal model for principals. As part of the study, principals were asked about their experiences and professional development opportunities that assisted and prepared them for their roles as principals. Although the ERS publication has not been updated since the original 1999 release, the professional development activities principals described as important for their development as leaders still are pertinent today. These professional development activities included keeping a journal for reflection and improvement, getting involved in a peer study group, becoming involved in support networks, completing an administrator portfolio, leading school improvement training as a school, and having a mentor to visit and meet with regularly.

Bennis and Nanus (2003) believed that learning was the essential fuel for the leader and provided the source of high-octane energy that sparked new understandings, new ideas, and new challenges. Lunenberg and Ornstein (2004) expanded Bennis and Nanus' views to address the professional development gaps that included small-group networking and goals to increase staff development for themselves and their staff members. Lunenberg and Ornstein (2004) and Lyons (1999) both make justifiable cases for pertinent and applicable preparation training programs for principals. Lyons (1999) stated "aspiring principals can benefit from university-level preparation that offers them the opportunity to interact with practicing principals in meaningful ways" (p. 18).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2007) published the *Changing Role of the Middle Level and High School Leader* that described what is

expected, what is needed, and what should be accomplished regarding leadership preparation. This time era includes a blend of management and leadership skills that included a proactive vision of the future, strong communication skills among constituents, strong ties toward instructional practices, and a priority placed on interpersonal relationships.

Potter (2001) outlined many areas of instruction with which principals should become familiar through a principal training program. Among them were instruction and supervision of curriculum, special education, school law, community relations, communications, public relations, principal delegation, leadership, vision, student services, human resources, facilities, maintenance, food service, mentorship, conflict resolution, transportation, accountability, and leadership styles. Potter's work was unique from many other experts and authors because of the emphasis placed on conflict resolution and leadership styles.

Tirozzi (2001) stated that exemplary principals practice direct, ongoing interactions with the superintendent; create support systems with current principals and assistant principals; develop programs for present and future principals; and, create quality life experiences for themselves. Tirozzi believed that communication and mentoring programs were integral parts for the development of school leaders.

Hess and Kelly (2007) conducted a study of the professional development for highly effective K-12 principals. The focus of the study was devoted to seven areas of principal development and the roles and responsibilities deemed to be vital for effective school leaders. These seven focal areas included managing the organization for results, managing the personnel, possessing and utilizing technical knowledge, maintaining the

importance of creating leaders, influencing norms and values of the campus, managing quality classroom instruction, and fostering a collaborative, leader-friendly school culture. These seven categories for leadership development are comprehensive and force the principal to focus on the entire organization.

Tucker and Coddling (2002) agreed with Hess and Kelly and suggested that preparation of the principal should stress the principal's role as the driver for results and highlight the crucial role of data in the drive for results, from the careful setting of targets to the collection, display, and analysis of implementation and outcome data to the use of data for setting goals, monitoring progress, allocating and reallocating resources, and managing the school program.

Coble (2005) described effective leaders as perpetual learners. Principals learn from other leaders, read current research breakthroughs, and routinely participate in conferences and networking opportunities. Coble claims that the developmental process for the principal has been a series of job-embedded experiences that span the entire career for school leaders. Wegenke (2000) agreed with Coble and explained that principals need ongoing professional development, since maintaining a positive school environment requires new knowledge and skills. He described principals who improved their performance as a result of acquired new knowledge and skills through training had a positive effect on the school environment.

Portin, Alejano, Knapp, and Marzolf (2006) identified that principals need to understand new role conceptions related to student learning. In conjunction with the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy from the University of Washington, the above authors found these professional practices included networks, mentors/coaches,

and leadership assessment systems. To summarize the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy and above authors, Gray and Bishop (2009) reported there is

No comparable substitute for the learning that comes as a result of acting in the role of the leader, contending with the authentic situations and real world consequences that can be garnered from a school-based field experience, practicum, or internship. (p. 29)

Challenges and Frustrations of High School Principals

The literature studied relating to challenges and frustrations of high school principals began with understanding that public high schools have changed dramatically over recent decades. Fiorentino (2008) compared today's high school principals to CEO's or university presidents in a conversation with high school principals. Zepeda (2003) thought that the keys to producing successful principals included a strong preparation program with routine interactions with other school leaders. Zepeda believed restructuring educational leadership graduate programs remains critical to future principals. He also described the need for graduate programs to be updated and connected to schools so they can effectively support the development of principal leaders. The list of related challenges and frustrations within the context of the position is long and sometimes crosses the boundary between them. Lyons (1993) conducted studies of the perceptions of beginning public school K-12 principals. The findings indicated that principals were challenged by delegating responsibilities, becoming familiar with the roles of a principal, and understanding school operations. Lyons (1999) later reported K-12 principals' greatest challenges and frustrations were "managing time demands and paperwork" and "dealing with the bureaucracy, insensitive bureaucrats, red tape, politics, legislative demands and regulations" (p. 21). Hale and Moorman (2003) agreed with

Lyons and expanded their list of frustrations to also include declining budgets, changing populations, more extensive accountability mandates, and the ever-expanding list of roles and responsibilities for principals.

Fullan (2001) suggested the four ways in which school leadership is challenging for principals in today's schools. First, changes are deeper and more involved than in previous years. Second, there are a number of dilemmas in deciding what to do. Third, one acts differently in different situations or phases of a process; and finally, advice comes in the form of guidelines for action, not steps to be followed. Portin, Alejano, Knapp, and Marzolf (2006) published a report titled *Redefining Roles, Responsibilities, and Authority of School Leaders* that examined school leaders and their positions. Specifically, the report focused on (a) the use of data and evidence to guide leadership; (b) (re)allocation of resources and creation of incentives to support instructional improvement, roles, responsibilities; (c) authority of school leaders; (d) assessment of leadership performance; (e) improvement of school boards and district governance; and (f) leadership for transforming high schools.

Buchon (2002) identified five frustrations that principals must address on a regular basis, if they expect to be effective school leaders. Time management is the first frustration and involves reviewing administrative support systems created to support staff, students, and programs. Second, principals need to have strong abilities in the areas of instructional leadership and management of systems. Third, principals with extensive classroom teaching experience, those who are routinely visible, and those with advanced degrees have credibility in their schools. Fourth, principals provided support and training opportunities for teachers and can be described as conductors leading the orchestra.

Finally, principals evaluate programs and personnel through visibility, communication methods, and conversations involving curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Buchon also described a viable, outside the box option for the future that involves splitting the position into two positions for effectiveness purposes.

Unlike Buchon, Howard and Mallory (2008) described the 21st century high school principal as someone who maintained a professional network, even though time demands and job overload often interfered with opportunities to network. Buchon shared Howard's belief that time demands and networking are both major challenges and frustrations for principals.

In another study, Whitaker (1995) surveyed and interviewed 46 school principals from Belgium. The principals represented K-12 school settings and the study found emotional exhaustion, depersonalization in the position, and the complexities within their roles as both challenges and frustrations in their jobs. Catano and Stronge (2006) concurred with Whitaker and warned that multiple leadership and management theories were difficult for a principal to maintain when leading schools. They stated, "school principals will likely experience role conflict and role expectation as they work to fulfill the perceptions of what they are expected to accomplish, and how" (p. 224). Catano and Stronge corroborated Whitaker's study and pointed to universal concerns regarding the principalship and its complex and challenging roles.

Buchon (2002) described the major issues that may cause school leaders to leave the principalship as increased demands, lack of role clarity, lack of recognition, and decreasing autonomy. Principals faced increased demands that included accountability pressures, increased paperwork, time-management issues, and tensions related to

restructuring and reform. Principals who lack role clarity become frustrated with the growing number of roles and responsibilities in their positions. Principals who lack recognition from all stakeholders perceived a need for more intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and recognition. Finally, principals faced decreased autonomy and often felt powerless and vulnerable. Clearly, high school principals face daily challenges and frustrations within their schools and outside the constraints of the building. The challenges and frustrations are not the high school; they are based on challenges and frustrations presented by the high school. Ultimately, the high school principal is charged with leading the school community and developing people to meet their highest potential.

Possible Future of the Principal Position

Eckman (2007) found a viable option for school districts to consider regarding the principalship. She proposed co-principals to attract more interest in principalships and to create support systems to better handle the expanding complexities of the position that only one individual maintains at the majority of public high schools in the United States. Eckman (2007) discovered approximately 170 individuals serving as co-principals in public and private schools across the United States. There are two major co-principal models for consideration. The first is being used in approximately 90% of the schools, where two principals concurrently work in the building and share all responsibilities. The second exists in approximately 10% of the schools: a part-time or job-sharing model with two principals. Eckman (2007) researched the increasing complexity and expanding workload demands that the principal faces and concluded that co-principalships could provide viable options for school district to consider in today's schools.

Howard and Mallory (2008) conducted a study titled “Perceptions of Isolation Among High School Principals” which identified several themes that challenged and frustrated high school principals. The most pervasive reaction of principals was the overwhelming amount of time required to do the job. Many principals worked 60 to 90 hours per week performing duties and responsibilities as high school principals. Howard and Mallory (2008) found one principal that said, “The number of hours I work depends on the season. I used to never think much about that, but after a while, I started to keep an account of it, just to see for myself. There have been weeks when I spent more than 90 hours at school. I’d say the average week is between 60 and 70 hours . . . then there are so many night things. It is your life. If you want to be a high school principal, you do not have too much of a life otherwise.” (p. 14)

Summary

This chapter examined research and literature addressing the leadership positions of principals. Research and studies specific to the high school level were limited. As a result, only a few studies specifically addressed the high school level. Literature relating to principal leadership was discussed as well as the roles of the high school principal. Professional development activities and the high school principal were emphasized, and finally, the challenges and frustrations of the principalship were reviewed.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, professional development experiences that impacted their careers, and the challenges and frustrations the principals faced when enacting their roles as high school leaders. The parts of this chapter include the study design, population and participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, ethical considerations, data analysis procedures, description of the external validators, and the researcher's reflections.

Study Design

The qualitative research design used was exploratory in nature. The primary method of data collection was interviews, which were developed to address high school principal roles, professional development, and the challenges and frustrations they faced. Creswell (1994) suggested this method of research would assist the reader to understand the participants' patterns, relationships, interpretations, attitudes, and behaviors. According to Seidman (1998), the goal of the interview process is to have each participant understand and make meaning of his or her experiences. The principals in this study were able to reflect on their personal situations as school leaders. Seidman also discussed the importance for the interviewer to allow participants time to develop their thoughts without interruption. Seidman recommended three interviews with each

participant, followed by transcription of the data collected. He also recommended the use of member checks and review panels.

Population and Participant Selection

According to NASSP (2001) data from 1999, the United States had approximately 37,000 secondary schools in the private and public sectors. Since the secondary school could consist of grades 6-12, 6-8, or 6-9, the actual number of schools specific to the high school level was unavailable.

Four counties within one southeastern state were selected for this study. The counties were chosen because they shared similarities such as the number of high schools, sizes of the schools, and the district student membership. They all were categorized as large urban school districts. The average number of schools in the four participating counties of this study was 60 which included the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The average number of high schools in these counties was nine. The information addressing each district is presented in Table 2.

The participant sample consisted of eight current high school principals, two from each school district. Principals were chosen to participate in the study by their Superintendent. Each Superintendent was asked to provide the names of two high school principals. They were not asked to identify any criteria they used for selecting the principals. Four men and four women were identified. All of the individuals who were identified participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 40 to 65 years of age. Seven participants were white and one was African American. Experience levels as high school principals ranged from 3 to 16 years and all participants held master's degrees. The information related to principal characteristics is presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Student Population and the Number of High Schools to Total Number of Schools for Selected School Districts

District	<i>n</i>		
	Student Population	High Schools	Schools in District
D1	67,000	12	70
D2	65,500	10	62
D3	47,000	7	44
D4	63,000	14	67

Source: Personal Communication with Four Districts (2009)

The researcher initially contacted the superintendents of the four selected counties through a letter. See Appendix E for a copy of the letter to the Superintendents. After confirming their agreement for their school district to participate in the study, each of the superintendents was asked to recommend two principals for the study. One of the potential issues with this form of selection and participation could be biased responses. Superintendents chose the principal participants solely based on their willingness to participate in the study. All eight principals volunteered to participate without reservation.

Instrumentation

Seidman (1998) recommended an interview model that involved conducting a series of three separate interviews with each participant. An interview approach was used to solicit participants' thoughts on key aspects of the high school principal's role in a context-specific setting.

Table 3

Demographic Information on Principal Participants by Gender, Race, and Experience

Principal #	Gender	Race	Years as High School Principal
P1	Female	White	4
P2	Female	White	3
P3	Female	Black	16
P4	Female	White	9
P5	Male	White	7
P6	Male	White	10
P7	Male	White	10
P8	Male	White	7

Source: First Interviews (2006)

The research questions are presented with the corresponding interview questions; these provided the researcher with the necessary qualitative data to address the research questions. The interviews followed a predetermined schedule of questions first approved by the supervising doctoral committee and then by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Each of the three interview protocols was drafted and edited with the assistance of the doctoral committee during meetings prior to the start of each round of interviews.

The first interview protocol was autobiographical and focused on each principal's leadership experiences. See Appendix F for a copy of the first interview questions, Interview Protocol 1. The researcher elicited experiences from the participants to personalize the data collected. See Appendix G for a copy of the second interview

questions, Interview Protocol 2. The second interview concentrated on the participants' past and present experiences. The participants were also asked about their leadership style and how others may have impacted their development. The second interview was focused on leadership, support systems, and roles of the principals.

The third interview sought to identify the current challenges and frustrations for the high school principal. See Appendix H for a copy of the third interview questions, Interview Protocol 3. Seidman encouraged interviewees to make meaning of their experiences during interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was secured to complete the study. The researcher completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course. An application for the IRB Review of Research Involving the Use of Human Subjects was completed. Permission to interview the eight high school principals from the southeastern state was sought through a mailed invitation letter followed by a phone call to their respective school offices. Participants completed and signed the IRB consent forms and personally returned them to the researcher at each of the scheduled first interviews.

Permission was also sought to record the interviews and to quote the responses wherever necessary in the study. The data were collected and reported in a manner that would not reveal the identity of the participants. The interviews focused on the perceptions of the high school principals related to staff development experiences, roles, challenges, and frustrations connected to their position. The literature and research reviewed for this study did not distinguish between roles, professional development, or challenges and/or

frustrations for high school or elementary school principals. The literature and research also did not differentiate between high-risk populations versus low-risk population schools, or between small versus large schools or school districts.

Data Collection

Once the high school principals committed to participate in the study, the researcher began collecting archival data. Some of the documents included school district enrollment and demographic data, district and school webpage information, and individual principal information. These documents were collected via the Internet and human resource departments from the school districts.

The researcher sent each potential participant a packet that included an introductory letter. See Appendix I for a copy of the welcome letter to the principals. The required IRB study forms and the initial interview protocol questions were also included. This allowed the participant an opportunity to review the study and questions before the actual scheduled interview. The advance preview created an opportunity for in-depth dialogue and discussion with various topics within the interview protocol during the actual interviews. The introductory letter included an outline and description of the study, as recommended by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003). The researcher traveled to each participant's school to complete the interview schedule at predetermined dates and times. See Table 4 for the schedule of the three interviews.

Each interview followed a prescribed protocol, but further inquiry was often necessary, depending on the participants' responses to the study questions. Each

Table 4

Dates and Times of Interviews For Each Principal

Prin #	First Interview Date/Time	Second Interview Date/Time	Third Interview Date/Time
P1	9/22 4:30-5:00	6/16 8:30-9:35	7/18 4:00-4:30
P2	9/14 3:30-3:55	6/16 11:00-12:10	7/24 3:30-4:20
P3	10/28 10:00-10:30	6/13 10:30-11:20	7/31 8:30-9:10
P4	10/28 1:00-1:35	6/13 1:30-2:35	7/31 11:30-12:10
P5	10/29 9:00-9:25	6/8 2:30-3:20	7/20 11:00-11:35
P6	10/29 12:30-1:00	6/8 11:30-12:35	7/20 2:00-2:50
P7	10/21 1:00-1:25	6/10 1:30-2:25	7/24 9:00-9:45
P8	10/21 10:30-10:55	6/10 9:30-10:20	7/24 12:30-1:10

participant had the opportunity to review individual transcription data results following each interview via email or fax. The researcher also needed to contact some participants following the transcription of each interview to clarify specific data after review and analysis. This was achieved through both phone calls and email communications. The use of follow-up questions provided richer, in-depth answers to the questions.

These questions explored newly discovered details and focused on specific themes revealed in the second interview. As with the initial interviews, the second and third interviews were scheduled with each participant at their school sites. The final interview with each principal helped enhance validity, or credibility, of transcription data from each participant. Participants were provided an opportunity to add or delete information from the interview transcripts. In addition, they helped clarify any data not understood.

The eight high school principals had the opportunity to relate lived stories in their respective positions. The interview data attempted to address perceptions of the roles, challenges, and complexities of the high school principal leader. Following each round of interviews, the data were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. As each participant answered each question, the researcher had several prompts that could be used to continue the dialogue depending on the participant's response which included, "Could you please describe an example" or, "Were there any other examples that you could give me?"

Data Analysis Procedures

The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim in their entirety by the researcher. The organization of transcription data and alignment to the research questions allowed the researcher to analyze the data in its entirety and arrive at study themes.

Psathas (1995) contended the key reason for obtaining recordings of all interviews in their entirety is that the interviews could be repeatedly replayed and transcribed as necessary.

Dexter (1970) explained that tape recorded interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to analyze interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Consequently, hearing the participant's tone of speech, slowly transcribing the data, and analyzing the results assisted the researcher in developing themes for the study. The transcription of each participant's three interviews took between 10 and 11 hours. Table 5 depicts the number of transcript pages for each principal in the study.

As Seidman (1998) suggested, individual responses from the transcriptions should be marked, grouped, categorized, and studied for thematic connections. Seidman (1998)

Table 5

Number of Pages Per Interview for Each Principal

Principal	<i>n</i>			
	Interview 1 Pages *	Interview 2 Pages *	Interview 3 Pages *	Total Pages*
P1	2	12	6	20
P2	2	14	7	23
P3	3	14	7	24
P4	2	10	6	18
P5	2	9	6	17
P6	2	11	9	22
P7	2	8	7	17
P8	2	13	9	24

Note. *Pages represent total number of pages represent all questions transcribed from interviews; not actual questions used in study.

claimed “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 3). As recommended by Meloy (2002), transcripts were coded, organized, and analyzed with the idea that themes would emerge. Merriam (2006) defined a theme as a subject or topic of discourse. It has a specific and distinctive quality, characteristic, or concern. As the researcher developed themes, two external validators analyzed the data and arrived at specific study themes. The data findings from this study could be shared with educational leaders at the local, state, and federal levels to assist in the development of an updated study focused on the understudied high school principalship.

Summary of Data Analysis Process

The researcher and the initial expert panel (IEP) used a recommended qualitative data analysis process to arrive at the research study themes. Harry, Sturges, and Klingner

(2005) described the process that consisted of five data analysis procedural steps. The five steps were:

1. Data analysis transcript review
2. Theme development
3. Summary of themes across interview questions
4. Theme findings by research question
5. Overall themes in study.

The above procedures were conducted regarding each research question and the following documentation supports the analysis of the research questions in this study. A summary table was created to depict the connection between the theme findings and the literature contained in chapter two. The first qualitative interview protocol instrument included the following questions and statements asked of each principal:

1. I would like to take some time to explain the study and the plan for the three interviews. Do you have any questions for me at this point?
2. Please describe your education background.
3. Please discuss your career history.
4. Why did you choose to pursue a high school principal position?
5. What experiences have you had to prepare you for a high school principal job?

The following three research questions were analyzed and answered. Each of the interview questions was listed below the corresponding research question, along with the approximate starting page (P) and line (L) number where the question found in the transcripts (see Appendices J and K).

RQ 1: What are the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school Leaders?

1. What do you perceive are the major priorities for the high school principal to promote? [L833]
2. What do you perceive are the most important responsibilities for the high school principal? [L746]
3. The job or the role of the high school principal is documented in research as a demanding and complex position. What are your perceptions of your role? [L1457]
4. Do you have a specific strategy for identifying potential principals in your school? Which common characteristics do they possess? [L442]

RQ 2: What professional development experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers?

1. What professional development experiences have impacted you the most during your career? What are your current professional development needs? [L234]
2. What could further enhance your development as a high school principal? [L1344]
3. Does the district have an orientation program? What are its foci? How have you benefitted from the program? [L619]
4. As an experienced principal, what developmental experiences would you recommend to new high school principals? [L1157]

RQ 3: What do high school principals perceive are their greatest challenges and frustrations?

1. What do you perceive interferes with your role as a high school principal? [L118]
2. What do you perceive are the greatest challenges for you as a high school principal? [L925]
3. What do you perceive are the greatest barriers or frustrations for a high school principal? [L1025]

Each principal had the opportunity to review, edit, and adjust transcription data after each of the three interviews. The member check process provided the principals and

the researcher with opportunities to communicate by phone and/or email. The directions were

“What I would like you to do is review each interview question and check to make sure that I have accurately captured the main points (themes) you made in response to the interview questions. If the theme accurately reflects your response to the question, please circle ‘Accurate.’ If the theme is ‘Accurate’ and you want to elaborate, please feel free to do so by typing in additional responses. If you would like to add new responses to the interview question not part of your original responses, please feel free to do so. For some of the interview questions, there were no responses to the question. If you could respond to these questions, I will have more complete data to answer my research questions.” (See Appendix L for the principal member check follow up directions and sample responses.)

The letter sent to each participant in the form of an email attachment is included in Appendix M. The cover letter provided the rationale for the member check and Appendix L contained the working document for each participant to complete as the member check. Five of the eight principals provided additional information on the form.

