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Selected Georgia High School Principals' Perceptions of Student Diversity

Ronald James Wiggins
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This study was conducted to identify Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity. The student demographics of many Georgia school districts and schools are changing rapidly, while some school districts and schools have not experienced much, if any, demographic change. As a result, it is important for principals to be aware of what other principals perceive as advantages and disadvantages, the types of policies/programs that impact principals in regard to student diversity as well as to be familiar with artifactual evidence that may represent an appreciation or awareness of student diversity.

The data displayed in this study was gathered through the use of qualitative methodology. The primary instrument used for this investigation consisted of in-depth interview questions and a participant observer perspective used to gather evidence. In the actual transcripts of the respondents, the data recognized preparing students for the real world as the primary advantage of student diversity and, according to respondents, the primary disadvantage was the problems between homogeneous groups that lead to problems between heterogeneous groups. The appreciation or awareness of student diversity was documented through the use of reviewing relevant school and district documentation as well as the taking of photographs at each school. This investigation
found that all participants knew and documented the federal laws in regard to equal
opportunity; however, the researcher did document, by way of digital photographs, an
awareness or appreciation for diversity that showed little effort was being made to
address student diversity in the respondents’ schools. The results of this study were
viewed as being particularly important to other high school principals as well as policy
makers.

INDEX WORDS: Student diversity, principals’ perceptions, high school principals,
Dissertation, Thesis guidelines, College of Graduate Studies, Student, Graduate degree,
Georgia Southern University
SELECTED GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS
OF STUDENT DIVERSITY

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Role of the Principal</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia K- 12 Demographics</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration/Minority Influence</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement and Demographics</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Diverse Strategies</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Relevant Environments</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Decisions</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Policy/Program and Appreciation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Major Literature Review Analysis</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Qualitative Analysis Research Question One</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Qualitative Analysis Research Question Two</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Qualitative Analysis Research Question Three</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Respondent Demographic Information</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Respondents’ School Size, Student Diversity and Location</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Dates of In-Depth Interviews</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Student Demographic Profile Comparison</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Table of Digital Photographs</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Poster Display Outside Spanish Classroom</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Poster Display on the Foreign Language Hall</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Bulletin Board in Spanish Classroom</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Student Painting in French Classroom</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Importance of Spanish Poster in Classroom</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Tribute to First Black Graduates of U.S. Military Academy in Main Office</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Embroidery Display in Principal’s Office</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>American Indian Dream Catcher Display in Assistant Principal’s Office</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Poster Display Outside of Guidance Office</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Poster Display in Guidance Office on Secretary’s Desk</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Black History Poster on the History Hall</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Student Flag Display in History Class</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Black History Poster in History Class</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Student Work Display in History Class</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Black History Poster in History Class</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Poster Display in Media Center</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Poster Display in Media Center</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Poster at Entrance to Media Center</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>Listing of Available Magazines in Media Center</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.20  Poster of Rainbow in Media Center ........................................... 107
4.21  Poster Display in Main Hall ....................................................... 108
4.22  Poster on Elective Hall .............................................................. 109
4.23  Liberty Poster on Main Hall ......................................................... 110
4.24  Club T-Shirt Display in Main Hall ................................................ 111
4.25  School to Work Poster in Technology Wing ................................. 112
4.26  Poster Display in Front of Technology Wing .................................. 113
4.27  Lunchroom Display ................................................................. 114
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“All students, regardless of their cultural background and heritage, deserve equal access to a quality education. Anything less than that for any child is a grave educational injustice” (Courtland, 2001, p. 258).

For over a century, the United States (U.S.) has received immigrants from all over the world, thus resulting in U.S. schools having the most diverse student bodies in the world. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 20% of the total school-age population are living in homes where English is not the primary language. Census officials estimate by 2050, descendants of these students will comprise 40% of the nation’s population.

Among the issues facing contemporary educators, addressing the academic needs of the growing number of students from culturally diverse backgrounds is, perhaps, the most challenging (Professional Association of Georgia Educators, PAGE, 2003). In his 1995 report to the American Association of Colleges & Universities, Darryl Smith defined diversity as:

The variety created in any society and within any individual by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning generally flow from the influence of different cultural and religious heritages, from differences in how women and men are socialized as well as the differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability. It includes such important and intersecting dimensions of human identity as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability. It also includes the value and significance that a community places on particular differences (p.2).