Data Analysis Initial and Verification Expert Panels

The initial expert panel chosen for this phase of the study had doctoral degrees from an accredited university. See Appendix N for the composition and qualifications of the Initial Expert Panel Members. One member completed a doctorate in Research and Measurement and the other in Educational Policy.

The researcher scheduled independent meetings with each expert to familiarize him or her with the instructions, expectations, and procedures for their independent analysis of

the transcription data. These experts were briefed on the purpose of the research study, the process and method the researcher used for data collection, and the procedures used to analyze the data and identify study themes. The transcripts were first organized based on the interview questions. The interview questions were then connected to the aligned research questions, respectively. The two members of the initial expert panel reviewed the complete transcription data individually to assist the researcher in a validity check of the recurring themes revealed in the data by the researcher. Both made multiple attempts to elicit themes based on discussions with the researcher regarding reporting procedures. There was ample time for dialogue and discussion during the process and follow-up conversations took place via phone, email and in-person after the completion of the task by the initial expert panel. See Appendix O for a copy of the Themes Review Form.

The next step was the development of the verification expert panel (VEP). The two members of the verification expert panel reviewed the data transcripts and completed the data tables for each interview question. The composition and qualifications of the verification expert panel can be found in Appendix N. One expert was a university professor and the other is a doctoral student and a school-based administrator.

Reflections of the Researcher

As a current high school principal, a former middle school principal, and a former assistant principal at both the middle and high school levels, the researcher was interested in learning about the perceptions of current high school principals. Specifically he was interested in their perceived roles, the types of professional development that impacted their careers, and the challenges and frustrations they face when enacting their roles as high

school leaders. The research findings addressing the various complex roles of high school principals and the numerous challenges they face could be valuable information for aspiring and current principals.

The role of the school principal has evolved into a demanding and complex job, requiring longer hours and diversified skills to meet additional challenges presented by a changing society (Murphy, 2002). Fullan (2001) concurred and stated, “Principals should have no problem claiming their fair share of frustration, since the role of the principal has in fact become dramatically more complex, overloaded, and unclear” (p. 137).

All principals face the challenge of role complexities at varying degrees, depending on the social system of the school. As society increasingly demands and expects more from principals, it is worthwhile to consistently review the high school principal’s complex roles. More role responsibilities and increased expectations have challenged and impacted today’s high school principals. The principals are expected to balance the intricate position of school manager with role expectations of being the instructional leader of the school.

One of these reasons for utilizing interviews was to interact or speak directly to the principals. Many principals, when receiving surveys, often pass them to assistant principals or department chairpersons to complete and return. Using an interview model prevents this from occurring and personalizes the process for both the participants and the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 3 included the problem, purpose, research questions, study design, participants, instruments, ethical considerations, data analysis procedures, description of

the external evaluators, and the researcher's reflections on the study. Although the interview process was time consuming, it enabled the researcher to answer the research questions. This study's goal was to provide qualitative data that would help others understand the high school principal's roles and challenges in today's world.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, the professional development experiences that most impacted their careers, and challenges and frustrations principals face when enacting their roles as high school leaders. Chapter 4 includes the results of the study, focusing on the data derived from three interviews conducted with each of the eight high school principals. Included in this chapter are the transcription data, themes, findings for each research question, and the researcher's observations.

High School Principal Interviews

The researcher conducted three interviews with each of the eight participating high school principals. Each interview followed a prescribed protocol. The researcher used an interview approach to solicit participants' perceptions of key aspects of high school principals' roles in a context-specific setting. The interview data were used to address the high school principals' perceptions of their roles and challenges. The interview schedules were developed after extensive research was conducted in the areas of principal leadership, roles of the high school principal, professional development and high school principal, and the challenges and frustrations of the high school principal.

The researcher developed each interview question to gain an overall sense of the roles and challenges of high school principals. During each interview round, the data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed. Interview one (see Appendix E) was based on professional education and leadership experiences; the second interview (see Appendix F) focused on current roles and the complexities of these roles. The third interview (see Appendix G) encouraged the participants to answer follow-up questions about their past and present experiences. During the third interview, the researcher asked participants to provide viewpoints of a high school principal's working life and current roles, along with the challenges and frustrations within these roles. The researcher elicited detailed experiences from the participants to enhance the data collected. Each participant was assigned a code with a number (P1 to P8) to maintain confidentiality.

Education background and career history. Based on responses to interviews and initial characteristics, all principals had master's degrees in Educational Leadership and/or Educational Supervision. All principals started their career as teachers and progressed to assistant principal positions at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Some were elementary or middle school principals prior to promotion to high school principal positions. Principal 3 responded

I was an assistant principal at a middle school, and before that, I was a math teacher at a few other schools. Prior to coming here, I was the principal at the feeder middle school for us. So, it's a big change and adjustment from middle school to high school. (P3)

As a group, they averaged 25+ years in education and 5 of the 8 principals had 30 or more years of experience. All of the high schools in the study had more than 1500 students.

There were some unique findings from the transcripts regarding the principals in the study. Principal 5 had been a new principal six different times at different schools and at the elementary, middle, and high school level. He stated

I have been a teacher and a principal at all three levels. I have been a new principal six times in my career. I have 30 years in education and this job is by far the toughest yet. (P5)

By contrast, three of the principals had only been principals at their current high school.

Two of the principals had been head football or basketball coaches. Several principals in the study described how important their leadership was for supporting students. Principal 1 explained

I became a principal because I wanted to help students realize their potential and see what success in school can do for them. (P1)

Principal 2 expanded Principal 1's statement and responded

I became a high school principal because I wanted to help kids build the brightest possible future for them. I am where I am because people invested their time in my development, and I wanted to do the same for kids. I know that, as a teacher, I can impact 150 students, but as a principal, here I can impact 3,600 students. (P2)

Principal 8 believed

Really, why I got into education was to hopefully make a difference. I want to make things better for them because I believe public education is the great equalizer. It gives people opportunities, and if they take advantage of it, no matter where they come from, what background, what circumstance, it can improve their life. (P8)

See Table 6 for the educational characteristics of each principal.

Perceptions of high school principals regarding their role. Research Question 1 asked about the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school leaders.

Table 6

Educational Characteristics by Principal

Principal	Undergraduate Major	Graduate Major	Years of Teaching Experience	Years of Administration Experience
P1	Science 6-12	Ed. Leadership/ Supervision	12	6 – Assistant Principal 4 - Principal
P2	Social Studies 6-12	Ed. Leadership	9	5 - Assistant Principal 3 - Principal
P3	Math 6-12	Ed. Leadership	8	6 - Assistant Principal 16 - Principal
P4	Biology and Chemistry 6-12	Ed. Leadership	17	7 - Assistant Principal 9 - Principal
P5	English K-12	Ed. Leadership	12	7 - Assistant Principal 7 - Principal
P6	Social Science 6-12/ Guidance K-12	Ed. Leadership	14	6 - Assistant Principal 10 - Principal
P7	Social Science 6-12	Ed. Leadership	7	7 - Assistant Principal 10 - Principal
P8	Science 6-12/ Physical Education	Ed. Leadership	14	9 - Assistant Principal 7 - Principal

N=8

To address this question, a series of three interview questions were asked of the principals related to major priorities, most important responsibilities, and perceptions of their role. The pertinent information contained in each interview transcription has been extracted for the reader. See Appendix J for the complete transcripts for each principal participant.

Research question 1 summary and themes. After the interview responses were transcribed, the researcher organized the data into themes. The interview questions were aligned with the research questions. The researcher and two expert review panels, the initial expert panel and verification expert panel, combined to identify and validate study themes. The researcher conducted independent, post-analysis meetings with both reviewers in the research panel to discuss and identify themes for the study and any variations to their findings.

The researcher and the expert panels identified four major themes. The four theme categories were: safe learning environment; quality teachers and quality instruction; high accountability expectations for all and mandates; and leadership. The researcher and initial panels each completed the following steps to arrive at their respective themes:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified which interview questions were related to each research question;
3. Identified themes and grouped comment statements; and,
4. Tabulated statements that shared a common theme (researcher); verified commonalities/differences between individuals (panel members).

See Appendix P for instructions to the initial expert panel for major themes, etc.

Based on findings/results of the initial expert panel members, the verification expert panel was tasked to identify specific statements related to the previously identified themes.

The following steps were completed:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified specific samples of verbiage for each theme contained within each interview question transcript; and,
3. Identified page and line numbers for relevant themes.

See Appendix P for instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes, etc.

The high school principals from this study provided many specific examples regarding their perceptions of their roles as school leaders. Themes became evident as the researcher and the panels found multiple statements and multiple participants connected to a specific role. Additional data statements that were provided through member checks were designated with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the data statement. The researcher then listed roles and provided the specific examples categorized by each principal participant connected to the research question.

Validation of research theme findings. The researcher analyzed the transcription data and categorized the data into one of four categories. The four theme categories were: safe learning environment, quality teachers and quality instruction, high accountability expectations for all and mandates, and leadership. These four categories summarized the researcher's analysis of the roles of the principal described by the eight principals from the study. The two expert review panels shared many of the same theme findings from the transcripts.

Safe learning environment. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed that providing a safe campus was one of the most important roles they have as school leaders. Six principals cited the safety of students and staff as a primary role. Some of the principal statements included providing and

ensuring a safe learning environment for everyone (P7), ensuring student safety on the campus (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6), and providing a safe, secure environment that is professional, student-centered, and free from chaos (P7). Principal 7 shared

Provide the most effective, world-class education he or she can provide in an environment that is safe and secure. (P7)

Principals 2 and 6 stated

Ensuring student safety has become a more important responsibility for the high school principal. (P2)

The most important job for a high school principal is to ensure the safety and security of staff and students. (P6)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher based on the data collected. External evaluator #1 found seven principals that cited the safety of students and staff as a primary role. External evaluator #2 found eight principals mentioned school safety during the interview questions for this research question.

Principal 1 explained

Ensure the safety of the staff and students everyday with a safe learning environment. (P1)

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P for the instructions.

Quality teachers and quality instruction. All eight high school principals formally identified hiring and retaining quality teachers and maintaining quality instruction as a primary role for them as school leaders.

Principal 1 framed this theme by stating

Ensuring that quality instruction is taking place throughout the building. If there is a qualified teacher in every classroom and every teacher is teaching every day, every period, students should be learning . . . conducting regular walkthroughs of classrooms with feedback and support to the teachers. (P1)

The principals who discussed this role focused on providing effective, world-class resources and training to teachers (P7), model collaboration, coaching, sharing among teachers, and reflective practice (P2, P3, P4), and creating challenging learning environments for all students (P6, P7). Principals 2 and 3 discussed

Get a staff into a culture of teaching with an open practice philosophy. It's reflective practice, and it's centered on the one piece. (P2)

*Constant struggle to keep a balance. I calendar an hour or two for instruction, for classrooms, for lunch time so I can connect to students and support the teachers. I spend a lot of time with teachers and with the APs to create programs and student schedules that focus on quality teaching and quality learning. (P3)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. Many principals cited quality instruction and quality training for teachers and administrators. They also described the importance for principals to expect quality teaching and exemplary classrooms throughout the school. Many of them described increased expectations for all as an indicator for potential success. Only Principal's 1 and 4 did not specifically discuss quality classrooms and quality teaching.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

High accountability expectations for all and mandates. Three of the eight high school principals formally identified high accountability expectations for all as a primary role for them as school leaders. For example, principal 6 discussed this role and emphasized the increased demands being placed on administrators, teachers, staff members, students, and parents to succeed at high levels. This principal explained

There's more emotional frustration . . . because the buck stops with you. . . . Student achievement stops with you . . . in the age of accountability, it's a very demanding position, it's very complex, and it's very political. . . . The number one priority is increasing the graduation rate . . . closing the achievement gap, which is a nationwide issue. (P6)

Specifically, principals (P1, P5) discussed how some of the measures have been good for education, while some measures remain difficult to achieve, or maintain.

Principal 5 shared

We started incorporating FCAT [Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test] chats with all of our students. My seven assistants meet with about 400 students in small, seminar groups of 30 to 40 students to relay the messages for the year and to stress the importance of academics and the FCAT. In this era of accountability, certainly student achievement has to be the number one priority. (P5)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. Five and three high school principals from this study described the importance for principals to hold everyone accountable for student and school success.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Leadership. Seven of the eight high school principals, including Principals 2, 7, and 8 formally identified forms of leadership as an important role as school leaders.

Principal 2 expounded

I didn't realize how much you lose your life until I became a high school principal . . . not . . . the healthiest lifestyle in the world. If you truly are in it to see your school improve and your kids learning . . . it's a 15 or 16- hour a day job. We're moving away from the principal as a manager and more towards the principal as the instructional leader. It truly consumes you. (P2)

The principals who responded, including Principals 3 and 4 discussed the constant strain and stress they felt as leaders to get everything done and be the leader for all facets of the school. Principal 3 captured this theme and shared

I also believe that today's high school principal needs to wear a dozen hats. I am an instructional leader, a community spokesmen, a supporter of all principals and future assistant principals, a data leader who evaluates quality instruction and programs, a key figure in the climate and culture of the school, a disciplinarian, and a social worker to everyone. (P3)

Principal 4 described the struggle of balance and responded

The high school principal position can be equated to a 1,000-piece puzzle. All 1,000 are necessary and important to complete the puzzle successfully. The high school principal position has become this monster of a job! It is a daily struggle to prioritize and get to what's important. There seems to be this culture that the principal is the only person who can make big decisions. (P4)

Principals 5 and 6 discussed communication and visibility in the community as important to school success. They also described public relations as "marketing" their school to benefit everyone within the community. Principal 8 shared

I like to say that a high school principal has 1,000 people who want 1 minute of your time. . . I feel like a cop, a doctor, a handyman, a teacher, a coach, a counselor or psychologist, an investigator, a play director, etc. (P8)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 found the importance for principals to be the leader on the campus for all programs and initiatives as a major theme in the study. External evaluator #1 found all eight principals cited examples, whereas external evaluator #2 found six principals who cited examples. Principals had a slightly different interpretation of what the principal should be focusing on as the school leader but, overall, they cited specific examples of the importance. The examples varied from prior leadership experiences (P4), to teaching or administrative work at various school levels (P5), to working with different populations of students (P3).

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Professional development experiences that have impacted high school principals

Research Question 2 asked about the most important professional development experiences that have impacted high school principals. To address this question, a series of three related interview questions were asked of the principals. The pertinent information contained in each interview transcription has been extracted for the reader.

Research question 2 summary and themes. After the interview responses were transcribed as before, the researcher organized the data into themes. The interview questions were aligned to the research questions. The researcher and two expert review panels, the research panel and verification panel, combined to identify and validate study themes. The researcher conducted independent, post-analysis meetings with both

reviewers in the research panel to discuss and identify agreeable themes for the study and any variations to their findings. The researcher and the expert panels identified three major themes. The three theme categories were: professional development experiences (formal/informal), training, and mentoring (formal/informal). The researcher and initial panel each completed the following steps to arrive at their respective themes:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified which interview questions were related to each research question;
3. Identified themes and grouped comment statements; and,
4. Tabulated statements that shared a common theme (researcher); verified commonalities/differences between individuals (panel members).

Instructions to the initial expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

Based on findings/results of the initial expert panel members, the verification expert panel was tasked to identify specific statements related to the previously identified themes.

The following steps were completed:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified specific samples of verbiage for each theme contained within each interview question transcript; and,
3. Identified page and line numbers for relevant themes.

Instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

As with the first interview protocol, the high school principals from this study provided many specific examples regarding their perceptions of the professional development experiences that had impact on them as school leaders. Themes became evident as the researcher and the panels found multiple statements and multiple participants connected to a professional development experience. Additional data statements that were provided through member checks were designated with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the data statement. The researcher then listed roles and provided the specific examples

categorized by each principal participant connected to the research question.

Validation of research theme findings. The researcher analyzed the transcription data and categorized the data into one of three categories. The three theme categories were: professional development experiences (formal/informal), training, and mentoring (formal/informal). These three categories summarized the researcher's analysis of the professional development experiences described by the eight principals from the study. The two expert review panels shared many of the same theme findings from the transcripts and each theme is discussed below.

Professional development experiences (Formal). Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed that formal professional development experiences were an integral part of their success as school leaders. The researcher-identified formal experiences included structured programs and trainings that often reoccurred with follow up. These opportunities were both within, and outside the school district. Principals are required to attain a master's degree and/or certification graduate courses to earn state certification. Oftentimes, formal professional development experiences were required for employment. Attendance and/or obtaining credits were associated with formal training. Conferences and seminars were sought or required by the learner to improve job effectiveness. For example, Principal 1 participated in a research group and attended interaction management and leading change training. The principal explained

My participation in the Panasonic research group [school leaders visiting other states to learn and view best practices] was a great experience. . . . Going to the conferences that are provided here in the state is important. I take courses at the local university that provide research-based models and plans. (P1)

Another principal (P2) visited other states and schools and shared

I participated in the Leadership Associate Program (LAP) with the construct of “all means all.” Hearing what they had done in State A, . . . State B, . . . State C, . . . State D, How they dealt with poor children and African American children and Hispanic and IEP children. (P2)

Principal 5 is a trainer for national conferences and workshops in the areas of literacy and leadership. Principal 8 attended a national training and Principal 3 *Understanding by Design* [national training program on school reform] for leadership development. Principal 3 emphasized the importance of participating in CRISS, facilitative leadership, and technology trainings. Principal 3 also discussed technology training as important professional development for development. Principal 3 described

First of all, I think understanding by design probably had the biggest personal impact on me as a principal. WG [National speaker on school reform] was the expert who trained our district. . . . It’s backward design, looking at your data. (P3)

Finally, Principals 6 and 7 discussed their advanced degree experiences and orientation programs as crucial programs for their development and preparation for principal positions.

Principal 6 explained

*Orientation program provided me the big picture of running a school. A recent veteran high school assistant principal with extensive and diverse experiences and expertise has been working closely with me on some school and district projects. (P6)

Principal 7 stated

The professional development that has probably affected me the most in my career has been my master’s degree experience. I think the thing I need the most is the ability to evaluate effective programs. . . . specifically, reading programs. (P7)

Professional development experiences (Informal). The researcher identified informal professional development experiences that were usually associated within a

specific affiliation or for a specific purpose for the development of the individual. These experiences are not usually formally acknowledged and were often dependent on the individual's specific situation or interests. For example, Principal 3 had the opportunity to work with both high and low socioeconomic populations. Principal 3 described

Definitely working with different populations. I started out my career at higher socio-economic schools, and now I'm at lower socio-economic schools. And I love working at the lower SES schools. I think the more experiences you have, the better. I think working under a variety of principals' leadership styles helps. You have to actively seek out new tasks and projects to keep learning. It's much easier to delegate to my assistant principals when I have lived in their shoes. (P3)

Another principal (P4) joined a cadre of principals to keep current on research and trends. Principal 5 emphasized mentors, along with networking opportunities with current principals. Finally, Principals 3 and 7 cited the master's degree and how the experience taught them to have a passion for lifelong learning, how to decipher research and data, and what to pay attention to in school. One expounded

I need help with quick trainings with data and analysis. I need to be able to bring data to the teacher, so they can be successful and help student achievement levels. It would be the time to expand myself educationally and professionally. . . . I've had the good fortune of having a couple of really good principals in our own district that I constantly communicate with, and it's a matter of finding people that are being open with each other. (P7)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. Seven of the eight principals discussed training, some very specific, to their development as school leaders. Principal 1 mentioned participation in college courses to stay updated.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel.

There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Networks and examples. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed sustainable networks were very important to their success as school leaders. Oftentimes, these are formed through contacts at the district, state and national levels as Principal 1 stated. These networks were viewed as assisting principals in their development as school leaders. Principals 4, 5, and 7 described the importance of attending conferences, trainings, and meetings to create structured opportunities for principals to network and share ideas. Principal 8 captured networking by stating that he joined a small principal group that meets once a month for dinner to share what's happening. "We support one another and give each other advice. It's been great!"

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals in the study described networking as an integral piece of their principal development. Principals described forms of networking such as working with other principals in meetings to share ideas (P1), collaboration and communication on a regular basis with a couple of principals or community members (P3), and principals that attended conferences had effective plans and shared ideas (P8).

Principal 1 expounded

Meet with the people that run your building like your plant manager, your bookkeeper, your office team, your cafeteria manager, your assistant plant manager, and the assistant cafeteria manager when you start. Make sure those people know that you appreciate all that they do and keep those people very satisfied with their jobs. They are your workhorses, and they do everything you need them to do. (P1)

Principal 3 explained

I like to bring outside observers to this campus frequently. We're lucky to have a university so close, and the professors will do it. . . . They conduct some walkthroughs and conduct a campus critique on their own. We then will do the same exact walkthroughs and campus walk together. . . . We discuss the differences and similarities we both found. (P3)

Principal 8 discussed

This past summer, for example, I was at a [conference], and I was in a little meeting afterwards. The high school principal from a nearby high school was the topic of the conversation. If you know anything about the school, the principal better be one of the toughest, meanest, gutsiest leaders because it is a tough, tough high school. They've been an F school for several years, and I believe that they have a new principal that's only been there about a year—and they went from an F to a C. I had to meet this principal. When I saw her, I said to her, you must be a magician for you to have accomplished that in such a short period of time. She said, "We check lesson plans every Thursday. . . . So, now they're making sure they're covering the standards and the benchmarks. Now that's accountability. (P8)

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Formal and informal mentoring examples. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed mentoring was very important to their success as school leaders. Formal mentoring is usually associated with a prescribed program with assigned personnel designated to assist principals in their development as school leaders. Principal 2 discussed that her experience lacked a mentor principal but that the district now utilizes mentors for developing principals. Principal 2 believed

The opportunity to have a mentor who would continue to work with them after they've been selected as a principal, so that could be a safe person to whom they can run ideas by and to whom they can vent about problems or struggles because there's an awful lot that happens in schools, and you become more isolated the further up the chain you progress. . . . A peer mentor, whether it is someone who is assigned from outside of this district or someone within the district, is crucial. (P2)

Principals in the study discussed both mentoring that they received as well as their experiences mentoring others. An example is Principal 3, who described that mentors visited the school regularly to conduct walkthroughs of the facility and the classrooms both solo and together with them. The result was useful dialogue to grow as a school leader. Another principal (P6) discussed that principals are assigned a mentor principal and there is a cadre of retired superintendents and principals to work with and mentor principals.

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals in the study described mentoring as an integral part of their principal development. Mentoring can be both formal and informal. People in these support systems included superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, fellow principals, district staff, professors, community partners, family, friends and nationally networked colleagues. Mentors also visit schools to conduct walkthroughs and complete site analysis reviews both solo, and with other principals. Mentors provide leaders with experience-based advice that they can apply in their positions. All of the principals except Principal 5 discussed benefits of mentoring in their careers.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Perceptions of high school principals regarding challenges and frustrations

Research Question 3 asked about the perceptions of high school principals regarding their greatest challenges and frustrations. To address this question, a series of three interview questions were asked of the principals related to interferences within their role, greatest challenges, and greatest frustrations in the position. The pertinent information contained in each interview transcription has been extracted for the reader. See Appendix J for the complete transcriptions of each principal participant.

Research question 3a summary and themes. After the interview responses were transcribed as before, the researcher organized the data into themes. The interview questions were aligned to the research questions. The researcher and two expert review panels, the research panel and verification panel, combined to identify and validate study themes. The researcher conducted independent, post-analysis meetings with both reviewers in the research panel to discuss and identify agreeable themes for the study and any variations to their findings. To address this question, the researcher chose to divide the research question into two parts. The first part focused on the challenges of the high school principal position and the second part the frustrations. A series of three interview questions were asked of the principals related to the challenges and frustrations of the

position.

The researcher and the expert panels identified three major themes. The three theme categories were: balancing the instructional leader with the managerial leader, legislative mandates and accountability and time. The researcher and initial panels each completed the following steps to arrive at their respective themes:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified which interview questions were related to each research question;
3. Identified themes and grouped comment statements; and,
4. Tabulated statements that shared a common theme (researcher); verified commonalities/differences between individuals (panel members).

Instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

Based on findings/results of the initial expert panel members, the verification expert panel was tasked to identify specific statements related to the previously identified themes. The following steps were completed:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified specific samples of verbiage for each theme contained within each interview question transcript; and,
3. Identified page and line numbers for relevant themes.

Instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

As previously, the high school principals from this study provided many specific examples regarding their perceptions of the professional development experiences that had impact on them as school leaders. Themes became evident as the researcher and the panels found multiple statements and multiple participants connected to a professional development experience. Additional data statements that were provided through member checks were designated with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the data statement. The researcher then listed roles and provided the specific examples categorized by each

principal participant connected to the research question.

Validation of research theme findings. The researcher analyzed the transcription data and categorized the data into one of three categories. The three theme categories were: balancing the instructional leader with the managerial leader, legislative mandates and accountability, and time. These three categories summarized the researcher's analysis of the challenges high school principals faced in their positions. The two expert review panels shared many of the same theme findings from the transcripts and each theme is discussed below. The discussion with both the initial expert panel and verification panel assisted the researcher to surmise that although the term frustration has distinct operational definitions, when used in certain contexts, can and oftentimes is, interchangeable with challenges. The principals described their greatest challenges and emphasized those that impacted the school the most. They based their answers on their individual experiences and the expectations of their districts' challenges. The principals described their greatest challenges and emphasized those that impacted the school the most. They based their answers on their individual experiences and the expectations of their districts.

Management and leadership. Based on the data collected, the high school principals from this study believed the balance between instructional leadership and management was very important to their success as school leaders. Many responses discussed how important site-based leadership was to the principal at the high school level. Principal 2 discussed the importance of emphasizing the right combination between management and leadership. This particular principal also noted that focused

conversations and specific actions to model for others was crucial. Principal 2 shared

There's a lot of management that needs to occur. It's completely outside of the role of being an instructional leader. Another . . . lack of preparation to be the principal. The job is immense, and the pieces that are about buses and cafeteria duty and safety drills and parent complaints and not having resources.

*Balancing management and leadership and how much emphasis is placed on each. (P2)

For example, Principal 3 said, "Coping with the growing size of this school is a constant challenge. We have grown by more than 500 students in the last 5 years. On a smaller campus, this is problematic and challenging for us." Principals 5 and 6 emphasized the importance of staff understanding that change is necessary in today's systems. Taking risks to benefit schools and utilizing various data sources is imperative to drive decisions.

Principal 6 expounded

The biggest challenge has been following a legend. I've replaced the principal who was principal here for 24 years, 16 as the principal. So, the challenge has been getting to know the staff, helping them to understand the need for change, helping them to understand the data and how that really should be the driving force for our decisions. . . . State and district mandates; paperwork, email, reports, and meetings dominate my days. (P6)

By contrast, Principal 8 described the district as top-down leadership but did emphasize that the new superintendent was working with outside consultants to change this across the system.

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals in the study described management and leadership as an integral part of their principal development. The principals who responded discussed how important balance was and how site-based leadership was a move in the right direction.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Legislative mandates and accountability. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed the navigation of legislative mandates and accountability expectations was very important to their success as school leaders. Many responses described the importance for principals to effectively manage the growing number of mandates and accountability requirements at the county, state, and federal levels was discussed by Principals 4, 7, 8. They each noted that mandates and staying updated on legislation was important in their positions.

Principal 4 discussed

Politics is a huge one for me. I think trying to be all things to all people. *Time! I can never get half of what I intend to get done each day. (P4)

Principal 4 described

Things possibly beyond your control. . . . Management of a construction project. Administrative minutia. . . . I sign purchase orders, sign athletic contracts, and deal with the volumes of mail that you get each day. (P4)

Principal 8 explained

They'll get into following rules and regulations and standards, and sometimes they forget about why we're really here and that it's the students. (P8)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals in the study described effective management of the growing number of mandates and accountability requirements at the

county, state, and federal levels as a reality in today's schools for leaders. Principals 1 and 3 described the political challenges and assumptions that many principals had all of the answers. Principal 1 discussed the changing population, staying updated on teaching techniques, and finding time to participate in professional development as challenging to meet the letter of the law each day. Principals 4 and 7 specifically described academic, reading, and legislative rules as difficult to navigate on a daily basis as an integral part of their principal development. The principals who responded discussed how important balance was and how site-based leadership was a move in the right direction.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Time. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed the management of time was very important to their success as school leaders. Principal 3 emphasized that they needed to control their time to some extent and stated, "Oftentimes, I cannot dictate what my day looks like as the principal. I have to find ways to get to the students and focus on what's the most important thing for me and for this school." Principal 5 concurred with Principal 3 and mentioned that he prioritized his day, and that interruptions to that plan damaged their best use of his available time. Principal 3 believed

Well, I think time. For me, the biggest difference between levels is time and demands. It is humanly not possible to ever finish anything at this high school. It doesn't matter how late I stay, it doesn't matter how much I work on the weekends, the job is so all-encompassing that there's just not enough

time to manage everything at the level that I would like to (P3)

Principal 4 established the importance of a secretary who can be organized and on the same page as the principal. Finally, Principal 7 said, “You can get so caught up in the day-to-day operations of the school that you really have a hard time finding time to expand your own personal and professional growth.”

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals in the study described time management as a challenge and a reality in today’s schools for leaders. The principals who responded discussed the constant strain and stress they felt as leaders to get everything done and be the leader for all facets of the school. The demands and stress continue to expand within the principal position as described by Principals 2, 4, 7, and 8. Principals 3 and 5 discussed the choices they make with their available time and how they manage it all.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Research question 3b summary and themes. After the interview responses were transcribed as before, the researcher organized the data into themes. The interview questions were aligned to the research questions. The researcher and two expert review panels, the research panel and verification panel, combined to identify and validate study themes. The researcher conducted independent, post-analysis meetings with both

reviewers in the research panel to discuss and identify agreeable themes for the study and any variations to their findings. To address this question, the researcher chose to divide the research question into two parts. The first part focused on the challenges of the high school principal position and the second part the frustrations. A series of three interview questions were asked of the principals related to the challenges and frustrations of the position.

The researcher and the expert panels identified two major themes. The two theme categories were: time and mandates. The researcher and initial panel each completed the following steps to arrive at their respective themes:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified which interview questions were related to each research question;
3. Identified themes and grouped comment statements; and,
4. Tabulated statements that shared a common theme (researcher); verified commonalities/differences between individuals (panel members).

Instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

Based on findings/results of the initial expert panel members, the verification expert panel was tasked to identify specific statements related to the previously identified themes. The following steps were completed:

1. Reviewed the transcripts in their entirety;
2. Identified specific samples of verbiage for each theme contained within each interview question transcript; and,
3. Identified page and line numbers for relevant themes.

Instructions to the verification expert panel for major themes are located in Appendix P.

As with previous questions, the high school principals from this study provided many specific examples regarding their perceptions of the professional development experiences that had impact on them as school leaders. Themes became evident as the

researcher and the panels found multiple statements and multiple participants connected to a professional development experience. Additional data statements that were provided through member checks were designated with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the data statement. The researcher then listed roles and provided the specific examples categorized by each principal participant connected to the research question.

Validation of research theme findings. The researcher analyzed the transcription data and categorized the data into two categories. The two theme categories were time and mandates. These two categories summarized the researcher's analysis of the frustrations high school principals faced in their positions. The two expert review panels shared many of the same theme findings from the transcripts and each theme is discussed below. The discussion with both the initial expert panel and verification panel assisted the researcher to surmise that although the term frustration has distinct operational definitions, when used in certain contexts, can and oftentimes is, interchangeable with challenges. The principals described their greatest frustrations and emphasized those that impacted the school the most. They based their answers on their individual experiences and the expectations of their districts.

Time. Principals 1 and 5 described the demands and issues that mount and ultimately fall to their responsibility. Principal 5 believed

Any interference with my schedule damages my best use of time. I should be in classrooms, not meeting with every parent who demands to see me because of a student squabble here, a schedule issue there. . . . *Interference with my schedule and priorities damages my best use of time. Building your team (teachers, administrators, student leaders) over time makes a big difference as a principal but it takes time. (P5)

Principal 2 concurred with Principal 1 and discussed that there is always a crisis for you

to deal with as the principal. Principal 6 discussed

*Time! I can never get half of what I intend to get done each day. *Intensity of the work is sometimes unbearable. The time and energy required to effectively do the job is not enough. Can I have 30 hours in a day? (P6)

Principal 7 discussed the administrative minutiae (purchase orders, contracts, mail, email, etc.) and lack of resources as issues related to time.

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals who responded discussed the high demands and many interruptions as frustrations. Principals 4 and 7 specifically mentioned managing their time effectively and figuring out how to work through the administrative minutiae efficiently. The principals who responded discussed the stress they feel as leaders being pressured to get everything completed and to be faced with many frustrations that most other people do not understand.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Mandates. Based on the data collected, it was apparent that the high school principals from this study believed that mandates impacted their ability to be leaders and created frustrations in their positions. The principals who responded noted lack of funding (P4, P7), lack of consideration at the school level (P3, P8), and unreasonable rules and restrictions (P7, P8) as key frustrations they faced as leaders.

Principal 3 explained

The big things that frustrate me are things that come down from the legislature.

You get to feeling that it's a small group of people making all of the decisions for us. I think that they have good intentions but do not have a school pulse when they plan these mandates. Three things impact my time: email, voicemail, and paperwork. (P3)

Principal 7 described his thoughts

I think time and resources. You know, administrative staffs are spread so thin that you tend to just find yourself doing the day-to-day operations with your assistant principal staff and your deans. You really don't have a lot of time to do any mentoring or growth experiences, and that really comes down to function of economics, that you only have so much money that you can spend in a school system. (P7)

Principal 8 responded

I think that the barriers are people not getting out of your way, so you can be a leader at your school. *Mandates and politics blur the vision of the school. (P8)

Principal 4 continued

Politics would be another big one for me. The mandates from the federal government and state levels. There are also local ones. There seems to be so many areas of deficiency and areas that we cannot control as a school or district. Many of the mandates that hit us in the face seem ridiculous and I often wonder if the state and federal government have the slightest clue about what schools look like, or how they function. (P4)

Initial expert panel. External evaluators #1 and #2 agreed with the researcher and based this theme on the data collected. The principals who responded discussed the mandates and accountability requirements as frustrations. The principals who responded noted a lack of funding, lack of consideration at the school level, and unreasonable expectations, rules and restrictions as key frustrations they faced as leaders.

Verification expert panel. The verification expert panel members found examples verifying each of the themes previously identified by the researcher and initial expert panel. There were some slight variations depending on where the verification expert

chose to categorize the statement on the data table. See Appendix P.

Researcher's Observations

Principals in all four participating districts accessed several professional development opportunities when they were assistant principals. This provided advanced opportunities for them to experience several roles of the principal and support their own professional development. When assistant principals expressed interest in attaining higher positions, they begin an extensive targeted selection process in these districts. Targeted selection was the process used by all four of these school districts to identify and select their school leaders. This process included the following steps:

1. An application and behavior writing sample;
2. Timed writing sample at the district office;
3. Three one-hour interviews with principals and district staff; and,
4. Superintendent staff interview.

Upon successful progression through all these steps, applicants were placed in an applicant pool. These future principals began a principal preparation program for state-mandated certification credentials. In all four districts, principals attended monthly meetings scheduled with the superintendent and their staff. They worked collaboratively on district initiatives such as curriculum design, district policy revisions and high school literacy plans. They also attended professional development sessions on key responsibility areas such as contracts, budgets, and personnel with the superintendent and their staff. This developmental process is instrumental for the principal and the superintendent's staff when they review school vacancies and try to match the school

with the new principal's experiences.

The principals in the study all discussed the importance of a supportive superintendent. The principals generally seemed to genuinely care about students and their respective schools. There were only a few instances of negativity from principals during the interviews. Specifically, one principal was nearing retirement and discussed the frustrations of the new accountability systems and principals losing the ability to truly lead the entire school and all of the programs effectively with the new changes in the system. Another principal discussed the new superintendent's style as being drastically different from the predecessor in that district.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to capture and present the portions of data transcripts that answered the research questions in the study. In a few instances, after careful analysis, some principals in the study did not provide information for some of the theme findings. Depending on the individuals, their experiences, and their district of employment, they may have varied in their perceptions. One of the advantages of a qualitative study is the richness of data collection and the authenticity of data in the transcripts.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current perceptions of high school principals regarding their perceived roles, professional development experiences that impacted their careers, and the challenges and frustrations principals face when enacting their roles as high school leaders. The parts of this chapter include the summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This study examined eight high school principals from four counties. The counties were chosen as they shared several similarities such as demographics, student membership, and number of high schools. The participant sample consisted of eight high school principals, two from each district. Four men and four women participated in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 40 to 65 years of age. Seven participants were white and one was African American. Their levels of experience as high school principals ranged from 2 to 19 years. All of the participants earned their master's degrees.

This qualitative study investigated perceptions of high school principals and addressed three research questions: (1) What are the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school leaders? (2) What professional development

experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers? (3) What do high school principals perceive are their greatest challenges and frustrations? The interviews followed a predetermined schedule of questions first approved by the supervising doctoral committee and then by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The duration of each interview was between 25 and 70 minutes and three interviews were conducted with each participant. A member check was completed for each interview with the participants via email and/or phone correspondence.

The researcher oriented the initial expert and verification expert panels to the instructions, expectations, and procedures of the analysis task. The researcher and initial expert panel identified themes in the study. The verification expert panel reviewed the theme findings.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the interview data are discussed below. The high school principals perceived that they had a tremendous number of roles and responsibilities within their positions. The roles routinely changed and expanded, creating increased demands. Principals reported that multiple responsibilities involved complex situations and impacted their decisions as school leaders.

The roles and responsibilities that were identified with the greatest importance were providing a safe learning environment, ensuring quality teachers and quality instruction, high accountability expectations for all and mandates, and leadership within the school and system.

Professional development opportunities and personalized support systems were

perceived to be vital to the success of the high school principal. Principals in the study reported that their professional development experiences were beneficial for their development as school leaders. Both formal and informal experiences contributed to their development and provided them opportunities to develop their strengths and weaknesses.

The principals perceived that when they developed relationships with mentors and created strong networks, they improved the likelihood of sustained support and success. Both formal and informal experiences with mentors and networks created the opportunities for principals to share, discuss, and problem solve as school leaders.

High school principals perceived the greatest challenges were management of time, balancing leadership and management of the school, and navigating the legislative mandates and accountability requirements. When principals in this study recognized these challenges and took appropriate actions, the likelihood of sustained support improved significantly throughout their systems.

High school principals perceived the greatest frustrations were issues related to time and legislative mandates dictated to them by the local, state, and federal systems. They faced constant pressures that could be directly tied to student achievement and accountability measures. Clearly, the high school principal in today's schools is required to make school decisions based on the needs of the population of students and trends found in student performance data.

The results of the study were congruent with the previously cited research on high school principal roles and responsibilities. However, the increase in the number of

federal, state, and local mandates was more demanding than previously. Principals in the study noted that specific training to meet mandated requirements was more prevalent.

Implications

The implications arising from the study data imply that high school principals need to be prepared to assume various roles in their positions based on their data statements. As the principalship continues to develop and expand into a more complex and demanding role, the challenges and frustrations for districts and states are increasing without adequate professional development.

This study supports the necessity to focus current research on the high school principal position as the accountability and emphasis placed on high school reform has increased exponentially.

The information from the study may provide current and aspiring principals with research and actual principal views to assist them in their development as school leaders. School districts could utilize the themes from the study and consider them for professional development training for future principals.

Connecting theory and practice, along with identification of relevant experiences prior to becoming a high school principal, could be very beneficial to school leaders. Information about the principalship as a recommended or required reading in courses of study would provide a broader perspective and support specifically intended for aspiring high school principals.

State organizations, professional associations, and university administration programs may benefit from the study as programs attempt to prepare professionals for the complex leadership role of the high school principalship.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the perceptions of the eight high school principals during their three interviews and the study findings of the researcher, several suggested recommendations for future studies are listed below.

Further research is necessary to determine if the roles, professional development, challenges, and frustrations of the high school principals identified by the eight participants from the southeastern state will generalize to states in other regions and nationally. A comparison study can be conducted to analyze the results and differences in findings both regionally and nationally.

The study could be conducted in small, rural school districts as compared to this study's larger, urban districts. A comparison between the small and large districts could lead to more specific professional development programs for high school principals.

The study could be expanded to include principals or assistant principals at the elementary, middle, and/or high school level(s). It would be interesting to explore whether additional themes emerge for consideration depending on the level of schooling. Would the themes found in this study for high school principals emerge for high school assistant principals?

A comparative study could be conducted with an emphasis on gender and/or

race/ethnicity for high school principals. Findings from this study could be compared to results from additional study specific to elementary, and/or middle school principals.

A study could be focused on charter schools and/or private schools. The findings could be compared to public school findings.

Graduate programs could conduct research on the roles of the high school principal and the professional development activities that will specifically support them in their position.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Lyons's 13 Principal Job Roles and Responsibilities

1. Have a vision for the school and stay focused on it.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Establish your leadership role as principal.
4. Stay up-to-date on teaching and learning, educational research, and learn all you can.
5. Admit that you do not know everything.
6. Have patience and realize that it takes time to improve a school.
7. Be fair and consistent and do not play favorites.
8. Learn to delegate.
9. Ask for help.
10. Establish a network of relationships and get a mentor.
11. Always remember what is good for students when you make decisions.
12. Keep your life in perspective and do not make the job your life; have a stress outlet.
13. Do not take attacks personally and maintain a sense of humor.

Appendix B

Hopkins's 10 Principal Leadership Behaviors

1. Possess a vision and a plan to achieve it.
2. State goals and expectations for the school.
3. Are visible and not confined to the office.
4. Are trustworthy and honest with students and staff.
5. Develop leadership skills in others and themselves.
6. Develop strong teachers and cultivate best practices.
7. Involve others in decisions.
8. Display a sense of humor and enjoy their occupation.
9. Role models for students and staff members.
10. Offer kindness and criticism for students and staff.

Appendix C

13 Roles and Responsibilities of the Ontario Principals' Council

1. Responsibility Guidelines
 - a. Maintain order and discipline
 - b. Responsible for instruction and discipline of students
 - c. Report neglect of duty or infraction of school rules
2. Student Safety
 - a. Ensure safety procedures followed at all times
 - b. Report child abuse with reasonable suspicion
 - c. Ensure care of students and property
3. Student Instruction
 - a. Supervise instruction in school
 - b. Obtain permission to evaluate students
 - c. Arrange for alternative instruction for students when necessary
4. Student Supervision
 - a. Supervision of students when school buildings and grounds open
 - b. Supervision of students during any school activity
 - c. Ensure teachers carry out supervisory duties and instruction
5. Staff Supervision
 - a. Supervise instruction in school
 - b. Assign and monitor assistant principal and teacher duties
 - c. Supervise student and staff support team members
6. Staff Evaluation
 - a. Conduct “new teacher” performance meetings and appraisals
 - b. Conduct performance meetings and appraisals for all teachers
 - (i) If a performance appraisal is unsatisfactory, the principal must document concerns;
 - (ii) create a plan and support system; and,
 - (iii) provide feedback and recommendations

Appendix C Continued

7. Staff Cooperation
 - a. Principals and staff display personal and professional qualities
 - b. Establish and maintain mutually respected relationships
8. School Administration
 - a. Maintain student records including attendance
 - b. Examine all data in a timely manner
 - c. Enforce all local policy and codes of conduct
9. Access to School
 - a. Monitor visitors into the school
 - b. Monitor student health records according to district policy
 - c. Direct a person to leave the campus if they do not belong
10. Building Maintenance
 - a. Monitor the condition and maintenance of property
 - b. Inspect the school regularly and have repairs completed
 - c. Provide appropriate facilities for instruction and activities
11. Community
 - a. Promote and maintain cooperation with community and business
 - b. Promote and maintain cooperation with parents and guardians
12. School Advisory Group
 - a. Act as a resource and assist in obtaining requested information
 - b. Solicit views of school action plans and policy for improvement based on data
 - c. Consider recommendations and advice for programs and policy
13. Reports to District
 - a. Report to supervisors as required
 - b. Transmit reports and recommendations to the district departments

Appendix D

Categories of Principal Roles According to Harris

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *leadership* were:

1. shared, collaborative leadership style;
2. creating, nurturing, and sustaining relationships with students and staff;
3. school's mission statement included leadership for all;
4. empowered, focused leadership teams and work groups for sustained school improvement; and
5. school improvement goals posted everywhere and known by all.