In order to understand the impact of diversity on education in the United States, it is necessary to review the history of education in America. Historically, America has been referred to as the great “melting pot.” A salad bowl presents a more modern description because of the distinct variety of flavors standing alone in a salad. Since its inception, the
U.S. has been mainly populated by people migrating from other lands. As a nation, the U.S. has struggled to deal with issues of diversity that have affected all areas of life (Powell, Zelm & Garcia, 1996). According to Powell et.al, various periods in U.S. history have seen parts of this nation experience influxes of minority populations, with schools especially feeling the effects of demographic changes.

In its brief history as a nation, the United States has moved through three phases of major economic development: agricultural, industrial and technological. Each of these phases placed a higher demand on students, their academic achievement, and the public schools serving these students. More recently the technological era has required new skills from students, especially skills used to generate and transfer knowledge. All students, regardless of socio-economic status, language proficiency, and ethnic or cultural background need to be provided with opportunities to learn challenging content and high level skills that reform movements have been advocating for all students (Banks, 1996). In addition, public schools have acted as the major acculturation and assimilation medium for these students, to ensure a successful integration into the workforce and the American way of life (PAGE, 2003). The following statistics express the importance and the need for schools that are prepared for diverse populations.

Nearly 70 million Americans identify themselves as something other than white (Barron 2002). While these changes are not directly comparable to the 1990 census because of methodological changes, it was clear that the composition of the U. S. was rapidly changing. As of April 1, 2000, the total U.S. population was 281,421,906, which was an increase of 13.2% over the 248,709,873 people counted in the 1990 census. This increase of approximately 32 million people represented the largest total census-to-census
population increase in U.S. history. This total was greater than that experienced during the baby boom era of the 1950’s and 1960’s.

In 2000, the fastest growing region in the U.S. was the West, with an increase of 19.7%, or more than 10 million people. The rate of growth in the South followed closely with 17.3%, or over 14 million people. It is important to note, for the purpose of this study, that Georgia had the fastest rate of growth in the region with an increase of 26.4 %, making the 1990’s the only decade in the 20th century in which this distinction did not belong to Florida (Baron 2002).

Demographic data from the late 1980’s and early 1990’s showed that the number of students in public elementary and secondary schools in the U.S. increased by over one million from 1987 to 1991. Three quarters, of this growth, were attributed to an increase in the number of Hispanic and Asian students. This data also showed that the overall ratio of minority public school students increased from 1987 to 1991, while the ratio of white non-Hispanic students declined (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1996). According to this demographic data, U.S. schools are becoming more and more diverse in their composition. However, educational goals have remained the same – preparing students for academic, career, and social success.

The U.S. will become more diverse over the next 50 years. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, between the year 2000 and 2050 the non-Hispanic white portion of the population is projected to decrease from approximately 72% to less than 53%. By contrast, the African American population is expected to increase from 13% to 15%; the Hispanic population is expected to increase from 11% to 24%; the Asian and Pacific Islander population is expected to increase from 4% to almost 9%. The Native American
population is projected to remain at 1% of the total population (Barron, 2002). Cartledge and Milburn (1996) contended that analysts have used demographic data to project that more than 49% of the public school student population will be from racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds by the year 2050.

Nearly 75% of colleges and universities in the U.S. include a commitment to student diversity of some form in their mission statements, but only a third consider race or ethnicity as a factor when evaluating entrance applications (Bushweller, 2003). While high school students primarily make up the pool of applicants for postsecondary institutions, the military, or the job market, the researcher decided to investigate the perceptions of the individuals primarily responsible for the preparation of these students. In summary, the purpose of this research was to examine high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity in Georgia. The research was conducted through the use of qualitative methodology designed to incorporate the maximum amount of student diversity available within the sample area.

Statement of the Problem

The State of Georgia, like other southern states, is currently experiencing demographic change. Some school districts in Georgia have seen increases by as much as 10% or more of English as a second language (ESOL) students or students traditionally classified as minorities such as African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and American Indians in just one year, while other districts have seen virtually no change in their demographics.

Although students continue to become more culturally diverse, most schools have changed little. They are mostly guided by a model of schooling that was developed at the
beginning of the 20th century. These guiding values are primarily based on white middle class values which may not address increasing cultural student diversity. While there has been research on diversity in schools, it has primarily been focused on multi-cultural education. A void exists in the literature on how high school principals perceive diversity in their schools.

If some behaviors are culturally based, then children who come from and identify with culturally diverse groups are likely to engage in behaviors that deviate from the culture of many schools; therefore, school leaders may need to be able to merge the cultural diversity of their student populations with different strategies that promote student success. While evidence supports the notion that the demographics of Georgia’s school-age populations are continuing to change, there is not much research along the lines of managing these changes; therefore, what was known about this study primarily was based upon the statistical data gathered to determine the amount of demographic change in Georgia. The unknown was primarily focused on what was being done in Georgia to prepare for these demographic changes; the researcher investigated how high school principals perceived these changes in diversity. The researcher investigated the perceptions of Georgia’s high school principals about student diversity.