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *shaping school culture* were

1. welcome students each morning;
2. role modeling in the classroom with teachers to support student learning;
3. visibility throughout the school and expectation for all staff to assist with supervision;
4. supporting students and assist them to develop goals; and
5. mutual respect between students and staff.

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *collaborating and communicating* were:

1. utilized multiple formats such as: web sites, newsletters, local newspapers, brochures, personalized letters and cards, etc;
2. listen to staff, students, parents, business partners for collaborative environment; and
3. attend community events and host evening activities to promote involvement.

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *effective instructional practices* were:

1. encouraging academic excellence;
2. supporting faculty improvement;
3. including teachers in instructional improvement;
4. providing resources and materials;
5. sharing best practices with faculty; and
6. recognizing and celebrating academic excellence.

Appendix D Continued

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *school improvement planning* were:

1. establishing a culture of inquiry through study groups, book studies, and data teams; and
2. created four teams to review pertinent school systems and data that could impact school improvement.

These four teams were:

- i. internal review team surveys staff and students each semester;
 - ii. teaching and learning review team reviews current staff development and curriculum initiatives;
 - iii. student, learning, and progress team analyzes student and staff achievement data, student discipline data, and the school improvement goal areas; and
 - iv. learning community team reviews school policy, looks at what worked, what did not, and makes suggestions for changes.
3. organized methods for change and systematic processes for improvement with buy-in from students and staff.

The best practices shared by the principals regarding *at-risk programs* were:

1. promotion of diversity school-wide;
2. emphasized remedial programs for identified students; and
3. tutoring and counseling services built into the student curriculum.

Appendix E

County Superintendent Introduction Letter

September 15, 2005

Dr. Roger Doe, Superintendent
Brown County School Board
215 Brown Avenue, West
P.O. Box XXXX
City, State XXXXX-XXXX

Dear Dr. Doe:

I recently completed my course work for my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Interdisciplinary Education at the University of South Florida. The title of my dissertation is *A Qualitative Study of School Leadership: Perceptions of the Roles, Professional Development, Challenges, and Frustrations of High School Principals*.

My study is qualitative in nature and I will be conducting interviews to acquire data. I would also like your assistance in nominating two current high school principals in your district for three 30-60 minute interviews during the next eighteen to twenty-four months.

Sincerely,

Steve Knobl

Appendix F

Interview Protocol 1: High School Principals

During the first stage of the interview process, I would like to take some time to explain the study and the plan for the three interviews. Do you have any questions for me at this point?

1. Please describe your education background.
2. Please discuss your career history.
3. Why did you choose to pursue a high school principal position?
4. What experiences have you had to prepare you for a high school principal job?

Appendix G

Interview Protocol 2: High School Principals

During this stage of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions about your attitudes and practices regarding your role as a school leader.

1. What interferes with your role as a high school principal?
2. What professional development experiences have impacted you the most during your career? What are your current professional development needs?
3. Do you have a specific strategy for identifying potential principals in your school? Which common characteristics do they possess?
4. Does the district have an orientation program for new principals? What are its foci? How have you benefited from the program?

Appendix H

Interview Protocol 3: High School Principals

1. What do you perceive are the most important responsibilities for the high school principal?
2. What do you perceive are the major priorities for the high school principal to promote?
3. What do you perceive are the greatest challenges for you as a high school principal?
4. What do you perceive are the greatest barriers or frustrations for a high school principal?
5. Because you are an experienced principal, what developmental experiences would you recommend to new high school principals?
6. What could further enhance your development as a high school principal?
7. The job or the role of the high school principal is documented in research as a demanding and complex position. What are your perceptions of your role?

Appendix I

Welcome Letter to Principal

October 1, 2005

Ms. Jane Doe, Principal
Sunset High School
Sunny, Georgia 34712

Dear Ms. Doe:

I recently completed my course work for my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with a emphasis in Interdisciplinary Education at the University of South Florida. The title of my dissertation is *A Qualitative Study of School Leadership: Perceptions of the Roles, Professional Development, Challenges, and Frustrations of High School Principals*.

I contacted your Superintendent and she/he recommended you for this study. My study is qualitative in nature and I will be conducting interviews to acquire data. I will be conducting three, 60-90 minute interviews during the next eighteen to twenty-four months.

At the conclusion of my study, I shall send you a copy of my study. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to offer any additional assistance with the study.

Sincerely,

Steve Knobl

Appendix J

1st and 2nd Interview Transcription Data

Would start by telling me about yourself and why you became a high school principal?

P2: I'm a twenty-year educator and a lifetime educator. I became a high school principal because I wanted to help kids build the brightest possible future for them. I am where I am because people invested their time in my development and I wanted to do the same for kids. I know that as a teacher I can impact 150 students, but as a principal, I can impact 3600 students, not all of them high school students, but 3600 students.

P1: I graduated from the University with a bachelor's degree in secondary education and was a science teacher for seven years in the state. I moved to this state and was a science teacher at a High School. I graduated with my Masters Degree from the University in Educational Leadership and Administration Supervision in 1992 and I became an assistant principal seven years ago at the same school I taught at. I became the principal here June first of this year. I became a principal because I wanted to help students realize their potential and see what success in school can do for them. The teaching and assistant principal experiences I had really led me to the position to be able to decide more and make decisions.

P6: I started out as a teacher for five years then I went into guidance and I became the Dean of students in a large suburban high school in the Midwest. I got really burned out

Appendix J Continued

on that fast. It was during the first drug era in the 1970's. I quit my job, moved here, sold insurance for three years, got called back up there to head up the guidance department and only lasted six months. You can't go back. I came back down here and worked as a counselor briefly at a Catholic school. I then got a job here as a counselor when the school was very small and I've been here now twenty-four years and I am retiring at the end of this school year. I became the principal here and this is a very strange story because I didn't ever start out wanting to be a principal. I didn't even start out wanting to be an administrator. In every situation, I was asked to take these jobs. I was a guidance counselor here for three years and this school had been through a lot of turmoil. This school had been shut down during desegregation and reopened again later as a volunteer school. It had been run by a man with many great ideas but couldn't implement anything. My predecessor was hired to try to stabilize the school. He went on to become the director of secondary education and I was asked to interview for the job. I got the job and I've been here ever since. So from 250 kids on a good day, high school kids, a K-12 campus, to now over 1600 kids and about 24 million dollars later for upgrades to the campus.

P7: Immediately following high school, I didn't go to college, I went into the military and I was in for five years. When I got out, I went to the University and got my undergraduate degree in social science education. It took me about three years and I graduated in 1986. I taught for two years at a middle school. I came to this high school

Appendix J Continued

as a teacher and taught for three and half years. In 1991, I became dean of students. I was dean of students for the remainder of that year. I was an assistant principal here until the summer of 1999. In the summer of 1999, I went to another high school in an assistant principalship for eight weeks. During that time the principalship at this school became vacant and I applied for that position and was accepted as the principal here. I know the community, know the school, and the culture. It made for an easier transition for me being in the community.

P8: This is my thirty-second year in public education and I started out as a teacher. I taught physical education, health, biology, physical science, and life science. I was a basketball coach for thirteen years. Really, why I got into education was to hopefully make a difference. I really found that working with young people there was a lot of instability. As unstable as I am I was the stability in most of their lives. I cared about them and I want to make a difference. I want to make things better for them because I believe public education is the great equalizer. It gives people the opportunity and if they take advantage of it, no matter where they come from, what background, what circumstance, it can improve their life. I've worked with young people and I had an opportunity to write a story a few years ago about a young man that came to this country from Cuba in the 1960s. When he was six years old he went to first grade with his brother who was five years old. They were the only two students in the elementary school who could not speak English and that was locally, which is now totally different.

Appendix J Continued

I had him and his brother both in high school and he would always tell me he was going to be a doctor and deep down in my heart I didn't believe that could ever happen. His mother worked during the day as a seamstress and his father worked at night in a photo lab developing film. They did it that way so that somebody would be home with those two children all of the time. They came to this country with the clothes on their back. The young boy is now a cardiologist at a Hospital and his brother is a senior engineer at a prominent engineering firm. His parents still live in the same little very lower-middle class home that supported those two young men and now they're very successful. I think anybody can do it if you have parents, if you have teachers, and you just have that commitment. If you have students who cooperate and they want to be successful and make something of themselves that is ideal. So that's really why I got into education was for the people of the world. It's a people business and sometimes we overlook that. I think we try to look at our test scores and I definitely believe that we need to be accountable as far as educating people but this is a people business. Sometimes when you just care and they know you care that will make the difference. That'll be the impact that might turn someone around. I have been an administrator for eighteen years, nine as an assistant principal, then seven as a high school principal and now two years here.

P3: I'll work in reverse. I'm a new principal here at this particular school. I was assigned here the first of February this year. Prior to coming here I was principal at a Middle School. So, it's a big change and adjustment from middle school to high school.

Appendix J Continued

The Middle School, much like this school, has a very negative perception in the community. We wound up turning it around to an A middle school. A school that had only one thousand kids when I left; this school has over two eight hundred. The superintendent brought me here with the same kids. The kids feed from a middle school to this High School. I feel like I'm living everything again with the same kids. Since 1997, I've been in this part of the county. Prior to that, I was an Assistant Principal at a Middle School and before that I was a math teacher at a few other schools before that. I've been a principal since 1999, an assistant principal I think from 1989 to 1999, so ten years as an assistant principal.

P5: I have an English degree and am certified K-12. I taught for more than 20 years and then decided to become an administrator. My master's degree is Educational Leadership. I have been a teacher and a principal at all three levels. That has been a tremendous asset to my career and my success. I have been a new principal six times in my career. I have thirty years in education and this job is by far the toughest yet. The demands and expectations that others have on my time and life are incredible. But I love this business and I love being with the kids.

P4: I've been in education for thirty years. My undergraduate degree is in biology and chemistry. I'm certified in all sciences. My masters degree is in Educational Leadership and the state I was in at that time, I was coaching and I really didn't worry about a

Appendix J Continued

doctorate. I probably had about sixty, maybe seventy hours beyond a bachelor's. But at that time in my life it was just about getting the money. While I was coaching I didn't think about administration and I just wanted my masters degree. When I got out of coaching and moved down here I did not want to coach anymore. I made sure that everybody knew that my goal then was to be an administrator. I was hired back in 1992 as an AP in another school and stayed there one year. My daughters went through this school and they revamped some things and brought me back over here. I was AP several years until 1999 and now I've just been appointed to the new high school. I'll be leaving in December of this year.

What interferes with your role as a high school principal?

P2: When I look at the role as a high school principal interfering with my role as an instructional leader the answers are systemic answers. The job is immense and the pieces that are about buses and cafeteria duty and safety drills and parent complaints and not having resources, those things can get in the way of being an instructional leader if you let them. If you are committed to spending time in the classroom many of those issues abate to an extent, but there will always be a crisis that has to be dealt with as a principal. So the primary thing that interferes with my role as a high school principal being an instructional leader is what I let take my time away from being in the classroom. And that is a choice I make. There is a harsh reality that there's other things that have to be dealt with, but I'm ultimately in control of where I'm spending my time, and the more time I spend in the classroom the less those issues crop up.

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P1: Well, I think communication problems between employees, the managerial type stuff, putting out fires. I mean we've had, for instance, they're redoing our track and redoing our tennis courts and it has been one thing after another battling with these people. You can't drive on the track, and you have to meet with all the booster club people, tell them they can or can't use the track. Football team can't walk on the track because the cleats leave holes in the track. All of that just takes many hours dealing with all of that kind of stuff that has absolutely nothing to do with instruction. Parent interruptions, parents that come in and demand time now, and they know it may or may not be a reason that you could help even them with. They may not want to set an appointment. They demand that you drop everything right then and see them right then. That throws off your supervision schedule. It throws off your meetings with your staff. It does all that so the managerial type stuff, the facilities management, you know all of that that you have to do but it just gets in the way of being the instructional leader in the building.

P6: Politics. I think trying to be all things to all people. It's not possible, but everybody expects that of you. If you have an open door policy there are lots of things that interrupt my day. It might not have anything to do with what should be going on for me in this school. We have a union contract that would choke a horse and it's a blue-collar contract. I've worked in two other districts and never, ever seen a union contract like this. I mean it spells out every duty even though they don't have a quote duty; you have to

Appendix J Continued

negotiate that with them. Teachers leave when the bell rings. But mine do not do this.

We came to an agreement. I think they have to be here after school for at least a half an hour. I think you could do things that would be better for school improvement if you had a little leeway in the contract.

P5: Time is the most precious commodity that I have and any interference with my schedule damages my best use of time. The nuances of a principalship are many in number. I believe that if you are an instructional leader, your administrative staff, your guidance staff, your secretarial staff, cafeteria staff, discipline staff, and teachers need to be empowered to make decisions and lead in their own way. My job is to mold them around our vision and goals. I should be in classrooms, assisting with curriculum development, and school-wide instructional and assessment models and plans. Not meeting with every parent who demands to see me because of a student squabble here, a schedule issue there. Before I created our new organizational structure, when I first arrived a few years ago, it was ridiculous here. I made little strides to school improvement. Now, I work hard to organize our organization and school so I can delegate most of the day-to-day issues.

P7: I don't know if there's anything that interferes with the role of high school principal, but I think all those interferences are part of the role of being a high school principal. I think those things that interfere with instructional leadership, as a high school principal,

Appendix J Continued

would certainly be things possibly beyond your control. For instance, for me personally, the management of a construction project. I'm not a construction engineer or a construction person. The district has a team of people that support that effort on a day-to-day basis, but it's me that has to make sure that things are going well, that the kids are safe. I'm held highly accountable for everything. I spent an enormous amount of time managing that project and so that gets in the way. I think as far as instructional leadership, things that get in the way of the role of principal have a lot to do with administrative minutia. I sign purchase orders, sign athletic contracts; deal with the volumes of mail that you get each day. There are so many people out there that want to show you the latest and greatest product that can help your kids. You don't want to necessarily turn that down because if it's really something out there that can help, you want to see it. So much of it out there is a sale pitch, with much of it being research-based. I have an in-basket that is a pretty big interference to the effectiveness of the role of a high school principal. All of that is part of being a high school principal. It's just those things are the parts of the job I don't necessarily like to do.

P8: I guess it's the rules and regulations. They'll get into following rules and regulations and standards and sometimes they forget about why we're really here and that's the needs of the students. I think sometimes we get inundated with being held accountable for this or that, or we have door stops and we've got a fire marshal worrying about door stops or something like that, all the little minutiae, things that happen like that. In this district,

Appendix J Continued

and I'll be honest, you've got ideas and you want to get things done, you've got to run it through twenty people and then when you get it where you think you need to be, you've got somebody else. I don't know if they're sabotaging, but they're not on board with you. We don't have site-based management in this district, it's kind of top down, this is the way it's going to be. I think that creates a lack of trust in the community, there's not the real trust. I don't think there's trust with administrators and teachers in this district. I'll tell you what the Superintendent is excellent at doing is strategic planning. He's already brought experts in here and trying to change that atmosphere. It's been amazing to me, there's a guy who works in maintenance named CB and he went to all that training, and when he came away from that training, he would come and say what is it that I can do for you? I'm going to make a promise. For example, our landscaping was a mess, and he made it happen that we got everything cleaned up and picked up and straightened up and I made a promise to him that I would maintain it. And he believed in that. He makes a promise and I make a promise. That's what it's all about. Two people can look each other in the eye and they don't need all this other stuff, and say, "I'm going to do this for you and you're going to do this for you. We've got a promise, we've got a commitment, we've got a pact here." I've found that with a few people, but from some of the leadership, I haven't found that. Not the Superintendent, if you make a promise to him or he makes a promise to you, you better believe it will be kept. I'm not going to work for just anybody. I've been sort of fortunate in my career, I've been able to select

Appendix J Continued

when I was an assistant principal who I got to work for except I was actually moved from one high school to another one because someone thought that I could maybe make a difference and I went there and the attitudes of the teachers, I mean the teachers would say this is a tough place to work if the kids weren't here. I tried and I knew that wasn't the place for me. I stayed there eight months and then I left. I knew that wasn't the place for me.

P3: Three things for me: email, voice mail, and paperwork. I spend way too much of my time responding to emails and voice mails. I find myself before and after hours trying to get as much of that done as possible. I get up real early, as you know, we're at work at 6:30. So I get up real early in the morning try to knockout 10 or 15 emails before I even get here, just so I can spend the first couple of periods on campus with the kids.

P4: Mandates, mandates, bureaucracy! The key for me is time! If I had more, I would need more! You know what I mean. I have to manage my time very carefully. My staff knows that our goal is student achievement and that our administrative team is in classrooms during the morning classes. With more money, we could have more staff and more resources! But, that's a never-ending dream that every educator talks about!

What professional development experiences has/have impacted you the most during your career? What are your current professional development needs?

Appendix J Continued

P2: When I first started as a principal I really needed several months to understand how I could impact the system. Truly, what can I do to steer the ship? And once I had a clue that saying things here and there could impact others, I had to be careful about what I said. So I had to do some learning for myself so I didn't misguide the ship because I really did find people wanted to please me. GT's work about grades and grading had a tremendous impact on me. I was a principal of a 6-12 school for nearly three years. It had a tremendous impact on my development. From a professional growth standpoint was participation in the LAP program with the construct of "All means all." That was our focus. And that was really all students can learn, and all really means all. So, for me, hearing what they had done in State M, hearing what they had done in this place, hearing what they had done in State C, what they'd done in State T, those understandings about how they dealt with poor children and African-American children and Hispanic and IEP children. These ideas helped me identify some needs for our school and gave me some direction with goal setting. Then we came back to our school, and when I say we, I talk about it from a leadership standpoint, because I don't make decisions, our group makes decisions. But we looked at data and sure enough our SES kids, our low socio-economic kids, were not performing at the same level as our non-low socio-economic kids were performing. So from a professional development standpoint my exposure to all of these conferences through the leadership associate program impacted that entire school because suddenly I had a piece of information that could have been true, that we proved to be true, and then we had a focus point. What could we do to break down the barriers for

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learning for our poor kids? Another tremendous influence on me through professional development as a principal was the work that was done around the concept of literacy. As a secondary social studies teacher I had no clue how to teach reading. I never had a cause, as I looked at it, to teach reading. Yet, what I complained about all the time is kids didn't understand things. An example is comprehension, which is what I complained about with kids. If I had known more about literacy I could have worked more to ease the pain of kids not understanding things. So my work centered on literacy and that's so broad but I can't break it down into itty-bitty pieces. Each year our school district has brought in some people. Someone came and talked about poverty and how it impacts student achievement. When I took it a step further to look at literacy we looked at how it was impacting our kids with their ability to read for information. GT's work was great for me, too. We did a little bit of work at our school centered on a poverty and literacy concept that was raised by FP in a book. But that helped us understand our expectations for our students. And again that went back to the "All means all." Do we really believe that kids who lived in poor areas could learn? That opened my eyes because there were some people who didn't agree with me that all kids really could learn.

P1: Yes, time management. I think that once I thought I was prepared to be a high school principal and I still think I was prepared. I think I was more prepared to be that instructional leader than I was to be the managerial leader. There are still a lot of things: facilities, athletics and I thought I was pretty much aware of everything that was going on

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and knew a lot, but come to find out when you know just get real into, immersed in it, there's a lot of things that you don't about, you know, and you're expected to. So, I think that some training in that area maybe, continually working toward knowledge. A specific example would be hiring a bookkeeper. I was a new principal and had to hire a new bookkeeper. There was no interview guide. It is a very skilled position that I do not have a lot of knowledge of the job description. There should be a pool for a position like that so an expert can sort out the applicant's skills and make a judgment. My EDS degree will help because you just need to get into literature and see what's going on. My participation in the LAP group was a great experience. You know that training, staff development, professional development, is really big with me. That's my passion. Anything that helps me to be able to be a better leader in the school, anything that helps me to know what's current and what will work or won't work with the kids in the school or the teachers in the school it's what I try to do.

P6: I think they need help in the beginning to see the big picture, like an orientation or something. I think they need help with the budget, because it was a monster. It's easy now with the technology. I think they need some real skills in evaluating staff. I think they really need to know what they see in the classroom and know what that really means and what's going on.

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P7: The professional development that has probably affected me most in my career has been my university master's degree experience. I had some really good educational instructors that taught me how to be kind of a life-long educational learner. I learned how to decipher research and what to pay attention to. It kind of inspired me into the principalship. I can't think of any one professional development activity that stands out more than any other. That being said, I think the thing I need the most is the ability to evaluate effective programs and I'm speaking specifically to reading programs. We get so much data, and it's not just reading. It's just the amount of data we get, that we never used to get. The amount of data we get now compared to five years ago has just exploded. We're constantly being bombarded with reading data, math data, achievement gains, and I need to get my hands wrapped around what's the most effective way to look at everything. Numbers can tell you anything and you can make numbers tell you anything you want. If there were some real solid training I could receive with data, it would be great. That third drawer of the file cabinet is just full of data and I have files from one year to the next that's just crammed full of different information. I go through it but I don't know that I'm doing the best job that I can with it. Our superintendent has recently asked the principals to work with our CIS department to help them get us what we need at the school level. We are leading an initiative to be able to use data and help it guide instruction. It will be user-driven because we, as the principals will be working on what we need from the professional development training.

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P5: I get most of the training that I want. I am part of AJ's group and I am a principal who she employs to make presentations related to literacy and leadership. When I want to attend national conferences, I use my principal funds to meet my professional growth needs.

P8: I'm going to tell you one of my biggest professional development experiences that changed my philosophy of education and changed me is I spent one year in an elementary school. I was a high school teacher and taught in junior high schools. I did it for selfish reasons. I was an interim head basketball coach at a community college and I needed a place to work during the day. As soon as the day was over, I'd go to the community college. I took a job as an elementary school physical education teacher and this thing where they say "look at Johnny standing in line. Isn't that nice how Johnny stands straight?" All of the other students would try to stand straight in line. I was like, "what is this stuff? This is unbelievable. Get in line, do this." "Look at Susie, thank you Susie for standing up straight." All of the kids would try to stand straight. I'm standing there saying to myself, "give me a break, what is this stuff?" I started watching it and I spent a whole year at this school. This was professional development for a whole year and then I did Training, which was outstanding. The next year, I went back to the high school. I worked as an assistant and then as the head coach. I was teaching conditioning classes and biology classes. I was very confrontational. I berated players and I berated students and I didn't take any crap from them. I cared about them but I was not very nice to them

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at other times. I still can be like that sometimes. I changed my whole teaching philosophy in the classroom. I changed my coaching philosophy. I was very critical. So, instead of telling them everything they did wrong, everything they did right was rewarded. It was a reward, right then on the spot. In the classroom when the students do the right thing I would say, "I appreciate that, you did exactly right," and they started falling in line. I started using Training. I was teaching a biology class and I used the department chair's class the first two periods every day. She started recommending interns to come in and watch me teach. One time, this girl came in, an intern, and I was using assertive discipline and she said, "I was just talking to teachers and they said that would never work in a high school. You're doing it and your students are great." I had a ring on once and I would cling it on the chalkboard, like clang it, they were perfect, but I said watch and they'd get quiet thinking I was going to go nuts! I probably shouldn't have done that, but it was fun. I've also been to all types of workshops. I believe in freshmen centers and small learning community high schools. It's funny how things that you go and listen to are things that you believed in and have always done and it just reinforces it. I went to a training last summer that was called HG. I took two of my AP's and we all went together and when we came out they all said "you've been to this workshop before haven't you because you already do these things." I'd never been. I find people doing the right thing, let them know it, and let other people see and hear it. Those who are not doing the right thing, I often speak to privately. There is this teacher here who doesn't get to his class on time. So I go up and open the door a few times and

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let his students in and wait for him. He was coming up the stairs one day and he said, “Oh s---.” He knew he was late. It was not the first time. Normally I wouldn’t say anything to him, but today I said, “you really need to get to class on time. Enough’s enough.” I think the strategic planning thing that we’re going through in our district is great. My frustration is I’ve worked in a system that used site-based management and we had a superintendent involved in the leadership process. We had an assistant superintendent for finance that had terrible philosophy. We took the budget and she just totally opened it up and said here it is. Here’s what we have, now let’s all work on this together. Who gets what? How much do we get? It was so open and honest that you were convinced. You might have worked in a system where you’re the finance director so I kiss your ..., treat you nice, and I come to you say hand me a little extra for this and that. If I don’t treat you nice then I don’t get what my school needs. That might never happen, but that’s the perception; whereas when you had this other person that had a site-based budgeting philosophy, you had much more autonomy over your school’s budget and needs.

P3: First of all, I think understanding by design probably has had the biggest personal impact on me. WG was the expert who puts it on for our district. When I went the first five days, I liked it so much I went back for the advanced training for another three days. It’s a model for planning and I’m able to use those tools with everything I do. Whether I’m planning a lesson with a group of teachers, or running professional development

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training for the school, the tools work. It's not rocket science, it's backward design and it's looking at your data. We decide what you have to do, what's required by law to do, how you're doing in those areas, and coming up with a plan to make those things happen. They also teach you about the assessment piece, which is so important. That particular training carries over beautifully to the classroom. I think a lot of teachers work hard teaching the wrong things, so I really try hard to give them the data, and bring people here to give them the information that they need to hit that bull's eye a little bit more. They go home exhausted because they've been working all day but they're not necessarily getting students where they need to be because they didn't have the end in mind when they wrote their plan. They went with a great lesson but the kids aren't learning what they need to be learning. I pretty much get most of the training that I want. I'm just becoming involved with the CCS. I'm not going, but I'd like to send some of my AP's out to the CCS next month. I see their work as supporting some of things I'm trying to do here. They're really focusing on small learning environments in the large schools. We're going to go to that and we're going to look at the possibility of writing a small schools grant for this school. If anything, I want to look at best practices at some schools that have taken these huge campuses and created some smaller environments for the kids. I've already decentralized my administration. I've already put ninth and tenth graders on one side of the campus and things like that. It was a challenge and they were departmentalized forever and the administration was all centralized in one building. Part of me coming over here was the \$50 million dollar construction project, so I used that as

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part of my vehicle to start moving people and changing people. A group of us came to consensus that they see merit in creating a smaller environment for the kids. They're going to miss the whole department being together philosophy. So we compromised. The first building that opened I put all ninth and tenth grade English teachers downstairs, all ninth and tenth grade math teachers upstairs and when the building opens caddy corner to that I'll put the other ninth and tenth subjects there so we'll have quasi departmentalized with ninth and tenth grade teachers yet I'm still creating the environment that I've wanted to do. I may even, through this grant, create a ninth grade house with interdisciplinary teams. I know this was one of the reasons I was put here. He knew I'd had teaming success at the middle school that previously wasn't teamed. All that worked. It gives the kids a better identity in the school. The decentralization helps promote shared leadership with my administrative team, too. It empowers them to make decisions for their building, their teachers, and their students. The change process with a lot of veterans that have been here a long time presents challenges. They're relatively supportive and they know that I'm not here to hurt them. I'm here to try to help them. But there are certain things that have to happen for improvements to occur. We had an opportunity to train ninth graders. We're having very few behavior problems with ninth graders on the campus. I guess ninth grade used to be the horror. We train the kids, we train our behavior plan, we train the dress code, we're not afraid to march them into the cafeteria. You tell them how to do things and most of them will do it. They just want to know what to do. They weren't of that mind set. I think coming from middle

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school, we spent a long time training those kids. When sixth graders arrived, we would train, train, and train them some more. It helps me knowing these kids over here because they remember me training them over in middle school. So half of them fell into line immediately because they knew I was fair and doing it for the right reasons. Yet other kids saw them behaving and it just seems to have fallen together pretty nicely. So, I want to learn not so much book stuff, I want to learn what's been working. In education, we don't need to reinvent the wheel. You might think it's your great idea, but if somebody has already done it, try finding it.

P4: CRISS Training, Facilitative Leadership Training, numerous Technology Trainings. We have monthly principal meetings with our superintendent and his staff that involve guest speakers and trainers. Being able to attend conferences that interest me have been limited, but the ones that I attended were fantastic. Technology and ESE (IDEA) updates are my biggest needs. I could also use an update on management, you know, organizational development stuff. There is no best time for training for a principal. But, the summer time is probably the best time.

Do you have a specific strategy for identifying potential principals in your school? Which common characteristics do they possess?

P2: I don't know that I had a specific strategy but what I believed in was giving opportunities of leadership to whoever said they wanted them. Even if I didn't think you

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could do it, if you were willing to step forward, you had the opportunity. I think in terms of a strategy, whether I knew it or not, what I was doing was not letting my preconceived notions determine what types of experiences a person could have, but rather their own desire to do something, their own motivation to do it. I think some common characteristics that potential principals have include charisma. If you can't gain a crowd's attention, if you can't make people feel warm and fuzzy, if you can't make them tingle as a result of your conversations with them, you can't lead them. You can't. Even if you have a position of authority, they're not going to do what you're asking them to do. They aren't going to follow where you go, because they have no relationship with you. So charisma I think is incredibly important. Another incredibly important characteristic of a potential principal is knowledge of curriculum and instruction and best practices. My heavens, what I didn't know. And when you take that step from the classroom to an assistant principal you have as an assistant principal a greater knowledge base than you did as a teacher. And I think you experience that same thing going into a principalship. I think maybe that's true in all of those career steps that you go through. But we add a knowledge base and an experience factor. As a principal you're not going to be successful because you don't have a variety of experiences. The third characteristic is just a willingness to be a change agent. Change is constant and growth is optional. I can't remember who said that, but I read it recently. And I don't want to take credit for it because I didn't make it up. But you know when you think about that in education even if it's change back to the way you did it twenty years ago, change is constant. But is you

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change resilient? Are you growing as a result of that change? And I think principals are people who become change agents.

P1: Well, I looked for people, as an AP, that were really eager to take on leadership tasks. I looked for people who had good communication skills and good facilitation skills. I looked for people who had leadership experiences and were successful with them. They'd been a department chair, a learning community leader, or committee chairperson. Then I looked for somebody who had a strong professional development focus. They were looking to better themselves they were looking to, you know, to get that extra degree or to move on because if they're not willing to get that degree, it's a waste of time to encourage them to be an administrator. It's not a waste of time to encourage them to do professional development to take on leadership roles, but in terms of developing administrators, they have to have a degree. So you've got to find somebody that's willing to do that. Here, I don't know the people well enough yet to know. I do know that there is one in the pool and I'm working real close with him and I'm trying to him opportunities to lead and opportunities to supervise kids and to, you know, be involved in some things to help him on his way to being an administrator. I think flexibility, student-oriented, and being a good communicator, including being a good listener. Probably also being a good facilitator, being able to lead a group of people to accomplish something would be also something to look for.

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P6: Those people are good teachers and they aim to establish good relationships with their colleagues. They're willing to step up to the plate and do things that are outside the duty day and not expect to be paid. They show interest in not only becoming a leader but they demonstrate those leadership skills in things that they do. I can count on them every time we need something done. So those people I try to promote and identify. I think it's better to grow your own, quite frankly, and two of the three AP's that I have are homegrown. The newest one that we got this year was a teacher here and wanted to be an administrator in the worst way. I've got other people around the building right now that I'm encouraging that are in Master's programs. I think you need to look for these people. I think they need to be a good teacher first. You see that when you bring in people that haven't been in education. I used to think education courses were the dumbest thing I ever sat through, but there's something that can be said for those who have versus have not had the background.

P5: First, let me start by saying that my staff is very educated on the whole. I have been very fortunate to always have four or five teachers working on their education in the area of administration. The location of a state university nearby helps us a bunch. Once I learn who they are, mostly through conversations or writing recommendations for them, I meet with them to explain the process of what it takes to become a high school assistant principal. I look for people who have the ability to multi-task. People who are calm and cool under pressure and have good common sense. People who are organized and hard

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working. People who look to get involved and take initiative to become school leaders.

Above all, I look for teachers who I believe will make great principals in our district.

P7: During my years as a principal, I've had two assistant principals that have gone on to become principals. But neither one of those individuals did I pick as my assistant principals. They were here when I got to this high school. In looking to replace those two, my goal was to try to find people that wanted to be principals. I think having an assistant principal that wants to be principal is such an invaluable tool. You don't need a whole staff of assistant principals that want to be principals. Honestly, I've got an assistant principal who really oversees my curriculum development. She's got a doctorate in curriculum development and that's what she wants to do. She doesn't want to be a principal and that's fine. I think every good administrative staff has a least one or two people that aspire to that role of principalship and I think that's important because it certainly helps relieve some of things that we have to do as principals. You can really develop people into principals by mentoring them and giving them tough assignments and issues to manage and lead. I currently have an assistant on this staff that wants to be a principal. I think if there's one characteristic of any good principal it is good common sense. Along with this, they should possess good communication skills, be able to think on their feet, and communicate clearly with all kinds of people. They have an ability to adjust their communication depending on the type of group to which they're talking. They're not afraid to make hard decisions and they can give you an unpopular decision

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and do it in a manner that almost sells the decision. It doesn't mean people are going to like it but they possess the communication ability to give information that people may not want to hear in a way that maintains the most positive atmosphere. They also have unbelievable work ethic. You've got to have people that have this to be successful for the long haul. There's just no end to this job. You got to be willing to work, and work hard. They need to be committed to kids. You can have all the other things, but they have to like kids, and I mean all kinds of kids. If they don't like kids, this just is not the job for them. I look for somebody that can think on his or her feet under pressure. A lot of times you are forced to make split-second decisions in this job. Critical to that are sometimes you need to make a decision, while other times thought and time are necessary first. I've worked for people that took forever to make a decision on anything. They carefully thought about it and frustrated everyone around them. They may end up making a great decision, but people are so frustrated by the time they get the decision they say "big deal." On the other hand, I've worked with people that make quick decisions all the time. There's no consistency in the decisions they make. So having good decision-making abilities along with good common sense is key. Intelligence is a key characteristic. Character, nobody's going to follow anybody that doesn't demonstrate some ethics and have the highest regard for ethical behavior and integrity. I think all of these things are important and the list could go on.

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P8: I think the one thing is a commitment to excellence or the commitment to taking care of the little things. I think it's also about willingness to go the extra mile. I think it's that you are willing to take ownership of something. Are you willing to reach down and pick up a piece of paper and throw it in the trash? Are you willing to come back when you are tired and do something? Are you willing to make that extra commitment? Two people that I worked with, that are now principals, one at a middle school, and one at a high school. One is at a high school, his name is TM. He was one of the nicest guys, he worked as assistant principal for five years with me and he was supposed to wear a black hat but he had a hard time doing that, he had a hard time being a mean guy. I went and spent some time with him. I'd hire him like that. The thing that I have noticed about him is he has taken ownership in that school and he's open and you can tell the students always loved him; people always loved him. But at the same time, we sat down together and he said, "Man, being a principal is a lonely job, isn't it?" He said most times, I'm the last one out of here. I'm the first one here, and the last one out. I said if other people care about it more than you, then you've probably got a problem. Now he cares about that school more than anybody. Those other people that care, they don't have the same stake in it as he does. He's made all kinds of changes and the students recognize that and the teachers recognize that in him. I think that when you have a special ownership; it's like this is your home, your child. This is your pride and your joy and you care about to that extent, you bleed red, white and blue, you care about it. You have king pride. At this high school, we believed in a philosophy it was great to be a fighting I. We had

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shirts the same way. I've had students come to me after they go to the University of Florida and say "AJ, do you know the University stole our thing? They say it's great to be a gator. They stole our thing AJ." They didn't have a clue that we stole it from them. But they had that kind of belief.

P3: There's no cookie cutter way to learn this job. I learned that from interview committees and things like that. Common sense! You have to have somebody who has some common sense. I like somebody who is not afraid to admit that they've made a mistake. I look for somebody who is pretty creative and will try some different things. Someone who is sharp enough to get the deadlines, the paperwork done, and keep things going, they have a good shot of being successful. I have seven assistant principals here and you know I met with them when I first got here and I continue to meet with them. What other experiences can I give you? Sometimes assistant principals get pigeon holed. They don't know how to do anything other than the same ten things they've done for ten years. So I really let them write their job descriptions with me to make sure the ones who want to be principals are getting different experiences. I remember when I was an assistant principal I really butted heads a little bit with my principals because I wanted to know everything. I want to learn the budget can you show me how it's done? What do we need to do to make it happen? I was always close to my principals. It was easy to act like that but I had to force different opportunities on myself. My AP's don't have that challenge. They know I'm constantly revisiting their jobs. I'll rewrite job descriptions

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monthly if I have to. But I want them to have a lot of different experiences on this campus. I think there's not a whole lot of credibility with an administrator who is not a good teacher. Teachers won't necessarily say that, but I think that if they see you as a good teacher, and they know you as a good teacher, that's one of my criteria, somebody who's a good teacher. I look for someone who I know is a change agent. They are those leaders I've seen at department meetings, on committees, working on changing something. Some people do that very naturally without offending people too much and things get done. You can kind of walk through the school and say this person would be a really nice person to have on my team because they get things done. They're efficient, they're easy going, they're honest, and they're consistent with the kids.

P4: There is always a project or a job to do. The high school is just such a huge place! I look for staff that shows an eagerness to be involved and seem willing to accept leadership roles. Teachers that are great at what they do; class sponsors, dept chairs, and people with a willingness to work hard. The teachers working on the master's degree for administration will come to you in time. Finding a few "keepers" that aren't on that track will help, too. Teachers that model best practices. They are enthusiastic, energetic, and passionate for doing any job. Teachers need to be "go-getters" and not be afraid to take on big projects. The biggest problem I have is that many of my best teachers will not go into administration because they love being in the classroom. So, it's a balancing act for me. I train my AP's to seek help for jobs and projects. So, my belief is if my

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administrative team all know what type of leaders we want to bring along for the ride with us, the journey if you will, we will be more successful in the long run.

Does the district have an orientation program for new principals? How have you benefited from the program? What developmental experiences do you recommend to new high school principals?

P2: The district does have an orientation program. It's called NPP and that can be for you before you become a principal or after you become a principal depending on where you are in the continuum. And that was a program that was very helpful to me. It was focused on the principal strands and the principal leadership competencies. And much more important than just being focused on those competencies, it was focused on sharing time and networking. Once you become a principal it's very lonely. You only have a limited number of peers and there are things even if you maintain relationships with people you worked with, it's tough. I have relationships with people but you can't talk to this friend about that teacher and what they did to you because that is the person's peer. You can't do that. So that sharing time was incredibly important to me in my development. And just hearing how other people dealt with the same issues that were presented to me on a daily basis because while your issues at your school might vary slightly from my issues at my school. AIP's are AIP's at every school but hearing how other people dealt with it is part of the NPP process. This type of sharing was very, very helpful to me. So have I benefited from it? I survived as a result of it. The project is one

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piece of the NPP. You have to demonstrate the principal competencies as a component.

The second component was the on-the-job training pieces, which were specifically about experiences. Have you been to a school board meeting? Do you know how the facility operates? Do you know how your food and nutrition services department operates?

Another component of it was running summer school in another school. And then the final component for me was the project. We also had to report periodically those critical incidents that occurred in our school. The project piece could be as meaningful as you let it be. My project piece was about developing learning communities and since I finished this program before I became a principal, it was very helpful to me because it was some of my work I was doing as an assistant principal. But it helped me then once I became a principal with how to get groups to work on a project. I'd only been a principal a few months when our school score improved and we got \$312,000 in school improvement money. I had worked through a process with my program, for the NPP program so I had a clue where to start with the process for what to do about the money. And if you think money causes divorces in marriages, how many marriages have \$300,000 they're fighting over?

P1: They do have an orientation program but it's part of the certification process. It's a two-year pool process and you get in the pool and then you earn your certification. The focus is experience. I think it's designed from what I viewed when I was in the pool, in the program; it's designed to get you as much experience in principal-type roles as you

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can get. Then you have to document what you've done; you know principal competencies as evidenced by your behavior in certain situations. Did I benefit from the program? I've benefited from the program because I was given the opportunity to learn about areas that I didn't have a lot of experience in. I was given the opportunity to sit and talk with people who, you know, from facilities management, from maintenance, from new construction, from financing, who gave up a lot of their time to sit and talk with us that we would never have had that opportunity before to learn about the behind the scenes stuff. I was also able to, through that, that program attends conferences that normally we probably wouldn't have been able to attend. Make a lot of contacts with other administrators. Also, it provides you with a mentor principal. My mentor principal was assigned to me over four years ago. I can still call him and say you know I've got this situation, what would you do? Establishing that support group was a real benefit of the program.

P6: I have to tell you that the program that we had here was a joke. Two or three of my people have gone through it and it was basically a paper-push thing. It was silly and it was a joke. And everybody knew it was a joke. Now this year for the first time, they've really kind of revamped the whole thing and they have to go down there once a month after school. They give them a light snack dinner and they're going through a series of activities. In addition to that, they're assigned a mentor principal. We have a cadre of retired superintendents and principals in our county that are also assigned as a support

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team. I can't tell you how it's going to look yet. They've just started it a couple of months ago.

P5: Yes, I personally have not been involved. I came to this district from another where I was already a principal. The focus is on preparation so people waiting for schools are ready to assume the chair so to speak. I did benefit from my program from my previous employer. But nothing compares to the experience I gained from being an involved assistant principal and what I learned once I became the principal I had a big, big wake up call.

P7: The principal induction program has really changed over the years. When I did it, I found it was really about building a relationship with a mentor. I was an assistant principal and that was established between the principal and me. There were some very specific strategies and specific things I had to demonstrate and he had to sign off on those skills. The twenty-one competencies I had to demonstrate and I had to create folders to demonstrate that I had met those competencies. It was a great program but it was only as good as the principal that was having me go through the program. I was fortunate enough to have a principal that really wanted me to meet those competencies. Since that time, in addition to doing that, the district has also gone for prospective assistant principals. A whole training program was developed so they could work with assistant principals and identify them as the up and coming leaders. They just kind of take them through all the kinds of things they might need to know, from legal issues to ESOL

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programs, to how to establish effective staff development programs, to staffing, to technology. I've seen the recent groups of assistant principals go through it and it seems great.

P8: They do. Mr. KT is heading that up, trying to develop that. He has a lot of experience. It seems people are too busy. I learned about being a principal from two people, from a guy named SB who was a principal that I worked for, and a guy named DD. We've been together since 1972. He ended up becoming principal and I went with him back to our old high school, back to the high school. If you really want to do this, you learn, you watch people. I don't know that everybody does that? If they watch other people and say this is something, or you pick and choose what works for you.