Research Questions

The proposed study was designed to answer the following major research question: What are selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity? Three related sub-questions were addressed in this study:

1. What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?
2. What are some of the district/school policies, if any, regarding diversity that impact principals?

3. What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

Importance of Study

This study was undertaken because clear evidence existed to support the notion that student diversity is public education’s biggest challenge; however, little information existed on how aspects of school life were made culturally relevant or sensitive to the needs of school populations, as well as how their leaders perceived these needs. Because of the changing demographics for some school districts and the limited influx of minorities for others, principals may have been faced with new and significant challenges, unlike what many had ever experienced. Dealing with these changes is a responsibility all educators must bear, but it was especially important for the principal because it was the principal who was the instructional leader in a school and who had the greatest impact on the school climate. More specifically, the researcher chose high school principals because secondary school represents, for most students, the last formal schooling attended.

Principals’ perceptions of diversity were important to educational leadership in several areas. First, perceptions could provide information on what these principals viewed as problems and challenges associated with diversity. Second, the researcher hoped to provide insight on how principals were affected by the amount of diversity experienced at their school as well as the influence of each principal’s own background and personal experiences on his or her perception of that diversity. Finally, the
researcher examined if participating school districts had any policies in place with regard to diversity.

The researcher believed that these findings were important to the profession because this information could help principals understand what procedures, if any, were being used in the State of Georgia in terms of diversity related issues. The researcher’s information could be used by policy-makers and other educational professionals to help anticipate and understand any discipline problems diverse school environments experience, understand qualifications needed for personnel decisions, examine current diversity related policies, and help to make these policies more effective.

The researcher found the topic important because of his experiences in education. The researcher has worked in education for over twelve years, having served as a middle school principal, an assistant principal for discipline in high school, and as a language arts teacher working with regular education, special education, and at-risk students. The positions held allowed the researcher to work with stakeholders of different genders, races, and nationalities; however, these stakeholders all had the same goal. The stakeholder’s goal was a quality education for their children. Therefore, the topic was important to the researcher because of his deep-rooted conviction that all children deserve no less than a free, appropriate, and unbiased education.

Procedures

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions incorporated in this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), there are four characteristics of qualitative research: (a) it is naturalistic, (b) it draws on multiple...
methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study, (c) it is emergent and evolving, and (d) it is interpretive. Because of these characteristics, this study was conducted through the use of a qualitative method designed to investigate selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity in public schools. The researcher chose a qualitative method of inquiry incorporating a participant observer perspective due to its focus on pragmatic interpretation and because qualitative inquiry is grounded in the real life experiences of people (Thomas, 1949). Concerns about reliability and validity were addressed by implementing the process of triangulation as defined by LeCompte and Preissle (1993).

Population

This study was completed with the use of a purposeful sample of nine high school principals selected from across the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) in the state of Georgia. The CSRA is comprised of the following twelve county/school districts: Burke, Columbia, Emanuel, Jefferson, Jenkins, Glascock, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, and Wilkes. The criteria used to select this sample were: (1) the school’s designation as urban, rural or suburban, (2) the tenure of the principal, (3) the size of the school, (4) and the amount of student diversity. The purpose of this sample was to ensure that the selected principals had sufficient amount of time working within the context of the study to be investigated and also to ensure the greatest amount of student diversity within the sample. Three years were designated as the sufficient number of years of experience as a principal, because this amount of time took into account the current mobility rate of K-12 principals in Georgia.
Data Collection

The procedures for this study began with successfully gaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Georgia Southern University. Next, the researcher used information gathered from the CSRA Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to determine preliminary information designed to help draw an acceptable sample. Next, from the data provided by the CSRA RESA, each high school was sent a demographic survey data sheet which informed each recipient that completing and returning the sheet would represent documentation for further consent to participate. The researcher then made telephone contact with the selected principals who met the requirements of the purposeful sample and began to formulate a timetable for the in-depth interviewing of each participant. Positive confirmation was sought by all respondents before interviews began. At the time of each site visit, the selected principals were given a letter of consent for the study to be signed and maintained in the researchers’ records and in that of the participating school.

The in-depth interview conducted by the researcher began the next phase of the study. At the time of the interview, each principal was given an opportunity to review the 10 open ended questions that would constitute the actual tape recorded portion of each interview and was given an opportunity to decline participation if they were not comfortable continuing. Each respondent was then informed of the need for the researcher to tour the facility freely to take digital photographs and to obtain a copy of the school and district student and employee handbook. During the interview, respondents were probed to allow each one an opportunity to explain his/her answers. After each
interview, respondents were informed that all data gathered would remain confidential and securely stored by the researcher.