P3: It's changed over the years, since I've become a principal. They've changed the program and for the better. Right now they take assistant principals who are interested in being principals and they have ongoing seminars to discuss topics such as: finance, curriculum, facilities, a series of topics, a series of speakers, people very experienced, who work in those areas. I think it gives the future assistant principals a broader view when they go back to their schools. I know when I first moved from assistant principal to principal I thought I knew everything. I had no idea the other half of the world dealing with the district and all that stuff. I never had to do that as an assistant. My principals dealt with all that. That was a big learning experience for me.

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P4: Yes, we do. It is two-fold: overviews of specific areas such as hiring, and sharing and developing a support cadre. The program exposes principals to all of the topical stuff I call it. The district does a nice job of offering breakout sessions and trainings for new principals many times during the year. The superintendent and his staff direct these trainings and meetings. Mainly by finding out that everyone faces obstacles, no matter on what level they are on, but there are resources to help. The support network starts with the superintendent and includes all principals and some district staff.

Appendix K

3rd Interview Transcription Data

What do you perceive are the most important responsibilities for the high school principal?

P8: I believe the high school principal is the educational leader and I believe that it is very demanding today and it's probably been that way for a long period of time. But really with being an educational what I think it really entails is that you are here to support teachers teaching and students learning and to help provide whatever support, whatever needs teachers have so that they can really motivate to do their very, very best.

P6: The most important job for a high school principal are number one, not just for a high school principal but for any principal would be to ensure the safety and security of staff and students. Two would be to promote a well rounded curriculum that is challenging so that students are better prepared for a post graduation opportunities be it a vocational school, college, or the workforce. By looking at that curriculum and making sure there is enough honors courses, enough AP courses, and challenging my guidance staff and administrative staff to identify students who could potentially do well or if not potentially, at least give them the opportunity to take advantage of more challenging courses. I guess, this should have been first, but public relations. I don't know how I didn't put that first. It's a political position and we have so many stakeholders that you're working closely with that you want to satisfy and it's not always easy. Some of your

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decisions aren't considered popular and that's okay as long as the decision is in the best interests of the students. So being a really good public relations person, out in the community, working with parents, working with teachers, your relationship with your staff are all very important responsibilities.

P5: Certainly student achievement. In this era of accountability, certainly student achievement has to be the number one priority and then of course, school safety. We try to send the messages early each year and maintain the high expectations throughout the school year. It is certainly a challenge with 2800 students in this school.

P1: One of the most important responsibilities would be to ensure that learning is happening in every classroom. An example of accountability in this area is conducting regular walkthroughs of classrooms with feedback and support to the teachers. I had an experience with a new teacher who was having classroom management issues. I visited the room once a week for a quarter. We would have meetings and I got her subs to attend trainings and see peers teach. Unfortunately, we did not retain the teacher after that year but I felt like I provided support and feedback. Another one would be to ensure the safety of the staff and students everyday, that a safe learning environment exists. Every day good quality instruction should be taking place in every classroom. I think it's the responsibility of the high school principal to promote your school in the most positive light that you can possibly promote it. Serve as the PR, as a community liaison for the

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school, make sure that you get positive press out there, as often as possible. I meet with students and parent groups. I also joined the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club.

P7: I think a high school principal's primary responsibilities are to provide the most effective, world class education he can provide in an environment that is safe and secure and one that recognizes that the high school is a reflection and a part of the community that they serve.

P2: Instructional leadership continues to be what I believe is the primary responsibility for a high school principal. Ensuring student safety has become an important responsibility for the high school principal. It's like Maslow's hierarchy, you may start with safety, but what safety is all about is really instructional safety. The most important responsibility is instructional leadership.

P3: I think probably the major responsibility is making sure that everything is getting done. There are very large high school campuses in this county. I have over three thousand students and two hundred forty employees. Making sure that it never gets so big that we lose the relationships is a key focus. We need to stay in touch with the kids and the people. It's just my second year as a high school principal and coming from a smaller middle school to this very large high school, I need to use my seven assistant

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principals very differently here. I count on them to do the majority of the classroom responsibilities list. They report back to me as we were just doing every Monday morning to see how things are going in their areas. Of course, the major responsibility is campus safety. Making sure that the campus is supervised is a priority. For example, I have double the amount of security people on this campus since I've become the principal. Making sure that people are on duty when they're supposed to be is a priority. Having a really tight supervision and safety plan that we stick to, that we've developed together as a staff is important to us. I would say that student achievement is right with safety on our priority list. I have over thirteen hundred level one and level two readers on this campus and every one of them is in a reading class. We are focused on getting some of the basic skills that they didn't have before into their hands. We also have some of the highest performing students in the county with our AP and IB program. We just got back staff, student and parent surveys and we're doing very well. The perception is that we have a good handle on all this. Kids feel safe and parents feel safe and people are very satisfied with the education their children are receiving here.

P4: The high school principal position can be equated to a 1000 piece puzzle. Which piece is the most important? All 1000 are necessary and important to complete the puzzle successfully. We attempt to look at all of the pieces of the puzzle. For example, we have a no walking on the grass rule. Students bought into it completely and it is part of our school culture. We also have a zero tolerance for fighting. When students fight,

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they receive 10-day suspensions and they are arrested. The students accepted this too and we had 1 true fight all year. These are all perception questions, so the major priorities for a high school principal that they promote in a high school, what do you think those are?

P8: I think the principal has to set the tone of their philosophy by their actions, what their beliefs are as far as teaching is concerned and as far as learning is concerned and the priorities are also in school safety is very important. I believe students seeing the principal out and the administrators out, everybody out and about and being very visible. To me it's sort of like law enforcement, and I don't mean that we're here to enforce laws; it's like law enforcement. They allow police officers to take their cars home at night in the community because that's a visible sign of authority and I believe the same thing is true of a high school principal, that you have to be a visible sign to your staff and to the students and to the parents and to the community that you care about the school, you care about the students, you care about the staff and you're going to be there in total support of anything that you need to do for them.

P6: The number one priority is increasing the graduation rate. It is certainly high on my priority list. We're fortunate here at this High School that we're piloting a performance-based program which is funded by a community foundation grant and this is the first semester of implementation so we're hoping that we'll have more students graduating with their original class. We did have an unfortunate incident occur at graduation. We

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had a young lady walk and she was a science credit short. So, I just worked with my administrative team and the guidance team to ensure we have steps and a plan to prevent this from slipping past us again. Second would be closing the achievement gap which is a nationwide issue and at our school we are the most diverse high school in this county, not just economically but racially diverse.

P5: I like to think that my biggest is communicating, whether it's with students, with parents, with staff, or with the community. A high school principal is incredibly visible and whatever I say, it is a different message than if it comes from someone else. So the communication and how I communicate is paramount to the perception of the school, and the impact on individual students, parents, or groups at large. I think that's a real high priority. The other thing is being visible and accessible. The school's huge, we're twenty eight hundred, almost twenty nine hundred kids. But it's important that every student, every parent, anyone who needs to see me about something, whether it be trivial or life or death, has that opportunity. We started incorporating FCAT chats with all of our students. My seven assistants meet with about 400 students in small, seminar groups of 30-40 students to relay the messages for the year and to stress the importance of academics and the FCAT.

P1: I think the major priorities are in some ways being dictated to us if you're talking about meeting AYP and meeting goals in terms of scoring on standardized tests and score

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accountability. In terms of personal priorities, I think that the biggest, or the major one for me personally would be ensuring that quality instruction is taking place throughout the building. If there is a qualified teacher in every classroom and every teacher is teaching every day, every period, students should be learning. It's not busy work, it's not wasted time, but that learning is taking place every day in every classroom.

P7: I think from a priority standpoint being accountable to the testing mandates that are out there, whether it's NCLB, FCAT, advanced placement or SAT. There are an awful lot of accountability measures and those certainly rise to the top priority in a school today. That being said, I think that you also have a priority of having a challenging and rigorous curriculum. I think that you also have to have a safe school and a social atmosphere that enhances student growth socially and academically. We do grade level meetings and orientations. We also have a 9th grade orientation day that we stole from a local High School. We have a freshmen academy and a peer connector program. We have two sections that are taught by two teachers. So, each of these sixty students get trained and have 8-10 ninth graders to mentor in their first year of high school. It is a great program that really assists us in modeling what we need to see here at this large high school.

P2: For most schools the only way to get at the instructional leadership piece is to take teachers at the high school level who have been departmentalized and therefore Appendix

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compartmentalized, and push the interdisciplinary connectedness and relevancy of what's happening. So the most important priority for a principal at the high school level is to get a staff into a culture of teaching with an open practice philosophy. It's reflective practice and it's centered on the one piece. The only way you can do that is if you make connections with other disciplines and with what's happening in students' lives. If it isn't perceived as relevant to them, it can be as rigorous as you want it to be, but students are going to find more application in it. So the most important priority would be in creating that learning-centered environment, focused on teaching practices. The goal is to make it open access and make it reflective so teachers can make connections between what they're doing with other disciplines as well as focusing on student relevancy.

P3: Without a doubt for me it is literacy. I spend probably every single meeting with every group in some way or another addressing literacy. Whether it's reading in the content area, determining our lexile level for each student, or coordinating our materials to the student lexile scores. I have ten full or part time reading teachers making sure they have a scope and sequence. We have a working partnership with the Florida Center for Reading Research. They assist us with evaluating our reading programs and make recommendations based on our learning gains and school scores. We have Reading 180, SRA, and RISE (a literature-based program). We have both 50 and 90-minute blocks to meet the needs of all students that are level 1 and 2. Without these kids being literate they're not going to be successful anywhere. So I would say that one of my major

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priorities is literacy.

P4: Being a curriculum leader is no longer just being a manager. The eyes are on you, so if you're not at that workshop and all the other teachers have to be there, they notice that. Next, is the organization of the school, is it very obvious, organized in every little thing.

You better have good people around you to do that because one person's not going to be able to handle that. And the other one is the safety issue. The kids have to be safe. These needs have to be met before they can do anything else. I think those are the three biggest.

What do you perceive are the greatest challenges for you in your development as a high school principal?

P8: In the development of a high school I think the most difficult thing right now is staff development. I believe it's the most needed aspect of improving our schools and that goes for everybody in the school, that we have a block of time where we can really do staff development that is going to affect the way we deliver instruction. To me it's too piecemeal now. We ask people to go on their own time, or we take teachers out of class or we try to do little things at the end of the school day and that's why I'm a real proponent of a modified instructional week. I've worked in three school systems where we had a modified instructional week and over the years of being in those systems I saw

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a positive change in the way teachers delivered instruction. And then I saw a positive change in students wanting to learn or using a higher order thinking skills to really think and solve problems.

P6: The biggest challenge this year has been following a legend. I've replaced the principal who was principal here for twenty-four years, sixteen as the principal. So the challenge has been getting to know staff, helping them to understand the need for change, helping them to understand the data and how that really should be the driving force. But it seems no matter how often they see that data, they're just uncomfortable with change and we can't continue doing things the same way we've always done them.

P5: Well, I think time. For me the biggest difference between levels is time and demands. I tell people when I was an elementary principal I could leave at four o'clock most days and be pretty much on top of most things. At the middle school I could leave around five, five thirty and be pretty much on top of things. It is humanly not possible to ever finish anything at this high school. It doesn't matter how late I stay, it doesn't matter how much I work on the weekends, the job is so all encompassing that there's just not enough time to manage everything at the level that I would like to. What I do is I handle the urgent and work on the important. I'm always in the urgent and important quadrant, not where I want to be, but I'm always in urgent and important as opposed to important not urgent. It's the nature of this beast called a large high school.

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P1: I think that the biggest frustration is probably that people assume that you know everything about managing a school just because you've become the principal. They assume that you know for instance, all the answers about Workmen's Comp, that you know all the answers about insurance, that you know all the answers about how to take vacation time or why you don't get vacation time or sick leave time if you were hired before or after a certain date. And some of those questions you do know, but some of those questions you don't know the answers to and it's very frustrating when some of the people from the district office assume that you already know those things and there's no explanation that comes with them. When you're with that memo that you're asked to fill out. Grants are the worst. When you're asked to fill out paperwork concerning grant personnel, there's no explanation for those pieces of paper that come to your office and you're asked to fill out this out and it's the principal's responsibility and you've never seen this paperwork before. There's no explanation for it and you're just expected to know how to fill it out. And when you call to ask you sometimes get someone who is responsive and receptive to you. I've never done this before and sometimes you get somebody who tells you just read to it and fill it out. Just do what the paper says they will say. There are a lot of things in the district that are that way, that are very, very frustrating. FISH reports can be that way. Even though you've done a FISH report before, putting on your plans for renovations, and how much it's going to cost and what kinds of building materials you're going to use on this new structure, if you don't know that, you've never been involved in that, it's difficult to do and you have to learn to rely

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on other people and luckily I have some people that I can rely on to do that. But it can be very, very frustrating. Some examples of ways that I have attempted to improve communication lines in our school are: email communications, thank you notes, announce great things happening in the newsletter and at meetings.

P7: In my own personal development as a high school principal, I think professional development training is so important. I need to stay up on the legislative changes and best practices of curriculum and instruction. It's extremely challenging. You can get so caught up in the day-to-day operations of the school that you really have a hard time finding time to expand your own personal and professional growth.

P2: The greatest challenges continue to be that there's a lot of management that needs to occur. It's completely outside of the role of being an instructional leader and how do you find the time to deal with those management issues and be the instructional leader in a building. That's a huge challenge. It's a public relations challenge if nothing else.

When I was a principal I prided myself on keeping more appointments scheduled so that parents could have my ear whenever they walked into the office. But if you create that kind of scenario where you're perceived as having a customer friendly school, a client friendly school, and then you need to be in the classrooms, how do you make that transition. So I think that's a great challenge. I believe I know how to do it but I recognize it would be a great challenge for a principal. Another of the great challenges

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for the development of a high school principal is the lack of preparation to be the principal. You can learn all the school that you want. You can learn all the school finance that you want. Until it is applicable to what is actually happening in schools, then it's theoretical and it's grey in theory but the application of it is truly the challenge of being a principal.

P3: Coping with the growing size of this school is difficult and a constant challenge. It would be very easy for the principal at a school this size to bury themselves in their office to focus on emails, phone calls, and meetings. I force myself to create a schedule that prioritizes my time in the lunches and in the classrooms. My secretary knows not to schedule parent meetings, teacher conferences unless they are emergencies during blocked calendar times.

P4: Two main ones. One obvious nowadays is academics, academics, academics. It's always been there but obvious tests and those kinds of things, you've got to have it, especially in the reading areas we're discussing. Reading throughout the nation is terrible and not a lot of reasons, but you don't have an alibi. The other one would be is the positive aspect of the school. You've got to be able to promote it and that's something that my assistant principals they do a very good job. Like last night with the open house. Giving the positives to the press all the time. A lot of times they may not use any of that information, but they certainly always seem very good high school, very good high

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school, so when we do get them on campus maybe they'll write something great, if something really negative ever occurs, they help you out a lot of times too. So this would be a positive. It's not hiding or covering anything up, but really putting that very positive spin on things we can.

What do you perceive are the greatest barriers or frustrations for a developing high school principal?

P8: I think that the barriers are, I keep hearing the word bureaucracy, but just people not getting out of your way so you can be a leader at your school. I've been very fortunate, I've worked with the Superintendent for thirteen or fourteen years and he's an advocate of site based management, and I think if you're going to put someone into a position where they're going to manage two hundred people they're going to have ten million dollar budgets or whatever the case may be, you need to let those people manage their facilities. Certainly, there needs to be some guidelines, and if you think you're going to do something that might be radical or drastic, you need to run it by your district office personnel. But I just think we need to have site-based management. Then you're a visionary. You can think and create and try to do things instead of having all this passed down from above.

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P6: I know in some districts some of the barriers might be lack of support from the district office or lack of support from parents. I've not faced any of those issues and I think mainly it's because I'm working under the leadership of a new superintendent. He came from out of the district and he understands things that I understand so I'm getting a lot of support from the superintendent and I believe that because I am hammering on those things that were indicated in the site analysis the parents are really supportive. I think my greatest barrier has been working with this staff. They have been under one style of leadership for so long. Right now I'm pulling back and I'm doing relationships and I'm becoming less focused on the need to change things right now. I'm reducing the sense of urgency intentionally on my part right now until I can get to know them a little bit better and tap into that personal side. Hopefully I'll be able to bring them on board with me at the start of the next school year.

P5: I have incredibly competent assistant principals. I have an outstanding secretary and a very strong guidance department. For the last five years that has improved significantly. I have one counselor left from five years ago. Everyone else is new and of my five assistants, only one of them was here. So I've been able to build a team, which has made a huge difference. My administrative team meets on Mondays from 8-10 in the morning. We cover areas and projects and things happening so everyone is in the loop. We fill out our evening coverage by season. But even given that this is just huge!

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P1: Barriers, I think the biggest barrier for the new principal is communication. I think that it's communication amongst the principals. I think its communication amongst the staff at the school. I think there's a level of distrust. When the new principal comes in people don't know if they can trust you so they don't always talk to you. I think that it's very, very important to establish somebody that you can trust totally on your staff and then I think it's very important to have somebody who is an established principal with lots of experience that you can go to and ask questions and they can tell you, you know I've been through that and this is how you can work through it and this is how you can handle it. It makes a big difference and I've been lucky enough to have a couple of people that I can do that with.

P7: I think time and resources. You know administrative staffs are spread so thin that you tend to just find yourself doing the day-to-day operations with your assistant principal staff and your deans. You really don't have a lot of time to do any mentoring or growth opportunities. And that really comes down to function of economics, that you only have so much money that you can spend in a school system. You spend on teachers, on administrative staff, support staff, and on the classrooms. You don't have time to really develop your assistant principals due to time constraints. Because of that, we're not seeing a lot of assistant principals that want to be principals because they look at the job of principal and say, "I don't want to do that job." I mean my own administrative staff is a great staff. I've only got one or two people that would really like to be a

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principal. The one assistant principal who wants to be a principal is very good. He embodies many skills that principals need to have in their arsenals. He has great communication skills, common sense, a great work ethic, and has terrific management skills. He is articulate and works well with groups and leading other people. Anyway, I think it's just a function of being able to properly mentor people and to have the time to do it well so they understand the role of the job.

P2: I think you can learn a lot about being a principal, but until you are one you're not learning what it's like to be a principal. We don't have a very good internship program if you will, for new principals in our county. I think we're getting closer. I've seen some things and heard about some things in the PNPP now that I think are good. As an example, a new principal has co-chaired the high school design team for the two last years and that grew out of his PNPP. I think the person got a taste of some of the aspects of the principalship because he got to try out more of the roles as an instructional leader of a group. It was a district group instead of a group of teachers but we don't have a very good induction program for new principals in my opinion. Not that the PNPP program isn't good, too much of it occurs after they've gotten into the position. The true opportunities to experience what it's like to be a principal need to happen prior to the real deal. I think another challenge and barrier is simply that management versus leadership piece. There's a lot that happens in a school. Knowing how to delineate between the two takes time and experiences.

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P3: The big things that frustrate me are things that come down from the legislature. You get to feeling that it's a small group of people making all of the decisions for us. I think that they have good intentions but do not have a school pulse when they plan these mandates. The Jessica Lunsford Act is a good example. I think that the intent is right but the manpower it's taking for us to check all of the game officials, all the things that have to be done with deliveries, it's crazy. Good intentions, but very frustrating and very, very time consuming. Now they're looking at changing the calendar. That should be a local decision. I don't see why they would tell a district to change the calendar because there is a parent group concerned. If it's a group, if it's a problem among parents, they're going to let our school board know and our school board is going to respond to that. I think that my biggest frustration is dealing with things that are not county issues but are kind of sent to us from the state. Coping with the size of the school is another frustration. I think it would be very easy for a principal to hide in their office because there's always lots of emails to answer, there's always voice mail, there's always people waiting. But forcing yourself to be out there with the kids, get to the lunches, interact with the kids, get to the evening activities. It's a challenge, but I calendar that. My secretary knows to not schedule conferences unless it's an emergency during the students' lunchtime, so I can get to those lunches everyday. I make sure I hit many activities. Almost every night I'm out at something. I usually attend multiple events in the same evening. I think being visible and being approachable is huge for a high school principal. I have a lot of potential problems that kids bring to me because they see me and know me. We have

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that relationship piece which is so important.

P4: It goes back to time management. I don't know the solution. I'm fairly organized. I got a palm pilot and got all those kinds of things, my secretary's tremendous but as a principal you dictate your schedule. Like I told you I didn't get a look at the questions. I put them off this morning. I had a chance to relax and do it, 'cause I came in early. Well there are some other issues that I had to take care of with an officer. I had to get organized so I didn't really do the things I wanted to but at least I got ahead; at least I looked at the questions. Politics would be another one. As a principal I equate it to head coach versus assistant coach. As assistant coach in football, they know all the answers. The head coach gets gray, has a heart attack whatever cause he's the one that answers to every decision someplace and he's got to be able to balance everything. As a principal, there's a lot of politics out there. You've got to know whom the players are and you've got to stroke different egos different ways. And once you've done that, a lot of times you need to do things that you shouldn't be doing without really making someone mad. The other part would be simply the mandates from federal government and state. There are also local ones. But mainly like the No Child Left Behind, certain things. I don't know if you've gone through the certification. We just had a meeting this morning, 7:30, and they had to go through how to be highly qualified, and all those deals. And the remark I made to the staff is like it's being poured on a plate and nothing comes off. Those are mandates that may be very good, but there's other mandates out there, you've got to do

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this, do that and so I think a mandate, especially when you talk about being funded, class size amendment. Next year it goes down to the schools unless they change it. But they're not doing what they're supposed to be doing with it. As a result it finally comes down to the local, which affects us for everything else. The problem with that though with the class size amendment is most of your resources is going to your core classes. You know you may have this fantastic engineering robotics classes and you knock the socks off everybody, but maybe you cannot put in the resources you really want to. Next year besides a regular agriculture program we're going to have a veterinary science so that we can up with a unit like we're supposed to. Class size, it's the unfunded mandates.