Data Analysis

A qualitative research design was used to analyze data gathered from information obtained from the in-depth interviews, the review of written documentation (handbooks), and the digital photographs. The tapes, handbooks, and photographs were then coded. The interview tapes were transcribed and reviewed by a professional court legal transcriptionist. The handbooks were reviewed for consistency with information gathered during each in-depth interview, and the locations accompanying the digital photographs were recorded with field notes taken during each school site visit from a participant observer perspective. The participant observer perspective is an essential element of qualitative studies (Marshall & Grossman, 1999). It was not necessary to follow-up with respondents to clarify any unclear information or to expound on any areas found to be of significance to the relevance of the study.

All information was stored through the use of computer software, as well as handwritten documentation. This information was stored in a secure place in the researcher’s residence for future reference. Once all of the information was gathered, the researcher used appropriate qualitative statistical analysis to find patterns, themes, and categories within the data. A second reader was used to aid the validity of the findings and the subsequent discussion in chapter IV.

Limitations

This study was limited in these main areas: location, perspective, size, and time. First, the study was limited to data collected only in high schools located in the CSRA in
the State of Georgia. Second, the participant observer perspective was used because under this methodology, the participant observer perspective cannot totally eliminate their bias. Third, size was another limitation because the study consisted of a purposeful sample of nine high school principals located in the CSRA whose student demographics were representative of the state of Georgia, but the study did not incorporate any school with a great amount of diversity. Last, time was a limitation because of the researcher’s need to treat each school equally; therefore, the same amount of time was spent at each school. While aiding the reliability of the study, it also limited it.

Definition of Terms

1. American Indian/Alaskan Native- A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.*

2. Asian, Pacific Islander- A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, but is not limited to China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands.*

3. AYP- Adequate yearly progress as defined by the No Child Left Behind law.

4. Black, not of Hispanic Origin- A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.*

5. Culture- The behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought as expressed in a particular community, race, religion or way of life.

6. Diversity- “The variety created in any society and within any individual by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning generally flow from the
influence of different cultural and religious heritages, from differences in how women and men are socialized as well as the differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability. It includes such important and intersecting dimensions of human identity as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability. It also includes the value and significance that a community places on particular differences.” (Smith, 1995, p.2).

7. Elementary School- A combination of students representing grades pre-k – 5.*
8. ESOL- A class for students who speak English as a second language.*
9. High School- A combination of students representing grades 9-12.*
10. High school principal - The instructional/disciplinary leader of a secondary school comprised of students in grades 9 through 12.*
11. Middle School- A combination of students representing grades 6-8.*
12. Multi-racial- A person having parents of different races.*
13. White, not of Hispanic Origin- A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.*

* As defined by the Georgia Department of Education
(accountability.doe.k12.ga.us/Report02/)

Summary

School populations across the State of Georgia are changing in regard to student demographics. These changes may have an impact on educational policies in the future. According to demographic statistics, Georgia, like much of the United States, will continue to see a growth in the number of individuals typically classified as minorities. This growth will need to be accommodated by public schools; therefore, this study was designed to examine selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student
diversity. By examining these perceptions, this research may help educators understand the perceived advantages and disadvantages of diversity, focus on current policies in place, and document an appreciation or awareness of diversity issues in schools. This study attempted to display some methods currently being used in order to find effective means of preparing for and handling diversity. The researcher intended for this to add to a limited body of research on selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

“The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be
willing to bear the expense of it.”
(John Adams 1758), Second President of the United States