Since you're an experienced principal, what developmental experiences would you recommend to new high school principals?

P8: I think first of all is find a mentor. If you've worked with other principals either as a teacher or as an assistant principal, put it down on a piece of paper somewhere things you saw them do that were highly effective and things you saw that weren't very effective. You have to be your own man, but you certainly model and steal from people who have been successful. This summer for example I was at FRJ and I was in a little meeting afterwards, and the high school principal from the High School, if you know anything about the school, the High School principal better be one of the toughest, meanest, you better have some guts, because it is a tough, tough high school. They've been an F

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school for several years and I believe that they have a new principal that's only been there about a year and they went from either an F to a D or C. I think they may have gone to a C in one year. I said I've got to meet this principal. Anybody that can take that high school that far so fast. And it was this lady, 5' 9", blonde, very attractive, " and when I saw her I said you must be a stud, for you to have accomplished that. So you find people that are having success and I asked her what did you do. She said I check lesson plans every Thursday. Every teacher submits their lesson plans for the next week and our staff, we stay after school, we pull the lesson plans and we go over them and then we put them back in their boxes and when they walk in the next morning they're in their mailboxes, but they've been checked. So now they're making sure they're covering the standards and the benchmarks. What is that? That's accountability. We are really supervising and we're holding people accountable for what they are to be teaching. The next thing she said, she asked every teacher in the school, when the bell rings you're to be by your door and have your eyes watching everywhere and let us know what's going on. All of a sudden those pretty tough students, I mean they're tough, start realizing it's not us against ten administrators, it's us against a hundred or two hundred some teachers and staff, everybody's looking. They're out in the hallways; they're watching what we're doing. Pretty soon the attitude of the students changed too. They knew people were watching. It wasn't everybody just running free, doing what they want to do. She said those two things she thought made the biggest difference, but to do those two things you've got to demand the teachers are going to do them. You've got to demand that on

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Thursday afternoon your staff, they're not going home until we go through the lesson plans. But those little things can make that kind of difference. I think the little things that you do will make a big difference.

P6: I think having more time to network with others, building leaders, and sharing ideas. You know, collaborating more would certainly help and validate some of the things I am considering at my school. Having time to read more professional literature and to have the time to organize your plan for the school year. Having time to network and to read more would certainly help.

P5: Well I've been the new principal many times. I was principal of three schools in California. This is my third school in Sarasota. So I've been a new principal six times. The error that all beginning principals make, I made my first year. But I only made it that first time and I learned from it. But I watch other brand new principals, regardless of the level. People come in and they feel a sense of urgency to make sweeping changes and the best thing you can do as a new principal is spend one year just watching and looking and trying to figure out why things are the way they are. Unless they're illegal or immoral or they're hurting kids, do not come in and make sweeping changes because sometimes what appears to be a problem results in you solving what appears to be the problem and you don't really solve anything. It is a symptom of a much bigger problem and all you're doing is solving superficial problems. So you really need to kind of step

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back and watch and listen and learn and then almost begin to develop a game plan of where you're going to go the second year. I would also recommend that you document everything and keep everything organized and file in binders or whatever system works for you. I print my palm calendar each day and hole punch it and it goes in the binder. I will add phone messages or papers and it's organized and structured. At the end of the year, my secretary places it all in a file folder and I start over. The other thing that I think, and some people will disagree with me on this. I do not believe, unless it's a very, very small high school, I do not believe anyone's first principal's job should be a high school principalship. It's too complicated. I learned if you can be an elementary principal and manage a budget of five million dollars and staff of twenty or thirty and six, seven, eight hundred, even a thousand kids, you can certainly do a budget for twenty million dollars or a hundred million dollars because you know how to do it on a smaller scale, it's just bigger and the same thing with managing personnel or managing kids. If you can manage and lead when it's small, you will be fine later with larger systems. The complexities and the differences of levels is a learning curve. Once you know how to be a principal. I believe you can be a principal at every level. You just have to learn the job. I watch that as I get assistant principals from middle schools or elementary schools. They know the assistant principal job, they don't know high school so if they can kind of juggle the job you can teach them the intricacies of the level that they're at.

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P1: Learn how to keep a calendar and keep everything on your calendar. Learn really, really quick, the names of all of your custodians, meet with the people that run your building; your plant manager, your cafeteria manager, your assistant plant manager, assistant cafeteria manager. Make sure those people know that you appreciate all that they do and keep those people very satisfied with their jobs. They are your workhorses and they do everything you need them to do. Get yourself a mentor. Find somebody that's been a principal that is a principal that you can rely on. There were some principals, brand new principals in the district who were given mentors. I was not one of them, so it was just sort of left up to me to kind of find one and I actually found a couple. Other things if you have the opportunity to pick the brains of the principal that you're replacing, do that. Start slow. You don't have to make lots of changes to begin with. Survey the staff to begin with and find out the sacred cows. I did a survey at the very beginning to ask the staff here what they wanted changed. If they could change one thing what would it be? What did they think the number problem or challenge was here? And then I asked them, as part of that survey, what one thing are you most proud of and what one thing do you never want to see changed about the high school? So I really quickly found out that there were some sacred cows that I did not want to touch. So I avoided a lot of problems with that. I think that you need to establish a really, really good rapport with your secretary and I think you need to start as you intend to finish. Don't go in a be real lax at the beginning and much like you tell a first year teachers don't go in and give away the classroom at the beginning of the year or you'll be lost, but it's having a

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sounding board, having people that you can talk to, having somebody who can give you advice when you really don't know which decision to make, all of those things are very, very important.

P7: I think the greatest thing I did was to find a colleague principal that I could work with well and relate to. I've had the good fortune of having a couple of really good principals in our own district that I constantly communicate with and it's a matter of finding people that are being open with each other. You know high schools can be very competitive by nature and this county is no different than the norm. Yet, our county is high performing both academically and athletically. The principals in this county are really committed to working together. I have principals when an issue comes up I can call them, and work with them. It's really incumbent upon me not to be afraid to make that call and to act like I don't know something. My first week on the job here involved some real crazy stuff. The principal I replaced denied a controversial field trip. During my first week, a group of students and parents asked for a meeting with me and broadsided me with a reversal request. Being new and unsure of myself, I denied their request at the end of the meeting. They called the superintendent and filed a complaint with the school board. I was on local television and in the newspapers. It was horrible and consumed me for a few weeks. I worked with a fellow principal and we discussed the issues with the trip. Ultimately, the group was able to attend the field trip and we moved on quickly. I guess the advice, if that's what it is, that I would give to a new principal would be to not feel like you have

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to know everything, and to never be afraid to go to somebody who has more experience and at least get their ideas. I learned to speak with others on certain issues before making big decisions. When this school went from an A to a B, the community went nuts! Then we moved from a B to a C and we went through the same issues. I spoke to a few principals and one recommended that I go to lunch with him because he lived the same things at his school. So the networking is key. Not necessarily to do it the way they would do it, but at least get a different perspective, another perspective. I think that's probably one of the things that have helped me in my transition. When you first go in as principal sometimes you just think you're supposed to know more than you are really are supposed to know. I think once you get over that and realize that you don't really know a whole lot, you are fine. Every year I find out how little I know. It really is important to have colleagues that you can work with.

P2: I think all new high school principals need to have developmental experiences in the areas of what you and I would simply call walkthroughs. What is it? What do you do to lead a group to serve as an instructional leader? How do you take what you think you should see in a classroom and use that to develop people who don't exhibit those characteristics and qualities? And how do you use that information to push forward people who already exhibit those practices but you want them to continue to grow? I think another developmental experience that would be great for new high school principals would be the opportunity to have a mentor who would continue to work with

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them after they've been selected as a principal so that could be a safe person to whom they can run ideas, that they can float ideas and to whom they can vent. Because there's an awful lot that happens in schools, you become more isolated the further up the chain you go. Once you become the principal there is some things that happen that may occur with your assistant principals and you just need someone else to vent to. But you can't do it to one of the other AP's.

P3: Definitely working with different populations. I started out my career at higher SES schools and now I'm at lower SES schools and I love working at the lower SES schools. You have to have somebody who's interested and up to the challenge to work hard. These kids bring a lot of baggage to school. A lot of them have reading issues and literacy issues. To be involved with the community, I try to do at least one home visit a week. I know where these kids are living and they fake middle class real well. I've been to a lot of their homes with dirt floors or the wood floors you can see through and they're so drafty. The trailers that many of them live in are in horrendous condition. But you see the kids walking around here and you wouldn't know that. I'd say a good thing for somebody who wants to be a principal is to experience different populations. I think the more experiences you have the better. I think working under a variety of principals' leadership styles helps. I think as an assistant principal demanding from your principal that you get new and challenging experiences every year. I think it's real easy, especially in high school to be pigeon holed into doing the same old thing year after year after year.

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You have to actively seek out new tasks and projects to keep learning. It's much easier for to delegate to my assistant principals when I have lived in their schools. I got along very well with my principals when I was an assistant principal. I was always looking for new things to learn and new things to do because I knew it would help me in the long run. I advised the yearbook and I sponsored the student council. I did all of those things so that when I asked somebody to do something and they're moaning and groaning that it was too much work, could address it and assist them.

P4: Two things, one handsome type of cadre or a little group of principals you're comfortable with. A cadre sounds more formal like, just someone you can talk to. I was in a meeting yesterday with a teacher and another assistant principal, I was helping a teacher on something, and I explained to them that of all times as a leader of a department is lonely, because a lot of times you don't know who you can sit there are bare your soul to. You've got to have that sounding board. Fortunately for me I have some very good principal colleagues and AP's. We have a mixture. I'm the old head, (AP) is not, obvious, and I have two young ones. It's all different talents but it makes a good puzzle here, it goes together. I've never leaned on them heavy. I was never one to be blunt. But a lot of it's because they request and we have a lunch meeting on Fridays. So that forces me to slow down a minute and talk with them and we talk business and schedule and also just social. You've got to have this relationship you can trust. The district here they do

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have some cadres. They do nicely. I attended once with high school principals and the things they talked about, some of them you kind of know, but it's pretty interesting just to be able to see some of the people's interactions. The other one for experience is always be current as you can. I joke with everybody, with one brain cell, but I do read a lot. I skim. I have to do that and now, the different curriculum things, they're online, they come to you, you can get to talk real fast. It's almost like the book, a little magazine everybody gets a lot of times, it has little blurbs in it, it's not educational, it just came in the mail the other day, it has little short stories, current topics. But that's what I get. I get it real fast. I do have some magazines that we skim very fast, from professional organizations, whatever. But you just keep current.

What could further enhance your development as a high school principal?

P8: Probably more patience. But I don't want to be too patient, because I think we've been patient too long in America. Is it a lack of patience or is it complacency. Is it just trying to get by. A lot of people move out of the classroom to be an administrator because they think it's an easier path. A lot of people become guidance counselors because they think it's away from students. Well, I don't want to be away from students. So my lack of patience sometimes probably gets me in trouble.

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P6: Yes there's some inservice, but it's not timely inservice. It's as though it's almost a day late and a dollar short. Some of it is stuff that you really need to know which would be better to receive earlier and some of it is stuff that you know but you're hearing it again and it's wasting time. We meet monthly and before the meetings were all day and it was just information just thrown at you. This has really been a hard year, not just for me because I'm new, but for every principal in the district because there's been so much change here. The frustration level is really high and no one seems to have the time to help each other due to all of the things that are being asked of everyone.

P5: I think more opportunities for professional development. It is so hard to be away and I used actually do some consulting myself, presenting at national conferences and that pushes you to another level in terms of having to pull together a presentation or be prepared to go in and work with the school to help them work with issues. I don't have the time to do that but those are real great for your development as a professional. I remember the first time I was working for a national consulting group and I felt so flattered. When I think of the hours and the money it seemed phenomenal and my ego got in my way. I think of the hours and hours and hours I spent preparing and I got to the city to where I was to present and I spent the whole night before preparing. I wasn't nearly as prepared and every time I was going to be more prepared but the time for all of it is consuming with this job. Those professional challenges of getting your act together, being able to communicate, that's something that you don't do often but it does force you

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to come to another level professionally. I have had great mentors in my career. I always want honest feedback and direct criticism to improve my school. I had a superintendent who once said, "Don't give them a bologna sandwich. Give them the real deal and move on." I really respect that philosophy now.

P1: I think this county does a really good job with this through the principals meetings. We have the chance to network and talk to other high school principals. We have the chance to share experiences and to talk about the good and the bad at our schools. It's routine to hear, "I'm having this problem at my school, has anybody else ever had this problem, and if so how have you handled it?" That helps a lot. Other things, as high school principals, we've done a couple of book studies. We've done book studies here, two as a faculty. We're about to take on a third one. Participating in these as not only a facilitator but as a participant has really helped my development as a principal and leader. I participate in the trainings that are provided by the district. Going to the conferences that are provided here in the state is important. I went to one, the S Association was really good. Participation on committees where you have the opportunity to learn more about what's going on in the district and to learn more about what's going on statewide and with high school reform and all those kinds of things. That's very helpful. Working on courses at the University, that's very helpful. But networking with other principals is probably been the most helpful to me. We have a group of principals who get together each month for dinner and networking.

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P7: Well, I think professional development, staff development. I need help with quick trainings with data and analysis. I need to be able to bring data to the teacher so they can be successful and help student achievement. I think I'd have to say that would be it. It would be the time to expand myself educationally and professionally.

P2: I think opportunity for a peer mentor, whether it is someone who is assigned from outside of this district or someone within the district. I think another thing that would enhance my continued professional development would be training in the areas of instructional leadership versus school management. I hate to say technology and use just that word, but how to use tools to make the job easier.

P3: What I use and have in place that I like is I bring outside observers to this campus frequently. We're lucky to have a university so close and the professors will do it. I have a professor who comes out each semester and we have system we use that seems to be quite effective. He will conduct some walkthroughs and conduct a campus critique on his own. We then will do the same exact walkthroughs and campus walk together. We then discuss the differences and similarities we found. I will ask him to look for certain things, too. Some examples have been to look at: cleanliness, rigor in the classrooms, or perception of school climate. I bring retired principals or acting principals to really walk through with me and look for things that maybe I'm missing. You know when you walk by something every day you kind of miss it, so I really have them come here and I ask

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them to be critical. I say find something you think I can do better. We'll walk into forty classrooms, interact with kids and teachers and he will give me feedback. He once said to me, "Walt, most of these teachers are focused on the regression to the mean." What he meant was that many of my teachers were teaching to the test and teaching all of their students the same way, with the same expectations. What do we need to do better or differently? I would like more time to do parent forums and student forums. I just did a student forum last week. That's where I pull fifteen to twenty students at random and I ask them what can I do to be a better principal. What do I need to know about on this campus? They'll talk about problems in the community that spill over to the school. How am I doing? What do I need to do better? Do I need to put more time here or there? Being open enough to accept criticism is important for an effective leader. Schools are always going to have problems and I think you probably get yourself in trouble if you try to pretend there aren't problems. I think having a way in place to solve the problems is what makes it successful. Sometimes we have parents here for different reasons. I'll go to a community center. I've gone to churches on Sunday afternoons just to talk to people, to find out what needs to happen. In a school like this you have to be careful to have a good blend of parents. I don't want all of my wealthy parents here. They're not representative of my kids that live in the projects. I'll even do groups separately if I have to. If there's an issue out there or something new that's coming up, I'll run it through SAC and see if they want to bring a few people in to talk to me about it and I have a great cross representation on my school advisory council that helps me along.

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P4: I jotted down five ones that came real quick, very stressed. We already know that. I'm not a good example of that because I don't really take care of myself like as you can see, I don't exercise like I'm supposed to. I normally like to run, play ball, and unfortunately I'm not taking the time. The stress is there. The next is, as we talked about, you have very few moments of no demands, just time to just relax a few minutes and feel the impact of everything. The other one is you're constantly multi-tasking as you know. You've got to have the game face. As I've said the eyes are on you. You may be even having a down day whatever, but when you walk into that classroom or walk into that teacher's meeting they're going to pick it up on you so you might as well put the game face and just go with it. It goes back to that positive spin. Time management, things on your plate. You know there's going to be a point; something's got to give in your life. For me, I'm very fortunate I've been married many, many years, and she married me when I was a coach and she understood the hours. I have two younger kids now, in middle school. But if I didn't have an understanding wife that deserves a medal of honor, a high school principal he spends all those hours, it's tough. The stress can go to a marriage very quickly. Like I said my wife is used to me being gone. If I stayed around much, she'd wonder what's happening.

The job or the role of the high school principal as we know is documented in research as demanding and complex. What are your perceptions of your role as a principal?

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P8: I like to say that a high school principal has 1000 people who want 1 minute of your time. I believe in giving a full day's work for a full day's pay! I think to hold people accountable, they need to be held accountable. I tell teachers all the time, I have for years, I would hate for someone down the road to say to me. I'll tell you where I learned this. I was a high school coach, I was a basketball coach and we had a football player named GT, a quarterback, great, just a great quarterback. He went to the University and at the same time a guy named CC, went there as a quarterback. They were both going in as freshman quarterbacks. So he thought maybe Tim shouldn't go there because thought maybe it's really not the right place. But that's really where he wanted to go. So he goes up there in his freshman year and he starts as a sophomore. Then they get a new coach in and he leaves. And he's upset because now he's not going to be quarterback; they're going to move him to defense or something. So he came home. He's at the school talking to different coaches and I said I never thought you should have gone to the University. He looked at me and said if you thought that why didn't you tell me. I wasn't his coach or anything but he said why wouldn't you have said that to me instead of letting me ...if you thought that why wouldn't you tell me that? I cheated that kid. I let him down. He wouldn't have listened to me anyway, but at least I would have said that. So as a principal when we see teachers and we see people doing things they shouldn't be doing, that need to improve, we need to come in a professional way, let them know that they are not living up to expectations, and we need to hold them accountable. To me people turn their head, that's what's happened to education through

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the years. That's what's happened to children through the years. I was starting this in the 1970's and I believe we had a tough situation. That's when we started integrating schools. We have African-American coming into the school system. We have white teachers teaching African-American children and nobody taught them how to deal with this, so when they saw things they just sort of turned their head and it was like I didn't see that because I don't want to deal with it. I don't want to deal with the conflict. I don't know how to deal with the conflict. Then what happened? The schools kind of got out of control. Today I think it's real important if you see something you let people know what's going on. Then on the other hand the biggest thing we can do is when we see the good things happening, don't focus on the little negatives, because there's more good going on than there is bad. It is that we celebrate publicly the successes of teachers and students. Use every medium that you have to celebrate students, the successes they're having. I'll give you an example I came to this district in '99 to do a fact survey, so what's your biggest venue? Our football games. All they wanted to talk about was their football team and the football games. I said at half time do you ever recognize students or teachers in front of all these fans. No. I don't think they ever did. When I was at Vero Beach High School for seven years, once we started, every home football game, and we had eight or nine home football games a year, we would recognize students at half time, they'd walk out on the field, they'd walk across the field, they'd get standing ovations from about five thousand people for culinary arts, they were in a cake decorating contest and they accomplished this, or that team that was a national honor group and

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new Alpha Beta math team, second in the nation, a national math team winner, science fair winners, Westinghouse Merit Scholarship winners, anybody that was successful academically, or teachers that went above and beyond. When we had national board certified teachers, they were recognized. So we recognized them at football games, largest venue of people that we had was at those football games and so we used that to celebrate our teachers and our students. That's the kind of positive peer pressure that you want to have and you want to change. How do you create that? At this school so far, I haven't totally created it. I've only been at this school two years. This will be my third year, but I missed a half year, and I don't see it, they back off a little bit and I know at this high school when I left there I have a home there, if I drive through a drive-through, they'll go didn't you used to be my principal, and I'll say, because there we used to say it's great to be a fighting I. That's what our shirt said, it's great to be on the front, and on the back it says a fighting Indian. I'll simply say, yes I'm AM, thanks for saying something. By the way it's what is it. And they'll say it's great to be a fighting Indian. They still do it. I'm talking, every time I'm out in that community and I run into kids, or people, they're still going it's great to be a fighting I. Here its cane pride is alive, go canes go and now the kids will go down our street and go canes go, making fun. It doesn't bother me a bit. Because, like today, we had Arbor Day and we planted trees and we're going to do...Ed Vantage is our Strategic Planner for the district, we're going to put the six core values on those trees. Today when I said something, I said you know we're always talking about cane pride is alive, what is cane pride. The environmental science

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class, they did this with their teacher. This is a visible sign of cane pride. Thirty one students and their teacher have taken it on to plant trees in front of the school, they've lined it up with the six core values from the strategic plan, they've got plans on doing all kinds of games at lunch time where if you pick up trash you earn prizes and all kinds of stuff like that. That's an example of student putting peer pressure on other students and I guess the key is to create an environment where there's peer pressure from students to put pressure on the students to do better, to do the right thing, to be a good student, to go to school, have good attendance and to behave appropriately, have good character and morals. Same thing with teachers. To get your teachers to the point where there's enough teachers doing it the right way that they're putting pressure on all the teachers. When students start saying Miss Jones, Mr. So and So, our other six teachers all use the laptop and they have technology and are doing cooperative learning and are doing hard work skills and we expect the same things from you. If you've got that kind of attitude where students are saying I want you to teach me the way everybody is teaching me that make me successful. It puts a lot of pressure on people. If you can create that somehow. I don't know how you do it all the time. I've been at one school where I saw that work. I don't know if I can get it accomplished here, but that's the goal. Our superintendent told us that as an AP and Principal, his teams met everyday for a few minutes. This was a strong relationship builder and created a tight-knit administrative team culture.