Historical Role of the Principal

Because this research examined principals’ perceptions of student diversity, it was
important to begin the literature review with a brief historical view of the principalship.
The local school principal was the first educational administrative position to evolve in
the United States. In 1647, the state of Massachusetts required that secondary schools be
provided for towns of more than 100 families. The colonists gave lay people the
responsibility of running each school. Most schools were led by a head or master teacher
until it became clear to the lay boards of education that the tasks of running a school were
consuming too much of their time (Wood, 1979). Near the end of the nineteenth century,
as schools became larger, the school principalship developed into an official staff post as
the head teacher assumed increasing responsibility for the administration of the local
school (Wood, 1979). The single word “principal”, referencing the controlling head of a
school, appeared in The Principal as Common School Report of Cincinnati in 1835 and in
the writings of Horace Mann (Pierce, 1935). In the second half of the nineteenth century
and into the early decades of the twentieth century, the principal’s primary duties
included the performance of minor administrative tasks, discipline, some teaching,
plant/building maintenance, and some personnel supervision (Cooper, 1979).
Lynn Beck, in her 1993 book, categorized the metaphorical themes of the twentieth century principal by decades. In the 1920s, the metaphorical theme was that of a value broker because of a merger between common sense and pseudo religious beliefs. The scientific manager of the 1930s was inspired because of an emphasis on the work of Frederick Taylor. Democratic leadership of the 1940s was spurred due to the events and post war demands of World War II. The 1950s was a decade of great change in educational administration. New administrative theories of leadership caused educational leaders, especially principals, to be grounded in the theory of administrative practice. This paradigm shift advocated that educational leaders develop and test theories in the same manner as researchers working in the fields of biology, mathematics, physics and other scientific disciplines. The bureaucratic executive of the 1960s was characterized by a need to create normalcy in schools. Principals were viewed as inhabitants in a specific role, differentiated by training, duties, and responsibilities. The humanistic facilitator of the 1970s was expected to relate well to persons and to facilitate positive interactions among and between students and teachers. Campbell (1987) described the 1970s as years in which external forces from increased federal involvement and vocal special interest groups altered many tasks of educational leaders. During the 1980s, the principal was portrayed primarily as an instructional leader who guided the teachers and students toward productive learning outcomes and experiences. This emphasis on outcomes propelled the need for principals to become change agents in the late 1980s, and this role continued to be the charge of principals throughout much of the 1990s.

An alternate way of categorizing the progressive roles of the principalship was explained by Hallinger (1992). From the beginning to the middle of the twentieth
century, the principal’s role was one of administrative management. Hallinger used the
Russian release of Sputnik in the late 1950s to delineate the major changes in the role of
the principal. According to Hallinger, the 1960s and 1970s were filled with reform
efforts designed for curricular innovations directed to aid math and science, as well as
federally- mandated programs for special education students.

The principal’s role during this time was primarily that of manager, according to
him. Then, in 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was released, indicating a need for educational
reform at the national level (Thro, 1998). According to Thro, the independent activities of
the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of the federal government intensified in
dealing with reform issues. The courts mainly dealt with educational finance, while the
states concentrated their efforts on attempting to design new systems of delivery for
educational services. A direct result of the redesigning efforts was the evolution of the
principal’s role into that of instructional leader (Terry, 1996). Active involvement and
participation with teachers in regard to curriculum and instructional areas became
commonplace. Although this became the expectation, it was hard to document how
effectively schools used this strategy to become more instructionally responsive
(Hallinger, 1992). Hallinger further stressed that the principal’s role remained primarily
that of manager with the added need for being the instructional leader.

Georgia K-12 Demographics

The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) lists 1,969 public schools in
Georgia. The schools are classified into three categories: elementary, middle, and high.
If a school has grade levels that fall into two or more categories, then the school is
counted in the type where the majority of its students are counted. By this classification,
in 2004, there are 353 high schools, 398 middle schools and 1,209 elementary schools in
Georgia.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 census, the state of Georgia had a
resident population of 8,186,453. To illustrate the amount of student growth in Georgia,
the GADOE states that during the 2001-2002 school term, the GADOE was responsible
for the education of more than 1,459,000 students, with slightly more than 375,000
students served in a high school setting. In comparison, during the 1997-98 school term,
approximately 1,365,549 children attended public schools, with more than 346,000
attending high school. This was a significant increase from the 1994-95 school year
during which roughly 1,270,000 students attended schools in all classifications and just
over 336,000 students attended high school. Taken together, these figures show a
constant pattern of growth within the state.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s quick tables for the state of Georgia, the
current demographic breakdown of the state by race shows that whites comprise 65% of
the population, African Americans 28%, Hispanics or Latinos 5%, and Asian/Pacific
Islanders and Indians comprising the last 2%. An examination of the 2001-2002 Georgia
Public Education Report Card revealed that these demographic numbers were directly
proportional to those of the K-12 population. According to the report, white children
comprised roughly 53% of students enrolled in public schools, African Americans
comprised 34%, Hispanics 5%, Asians 4%, American Indians less than one percent, and
multi-racial students 2%, with approximately 51% being male and 49% female. In
Georgia, 2.5% of students were enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESOL)
classes.
Migration/Minority Influence

Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS) offered researchers their first opportunity in a decade to classify states by their migrant and immigrant populations. During the 1990s, 73 million people moved across state lines, and another 13 million migrated from other countries (C2SS). According to the C2SS report, immigrants from overseas tended to be younger than the general population, and they selected destinations where they had friends and family and could speak their native language (Salinas, 2004). According to Frey, the migrants within states were usually more educated and had less risk than the general population. The regions that absorbed these immigrants became rejuvenated because of the growing working age population. As migrant students moved across our nation and enrolled in high schools, they demanded unique approaches that were rooted in an educator’s ability to understand the migrant community and the curricular, instructional, and support system needs of migrants (Salinas, 2004).

Foreign-born immigrants in the year 2000 made up more than 10% of the population in 15 states compared to five states in 1990 (Frey, 2000). The term “domestic migrant magnet” was used to describe states attracting large numbers of in-migration from other parts of the U.S., such as California, Florida, and Georgia. States where these newcomers made up at least one-third of the population were regions where the non-natives are not seen as outsiders, make friends easily, can move into business circles, and connect with the wider community. Because of the stable economies of some western and southern states, these areas have become the focal point of in-migration (Frey, 2000). This migration results in some areas being inundated with large numbers of migrants while other areas remain stagnant or experience little change. States such as Georgia and
South Carolina have witnessed increases in demographic groups greater than one-third of their total shares over the last two decades (C2SS). Georgia rose from a national ranking of number 29 to number 21 when its out-of-state population migration rose from 27% in 1980 to 34% in 2000.

Places where more than 65% of their residents were born in the same state are typically regions that have not attracted many immigrants. These states tend to have older populations because they are not attracting youthful migrants. In other words, most migratory behavior tends to be toward established areas where jobs can be found. Therefore, the result is a disproportionate amount of migration within regions. The regions most associated with this phenomenon include the Midwest, the Northeast, and the less migratory states of the South. The more dominant minority population in these regions is African-American (Frey, 2000).

Student Achievement and Demographics

It was important to review literature related to student performance because of the effect school diversity may have on student achievement. Students of color, who score lower on standardized testing, attend schools with: (1) less-qualified teachers, (2) fewer resources per student, (3) lowered expectations for student achievement, (4) more and harsher discipline, (5) mismatches between school and home culture, and (6) high mobility rates of students and teachers. In addition, these schools are usually in communities with high poverty (Ferguson, 1998).

Steinberg (1996) studied nine high schools in California and Wisconsin. This sample included predominantly white suburban schools and inner-city minority-dominated schools and found that African American and Latino students made the lowest
grades in both schools, regardless of family income. Conversely, low-income Asian American students outperformed middle-class black students by a wide margin.

In a related study that examined student educational and vocational goals, Mau (1995) reported significant main effects and interaction effects of sex and race. He found that Asian American students had significantly higher educational aspirations than other racial groups. He also found that Native American students had significantly lower aspirations. African American and white male students were found to have significantly higher aspirations than did Hispanic and Native American males. For each racial-ethnic group, female students had higher educational aspirations than their male counterparts.

The patterns of educational achievement among immigrant youths were examined by Portes and MacLoed (1999). Three hypotheses were tested in this study in relation to predicted effects of human capital, social capital, and modes of incorporation of immigrants. The major finding of this study was that one’s own family status and that of other children in the same school directly influenced academic performance and tended to reinforce each other.

Need for Diverse Strategies

Currently, in the state of Georgia, approximately 8% of students receive gifted services, 2.5% receive instruction with English as a Second Language, and 1% of students attend school in an alternative settings. The differentiation between the types of schools and in student services was evidence of a need for educational agencies to utilize diverse strategies to reach students. Approximately three years after *A Nation at Risk* report, a 1986 Gallup poll showed most Americans believe ineffective disciplinary practices have become constant problems in U.S. schools. Although school children
being disruptive can be traced back to the seventeenth century, these problems can lead to fear, intimidation, and chronic school disruptions (Adams, 2000). According to Adams, in an effort to re-establish control, school administrators have sought to use various alternative disciplinary procedures to meet the needs of a diverse school population.

Until the early 1980’s, corporal punishment was a widely accepted form of punishment. Then out-of-school suspension and expulsion began to be viewed as a viable alternative to corporal punishment (Costenbader & Markson, 1994). However, later in the 1980s, most educators began to recognize out-of-school suspension as an ineffective and counterproductive means of discipline (Radin, 1988). As student populations become increasingly more culturally diverse, educators must recognize how selected behavioral interventions can be influenced by the students’ cultural background (Grossman, 1995).