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P6: When I was an assistant principal I thought that the assistant principal did all of the work. I would see my principal just sitting in his office, delegating everything out and I would think, hey, he's not doing anything. We're doing all of the work and it's just not true. There's more emotional frustration tied into the principalship because the buck stops with you. Student safety stops with you. Student achievement stops with you. Your name is on everything as the principal, so anything that goes wrong, ends with you. Fortunately, everything that goes right you're going to get the credit for, too. But in the age of accountability, it's a very demanding position, it's very complex, and it's very political. Some people make it look easy, but the people who I have known who have made it look easy are either naturals or they had the opportunity to open up their own school and hire their own staff. It's a bit more difficult when you are adopting a staff. Someone's compared a high school principal to a superintendent, with the job of a high school principal being much more complex than even being the superintendent of a school district. The high school job is just massive! Just changes with the way we do business in America is eventually going to affect high schools even more than it's currently affecting. We had an opportunity to attend a luncheon and we listened to Tom Friedman the author of a book *The World is Flat*. You've got to read that book. It talked about how America was once the leader, or giant in terms of the economy and just taking the lead in everything and how when we were growing up and our parents would always tell us eat your food, there are people in Asia starving. Well those people, because of the Internet and new technology, they're surpassing us quickly. They have surpassed us in a

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lot of ways and so America is no longer the dominant country. We have a lot of work to do to get back on top and not enough people know what's happening and it's kind of scary. So therefore, what we teach in high school is traditional in nature. What we teach in a vocational school really needs to look like today's market. We need to analyze the curriculum and make some changes so that we're preparing students to compete effectively. Right now it's scaring me.

P5: My immediate supervisor talks about and reminds us that, as high school principals, that we're running a small city and if you count the custodians and my food service people, I have over two hundred fifty employees, twenty eight hundred kids. Even if every one of those kids has only one parent, in most cases they've got parents and stepparents, it's a phenomenal number of people to just kind of orchestrate. The other perception is having a lot of assistants is great and I can delegate lots of things. I have competent people, but it's always a different message when it comes from me or when I'm on campus. An example was a big winter concert with our entire music program at the opera house downtown in December. The same night we had a big basketball game. I had three assistant principals at the basketball game and I went to the winter concert and when I went back to school the next day several people said, "Oh, I was surprised you weren't at the basketball game." The music concert was a function that was very important, a once a year event. Yet, there were people asking why I wasn't at the basketball game. That's where the frustration lies. You can't be everywhere. You know

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I can visit twenty classrooms a day. That's not even going to scratch the surface. As an elementary principal I told people I could be in every classroom every day, literally, even if I just cruised through. Middle school I could get to every classroom once a week. Getting out of this office, even if I took a whole day, I couldn't, you can't get to all of these classrooms. You can't be in every classroom and so that's the part that's the volume, the mass of this thing. And the magnitude is what I think makes it. Plus in high school many problems are really life and death. In elementary there's always another opportunity for a kid and in middle school there's always another chance. In high school they get here and the clock starts ticking in ninth grade and the hardest conversations I have is when I have to meet with a parent of a kid who has just turned eighteen, whose got six credits, got a 1.2 GPA and hasn't passed FCAT. It's such a final thing, but you are done. There's no easy way to tell kids that your dream of graduating high school can't happen. That's that kind of finality because it really is kids futures and when you talk to kids, you see it. I'll go to Publix and see former students who dropped out. A student will say something like, "This is my principal!" I will say, "Hi, what are you doing now?" It's common to hear, "Oh, I got pregnant, or I dropped out and I'm working, or I wish I would've worked harder in high school." Those aren't the stories I want to hear. Or the kid behind the deli comes over and says, "You know, I dropped out, I got my GED, I'd really like to come back and finish." Those are the sad stories and you know I'm always glad they're doing something productive with their lives, but I'm always sad that we lose any of them.

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P1: I was in the TM training the other day and it was pretty interesting. He made this statement that he'd been a principal at every level and he loved being an elementary school principal. He didn't mind being middle school, but the kids were a little different and the only problem with being a high school principal was that he lost his life and that's pretty true. I didn't realize how much you lose your life until I became a high school principal. You really do. If you're in it to improve your school the way you should be, not that it's the healthiest lifestyle in the world, but if you truly are in it to see your school improve and your kids learn and do the very best that they can, it's pretty much, it's a fifteen, sixteen hour a day job. I come to work in the morning very early and work late and I leave here thinking about what I didn't get done or planning and thinking about how we can improve on what we've already done. I think you're a role model to a lot of people. I think you are a parent to a lot of people, not just the students, but as we get older, younger and younger teachers who need the helping hand to get where they need to be in their career, I think the principal is a teacher. I truly think that we're moving away from the principal as a manager and more towards the principal as the instructional leader. I think that the principal is still going to have to be a manager until we get to the point that we hire a manager to run the school. We still are going to have to do that. But more and more the principal is going to be called upon to be and is being called upon to be the instructional leader of the school and we're being held responsible for that. We jokingly say we go to bed at night and wake up at three o'clock in the morning

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thinking oh my gosh I forgot to do that, or I've got to remember to do ... and come to school in the morning, on the way to school we're calling each other on our cell phone about what we're thinking about doing. We're all sitting around at the table at the training talking about how we all have a pad of paper beside our bedside table so that when we wake up in the middle of the night we write down what we're thinking about so we don't forget it for the next day and all of us were principals sitting at the table. But I think if I could just make one phrase, I think the role is all consuming. It just consumes you if you're in it for the right reasons. If you're in it just because it's a job, then it's just like any other job you do. If you're in it for the right reasons and you truly want your school to be successful and you want your kids to succeed, then it is truly just all consuming. Just eat you up, totally.

P7: You know, I think the high school principal is by far one of the most important jobs that you can do anywhere. I think being a high school principal from my perception is extremely important work. It's immensely challenging but when you really look at what you do on a day to day basis and the opportunities that you have to affect lives and to touch, not just students lives, but staff members lives, teachers lives, I think it's the most important job in the world. It is extremely complex because of the things that you're responsible for in this job. With so much emphasis on accountability and the high stakes testing, there is sometimes not enough attention paid to the other affective things in student lives. I think that's what we have to do as principals. We need a kind of balance

Appendix J Continued

for the demands placed on principals in schools. My goal is to find a way to work with the whole child, work with keeping good teachers in the system, developing teachers into good teachers and to do it in a way that inspires people to want to be in your school. And I think that's a huge challenge for all of us. It's real important work and I guess that's where the long and the short of it lie. I just think this is tremendously interesting and challenging work. I would not want to be a district administrator or anything like that just because I like the day-to-day operations of a school.

P2: I think I read somewhere that a high school principal's tasks last about eight minutes a day. The role is amazingly complex. But you would only get to focus on something for an average of eight minutes before you had to change gears to do something else. That's unheard of in an organization of two thousand people outside of education. But that truly does speak to the complexity of the job. So again if you take that study that he's done with the information that says that at most they get to focus on an average of eight minutes a day on one thing, the complexity is in the nature of the job. I don't think there's anything we can do to lessen the complexity of the job but there surely has to be something that we can do that better equips the leaders to deal with the complexity of the job.

P3: I think that it's very, very complex. There's so much to do in this job. Sometimes I go home at night and I try to talk to my wife about what I've done that day. It's never

Appendix J Continued

what I had planned it's always what happened during the day. You're in the mode of solving problems that other people create, not problems that you necessarily create. All of a sudden they become your responsibility and their mistakes becomes your mistakes. I find that frustrating sometimes. You have a teacher who really did not make a good decision and the kid wound up going down to get disciplined and the parent comes to me, and I hear the appeal and I think, boy, you know, the parent is a little bit right here. You know, maybe the teacher shouldn't have backed this kid into the corner that way. So being able to balance things and make sound decisions while you're supporting your people can be real, real hard sometimes. I think the hours are exhausting. I get up at 4:15 every morning and I check my email before I get here so I can interact when I get on campus and then every night I could easily stay out until nine o'clock. I take a break in the middle if I can between when the kids leave and the night activities, but the hours are grueling. You have to have somebody who can handle that, who can balance that. When I first moved from middle school to high school that was the hard part for me because middle school didn't have it. At most we had one or two functions a week. My director always tells us a high school principal is ranked as one of the most stressful and difficult jobs. I'm sure it is but it's also fun. I mean I really look forward to coming here everyday. The kids are goofy and silly at times. It's challenging but it's very enjoyable for me.

Appendix J Continued

P4: I had a very stressful morning one day and I was trying to keep my positive game face on for everyone. A department chair came to me and started saying she needed to vent about something. Suddenly she stopped speaking and looked at me and realized it wasn't a good time. I met with the teacher because she is important to me. She felt better and I realized that my game face wasn't on. That can be a challenge at times. I jotted down five ones that came real quick, very stressed. We already know that. I'm not a good example of that because I don't really take care of myself like as you can see, I don't exercise like I'm supposed to. I normally like to run, play ball, and unfortunately I'm not taking the time. The stress is there. The next is, as we talked about, you have very few moments of no demands, just time to just relax a few minutes and feel the impact of everything. The other one is you're constantly multi-tasking as you know. You've got to have the game face. As I've said the eyes are on you. You may be even having a down day whatever, but when you walk into that classroom or walk into that teacher's meeting they're going to pick it up on you so you might as well put the game face and just go with it. It goes back to that positive spin. Time management, the things on your plate. You know there's going to be a point; something's got to give in your life. For me, I'm very fortunate I've been married many, many years, and she married me when I was a coach and she understood the hours. I have two younger kids now, in middle school. But if I didn't have an understanding wife that deserves a medal of honor, a high school principal he spends all those hours, it's tough. The stress can go to a marriage very quickly. Like I said my wife is used to me being gone. If I stayed around

Appendix J Continued

much, she'd wonder what's happening. The other night, my wife comes and we'll grab a sandwich someplace and we're at the game. So we get to spend quality time that way. You'll see, once you step into that principal's seat, no one can explain it, it's just a different level. The principal I worked for at Palmetto, as an assistant for a long time, then he became a director of secondary, now he's executive director. I always forget his title; it's a long title. He used to tell me that. One of these days when you become a principal he said you'll understand, you just can't explain it. The best analogy, he was a former coach; he said it was like going from assistant coach to head coach. As assistant coach, you're got responsibilities, if you're offensive coordinator, but you're not really worried a whole lot about the defense. And usually the head coach is doing the whole deal and other kinds of things. If you're a head coach you're responsible, no matter what. You can screw up as offensive coordinator and I'm the head coach, you name's not in that paper. I'm the one catching the crap. And so you know, that's just part of it. Yeah, I love kids. You know I'm not in a power ego thing. Do I have an ego? Yeah, I know I do. To me if you're passionate about it you probably have some type of ego. I love what I do. But again, stress on the principal is great, but you see, you're still a young man. You know I've got a lot of miles on me. I still got a long way to go. You'll find out. If you're passionate about kids, you're going to spend the time. There's no other way. I'm a hands-on; I'll be honest with you. I'm known all over. I come in very early to get all this email junk done, or paperwork and stuff, so I can be out and about with kids and so forth. Like I say lucky we only have one watch, we're walking around talking, this child

Appendix J Continued

isn't making comments. We had an example yesterday, five kids came to us just about this time of day and these kids, we got to know either from sports or whatever, there's a boy that made a very stupid statement to them, very stupid. Did he really mean it, maybe not? But, students are more open with us.

Appendix L

Principal Member Check Example

Follow-up Directions

My dissertation study had three research questions. To answer each research question, I asked you a series of interview questions. From your responses, I identified the main points or themes I thought I saw in your responses.

What I would like you to do is review each interview question and check to make sure that I have accurately captured the main points (themes) you made in response to the interview questions. If the theme accurately reflects your response to the question, please circle “Accurate”. If the theme is “Accurate” and you want to elaborate, please feel free to do so by typing in additional responses.

If you would like to add new responses to the interview question not part of your original responses, please feel free to do so.

For some of the interview questions, there were no responses to the question. If you could respond to these questions, I will have more complete data to answer my research questions.

[*Actual responses to member check request in italics.*]

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of high school principals regarding their role as school leaders?

Interview Questions

IQ1: What do you perceive are the major priorities for the high school principal to promote?

IQ2: What do you perceive are the most important responsibilities for the high school principal?

Themes

1. Ensure a Safe Learning Environment

Appendix L Continued

Provide and ensure a safe learning environment for everyone--Q2

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration: *I think this is a responsibility. Ensuring good communication is an essential part of this.*

New Responses:

2. Ensure Quality Teachers and Quality Instruction

Provide for quality teachers and quality instruction in all classrooms--Q1

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration: *Yes, but I think it is providing resources as well as a highly qualified teacher and then making sure through accountability that high quality instruction is taking place.*

New Responses:

3. High Accountability Expectations for All

School goals achieved (Accountability w/school grade, AYP, Standardized Tests)--Q1

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration: *There is an expectation that all teachers will meet their professional goals. There is also an understanding that all teachers will hold high expectations for all students and will do whatever it takes to help these students be successful. Accountability is accomplished through walkthroughs, review of PDP's and Reading Group meeting participation.*

New Responses:

Appendix L Continued

4. Balance the Manager Leader and the Instructional Leader

Support staff with a balance of management and instructional leadership--Q3

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration: *I work to find time to do the management part when students are not here if at all possible. This allows me to spend a greater amount of time being an instructional leader, out in classrooms and working with students and teachers. This also means that the days are very long.*

New Responses:

Research Question 2

What professional development experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers as high school principals?

Interview Questions

Interview Question #1: What professional development experiences have impacted you the most during your career?

Themes and Data Statements

1. Formal professional development experiences that had impact

1. Participation in Panasonic research group was a great experience--Q1
2. Professional book studies with principals and my staff--Q3

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration:

New Responses: *Interaction Management, Leading Change (Trainer Training)*

Appendix L Continued

2. Networks

1. Conferences allow for networking and professional growth--Q2
2. Collegiate contacts and other county and other state networks help me--Q2
3. Principal meetings allow for support, discussions and networking--Q3
4. Regular meetings with key staff, your work horses (cafeteria manager, plant manager, secretary, bookkeeper, data entry operator, secretaries, AP's)--Q3

Accurate? Yes

Accurate and elaboration: *I am not sure, but maybe District Committees go here. High School Guidance and High School Design as well as the SACS Accreditation and the Pasco Vision Committee have provided great opportunities to stay up to date and to learn and grow professionally.*

New Responses:

3. Mentoring

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration:

New Responses: *Working as a mentor for a participant in the Preparing New Principal's Program. I attended a conference on Coaching and Mentoring that really changed the way I looked at the roles. Also, participation on the District New Teacher Support Committee.*

Interview Question #2: What could further enhance your development as a high school principal?

New Responses: *Time to seriously reflect on what we are doing and to learn about what others are doing and what is or is not working in other schools.*

Interview Question #3: As an experienced principal, what developmental experiences would you recommend to new high school principals?

Appendix L Continued

New Responses: *Interaction Management is a must. If you are going into an existing school, Leading Change is great or Building a School Culture is one that I would recommend. I would also say that the new principal should take the trainings that they expect their teachers to complete so they know what the teachers are learning and what they can expect.*

Research Question 3

What do high school principals perceive are the greatest challenges and frustrations of being a high school principal?

Interview Questions

IQ1: What do you perceive interferes with your role as a high school principal?

IQ2: What do you perceive are the greatest challenges for you as a high school principal?

IQ3: What do you perceive are the greatest barriers or frustrations for high school principals?

Themes and Data Statements

1. Examples of Challenges in the position

1. Communication problems between employees-putting out fires--Q1
2. Communication problems among principals and staff at school--Q3

Appendix L Continued

Accurate? *Yes, more so when I first answered the question than now.*

Accurate and elaboration: Now, I would say challenges include a changing population and trying to meet a wide variety of needs of that student body. Another is trying to get teachers who are uncomfortable with technology to use it and allow students to use it in the daily classroom. Staying up-to-date on techniques and strategies and finding time to do professional development are also challenges.

New Responses:

2. Examples of Frustrations in the position

- a. Parent interruptions and unpredictable demands--Q
- b. Assumption that you know everything about everything--Q2

Accurate?

Accurate and elaboration: Again more so when I originally answered the question than now.

New Responses: Now, I would list a barrier or frustration as the items that are imposed upon us by an outside entity. (Those things that take us away from the business of educating children.)

Appendix M

Member Check Correspondence

Date

Dear Participant X,

I am sending you this email to give you an update on my research study. I interviewed you recently to collect data for my dissertation research study. After analysis of your data transcripts, I have identified some themes that assisted me with answering the three research questions that I posed in my dissertation. But, one of the gaps that became apparent through this careful analysis is some interview questions did not contain data, or enough data to support answering the research questions sufficiently. I am requesting that you review the attached document [Appendix L]. I have set up the document so you can provide additional data statements with explanations where applicable. If you read an interview question and review your summary data statement(s) and feel that your responses encompass your thoughts, please continue moving through the questions. If you feel that you'd like to add statements and more information, you can do so by just typing under each question area that I have provided.

Completing this follow-up activity is *completely voluntary* and should take less than 30 minutes. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and I will be the only person seeing it. Identification numbers will be used with the data and your name will never be used in the reporting of the results.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (xxx)-xxx-xxxx (office number), or at (xxx)-xxx-xxxx (cell number).

Again, I thank you for your additional time and input. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

Steve Knobl

Appendix N

Demographic Characteristics of Members of Both Expert Panels

Information on Initial Expert Panel Members

<i>Expert</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Position</i>
RP #1 (J.P.)	Female	Ph.D. in Measurement	District Supervisor, Research and Evaluation
RP #2 (S.D.)	Male	Ed.D. in Technology Education	Director, Research and Evaluation

Information on Verification Expert Panel Members

<i>Expert</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Position</i>
RP #1 (J.R.)	Male	Doctoral Student	School Administrator
RP #2 (J.W.)	Female	Ed.D.	Professor with Experience in Principal Competency Assessment and Research

Appendix O

Major Themes Review Form

What do you perceive interferes with your role as a high school principal?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers		
A. Systemic Issues			
B. Communication Issues (Mngt)			
C. Politics/Mandates Rules/Regulations			

Appendix O Continued

What professional development experiences do high school principals report are most important in impacting their careers?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers									
A. Formal Training										
B. Informal Training										

Appendix O Continued

Do you have a specific strategy for identifying potential principals in your school?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers					
A. Give Opportunities For Leadership “Desire to Learn”						
B. Already Successful Leaders / Grow Your Own						
C. Good Teachers						

Which common characteristics do they possess?

A. Charisma						
B. Knowledge of Curriculum and Instruction & Best Practices						
C. Willingness to be a Change Agent						
D. Eager for Leadership “Desire to Work”						
E. Strong Communication and Decision-Making Skills						
F. Common Sense						
G. Hard Working and Detail-Oriented						
H. Change Agent						

Appendix O Continued

Does the district have an orientation program? What are its foci? How have you benefitted from the program?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers							
A. Principal Preparation Program								
B. Networking / Collaboration								
C. Principal Experiences								
D. Mentor Principal								

Appendix O Continued

What do you perceive are the most important responsibilities for the high school principal?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers						
A. Safe Learning Environment							
B. Ensure Quality Teachers, Instruction, and Learning							
C. High Accountability Expectations For All							
D. Public Relations, Communication With Community, Political Influence							
E. Educational Leader of School							

Appendix O Continued

What do you perceive are the major priorities for the high school principal to promote?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers							
A. Safety								
B. Teaching and Learning								
C. Increasing the Graduation Rate & Student Achievement								
D. Communicating w/Everyone								
E. Literacy								

Appendix O Continued

What do high school principals perceive are their greatest challenges?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers				
A. Instructional Leader					
B. Time For Professional Development					
C. Initiating School Change					
D. Public Relations					
E. Lack of Preparation					
F. Loneliness					
G. Expectations & Assumptions					

Appendix O Continued

What do high school principals perceive are their greatest frustrations?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers						
A. Time To Lead							
B. Assumptions About Principals							
C. Mandates & Rules							
D. Lack of Support & Skills							
E. Working With Staff							
F. Communication							

Appendix O Continued

As an experienced principal, what developmental experiences would you recommend to new high school principals?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers					
A. Have Mentors						
B. Attention To Details						
C. Time to Network						
D. Time to Collaborate						
E. Don't Make Sweeping Changes						
F. First Principal Job is Not HS						
G. Walkthroughs						
H. Working With Different Populations						
I. Working Under Various Leadership Styles						

Appendix O Continued

What could further enhance your development as a high school principal?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers				
A. More Patience					
B. Timely Professional Development					
C. More Time To Network and Train					
D. Peer Mentor(s)					

Appendix O Continued

The job or the role of the high school principal is documented in research as a demanding and complex position. What are your perceptions of your role?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers							
A. Time and Responsibility Demands								
B. Teacher Accountability								
C. Message(s) Principal Sends Versus Assistant Principal								
D. Manager / Solving Problems								
E. Stressful								
F. Guide the "Ship"								

Appendix P

Verification Expert Panel Forms and Directions

Reviewer Name: Jane Doe

Instructions: Please review the attached transcripts. As you find study themes, please note the page (P) number and the line (L) number for the data statement/theme finding in the table(s) below. Thank you.

Examples of Verification Expert Panel feedback below:

What do you perceive interferes with your role as a high school principal?

Themes	Page/Line Numbers		
A. Systemic Issues	P124 L121 P2	P127 L185 P7	P128 L220 P3
B. Communication Issues (Mngt)	P124 L132 P1	P126 L164 P5	P127 L174 P7
C. Politics/Mandates Rules/Regulations	P125 L146 P6	P127 L189 P8	P128 L226 P4

About the Author

Steve Knobl earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Central Florida and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Saint Leo University. He began his teaching career at Richey Elementary School. He next taught and coached at River Ridge High School and at J.W. Mitchell High School.

Steve began his administrative career in at Land O'Lakes High School as the Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction. He transferred in to Gulf Middle School in the same capacity three years later. He began his first principalship at Bayonet Point Middle School the following year. Two years later, he accepted a promotion to Gulf High School where he continues to lead as its principal.

He has been the district's Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year, Secondary Principal of the Year, and Finalist for Administrator of the Year for the district.