The effect of school suspension has been widely criticized. Proponents of school suspension have argued that students who are interested in learning should not have to suffer because of a few misbehaving students (Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Those against school suspension contend that suspension has a high correlation with other negative school experiences such as dropping out, retention, and poor attendance (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Mendez & Sanders, 1981) and is racially disproportionate (McFaddenn, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992; Nichols, Ludwin, and Iadicola, 1999). In Costenbaders and Markson’s research, three subgroups of students were examined (in-school suspended, out-of-school suspended, and never-been suspended). They found the previous criticisms of school suspension to hold true. First, there were a disproportionate number of blacks and males that reported being suspended. Second, students who had been removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons had
a lower level of achievement. Third, involvement with the criminal justice system was found to be correlated with school suspension.

Further reports by the NCES show that peer mediation approaches to conflict resolution have reduced the number of fights on elementary campuses and that as many as 78% of schools report having some type of formal school violence prevention program (Herzog, 2000). The report also states that 79% of public schools have zero tolerance policies for infractions involving violence, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, firearms, and other weapons (Herzog).

Hallam (2001) focused on the evaluation of projects designed to reduce exclusion from school. This study was commissioned because English schools, like their American counterparts, experienced a significant increase in the number of students suspended from school between 1990 and 1997 (DfEE, 1997). Another similarity found in Hallam’s study was the fact that the pupils most highly at risk for suspension continued to be Afro-Caribbean boys (DfEE, 1997). The study found that the incorporation of In-school Centres (ISC), the same as in-school suspension, and Multi-disciplinary Behavior Support Teams (MDBST), which were educational teams designed to review the discipline and academic needs for students, much like a student support team (SST) and other strategies, decreased the number of students excluded from school by 20% where MDBST were used and 4.3% where ISC were incorporated, as opposed to a national rise of 2% (DfEE, 1998).

The high school completion rate of students enrolled in in-school-suspension (ISS) during their high school careers was examined in 1989. Academic failure was the critical issue of the study, which was evidenced by the finding that 78% of the students
sent to ISS were not on grade level by their senior year. Completion of high school in four years was completed by a little over one-third of the total of ISS students. The study also found a drop-out rate of 15% between the junior and senior year, as well as a higher graduation rate for females than males serving ISS time (Johnston, 1989).

Other research has also focused on the perception of the effect of suspension by teachers. Diem (1988) found that teachers used ISS as a “dumping ground” for students they could not control in their rooms. On the other hand, a 1995 study done with Missouri high school principals found that ISS is currently used by 88% of Missouri high schools and was perceived to be effective when dealing with serious disciplinary incidents not requiring removal from school or out-of-school-suspension (OSS) (Billings & Enger, 1995).

By analyzing the discipline files of students from nine schools in one Florida school district, McFadden (1992) found that African-American and Hispanic students had a disproportionate discipline referral rate, and African-American students with disabilities were punished more severely than other students committing similar offenses. Culturally different students from low-income families are at a greater risk than are other students of being psychologically abused by educators (Hyman & Pokalo, 1993). There is a correlation between verbally abusive educator behavior and increases in student misbehavior (Hyman & Perrone, 1998). More than 60% of minority students reported experiencing at least one occurrence of maltreatment by an educator, which leads to some stress symptoms, including aggression (Lambert, 1990).

The need for culturally sensitive strategies can best be stated by Artiles and Trent (1994) who contend that encouraging prospective educators to examine diversity issues
and their personal beliefs will lead educators to increased cross-cultural competence and improved decision making. Investigating how educators intervene on behalf of students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds will provide disciplinarians with assumptions that educators have about students from culturally diverse backgrounds and curriculum content needed in teacher/administrative preparation programs (Artilles, 1994).

Lawrence and Olvey (1996) speculated that discipline is a skill and not a punishment, and contend that eight criteria must be met when designing a discipline plan that allows for the greatest amount of student success. The eight characteristics of their plan include: (1) development by a consensus of the school community, (2) making sure students, teachers and administrators understand the plan, (3) being consistent in imposing sanctions for violations of school rules, (4) specifying good and bad behavior, (5) getting parents involved, (6) planning should include instructions for emergencies, (7) offering alternatives to out of school suspension, and (8) maintaining high expectations for all students.

Culturally Relevant Environments

Much has happened in the U.S. since the early days of the multicultural revolution that has led to an awakening and a sharpening of visions of those essential elements that make a person or culture unique (Fuentes, 1998). Because much of the work of pediatricians has a direct effect on school age children, their parents and their schools, it is important to view the American Academy of Pediatrics stance on cultural diversity. According to the Committee on a Pediatric Workforce, the pediatric population in the U.S. is continuously becoming more culturally diverse. It is estimated that by the year
2020, approximately 40% of school age Americans will belong to a minority group (Fuentes, 1998). Because of these vastly changing demographics, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recognizes that the cultural diversity of the population has implications for the provision of pediatric health. These demographics will also have a great effect on U.S. schools. With these demographics in mind, the AAP has begun to realize the importance of culturally effective pediatric health care, which is defined as the delivery of care within the context of appropriate physician knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of cultural distinctions. This understanding takes into account the beliefs, values, actions, customs, and unique health care needs of distinct population groups. Providers were asked to enhance interpersonal and communication skills to strengthen the physician-patient relationship and maximize the health status of patients.

Culturally effective health care is related to cultural competence and cultural sensitivity. The term culturally effective health care refers to the interaction between the provider and the patient. Therefore, culturally effective health care is based on cultural sensitivity and cultural competence, but also goes beyond these concepts in describing the dynamic relationship between provider and patient. To promote the provision of culturally effective health care to pediatric patients, the committee recognized the need to develop education and training materials and courses (Fuentes, 1998).

In 1998, more than one-third of the students in U.S. classrooms were from ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse homes. The numbers will increase significantly by 2025 (Cruz, 1999). Promoting the academic success of culturally and linguistically diverse learners will mean that understanding various perspectives and incorporating them into the school workforce may be much like the process undertaken
by the American Pediatrics Academy. According to Banks (1996), diversity implies a need to see the culture of the student as a learning resource. Banks calls for the teacher to view his classroom as a microcosm of society.

McAllister (2000) explains that teachers in multicultural classrooms face increasing challenges in providing an appropriate classroom environment where high standards of instruction foster the academic achievement of all students. In order for educators to be effective with diverse students, it is crucial that they first recognize and understand their own worldviews and only then will they be able to understand the worldviews of their students (Bennett, 1993). Other research asserts that in order for educators to interact effectively they must confront their own racism and biases, learn about their students’ cultures, and perceive the world through diverse cultural lenses (Rolon, 1995).

The ideas discussed earlier are well-versed in teacher education literature. However, there is little research about the process by which teachers develop a cross-cultural competence that enables them to effectively teach diverse students in their classrooms, and even less information on how to incorporate these ideas into school administration practices.

Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages

In its June 23, 2003, ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the policy of the University of Michigan Law School to use race in its admissions decisions. The court upheld the claim that diversity benefits all students, minorities and non-minorities (Tam, 2004). Several studies motivated by the University of Michigan’s much publicized use of race based admission policy, have sought to find definitive advantages of diverse student
bodies. At the heart of these studies are various claims about the influence of ethnic
diversity. Mo Yin Tam (2004) investigated the assertion that a diverse student body
improves the quality of the educational experience. Furthermore, the researcher
investigated the assertion that a diverse educational experience better prepares students
for a pluralistic society. According to Tam, students from a very diverse high school
have an expected first semester grade point average that is one-fourth to one-half higher
than a student from a non-diverse high school.

Meacham (2003) surveyed 117 university students with regard to the affect of
student diversity on educational outcomes. According to Meacham, both white and
minority students perceived three educational outcomes that were likely to result from
having more minority students in classes: gaining cultural knowledge and awareness,
recognizing the complexity of issues, and learning to work with people who are different.
The overarching summary of this research contends that increased student diversity
provides more opportunities for students to become aware of cultural differences and to
share knowledge of each others backgrounds and experiences. Increased student
diversity increases the likelihood that class discussions will go beyond simplistic answers
and instead reflect the full complexity of the issues. Also, increased diversity in the
classroom means that students will have more opportunities to collaborate, to work in
teams, and to solve problems together with students who, as a group, reflect the diversity
of workers and citizens in American communities and the global economy.

Although many researchers would consider it politically incorrect to attempt to
associate any disadvantages with student diversity, Achinstein (2004) did just that by
examining how new teachers and their mentors view diverse learners and the challenges
of diverse classrooms. Her research focused on how new teachers identified challenges in relation to mentor teachers and their view of their students. In this study, Achinstein examined 15 new teacher-mentor pairs over 2 years in northern California through mentoring conversations, classroom observations, and interviews with mentors and novices working with culturally and linguistically diverse elementary students. The researcher described the three ways teachers viewed their classroom relations: teachers who were primarily concerned with the day-to-day operations were labeled managerial, human relations centered teachers were concerned with students and others’ feelings, and political based teachers primarily worked in a bartering method. The researcher found that a majority of participants found themselves in “practice shock”, which resulted in an over-focus on controlling students and a cultural mismatch which caused novices to view diversity as a problem. With this idea in mind, the focus, of this section, was to examine other problems or disadvantages associated with student diversity.

In her book, Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? Tatum (1997) discusses another perceived disadvantage of student diversity—student self-segregation. According to Tatum, even in schools where the same children stay together from kindergarten through eighth grade, racial grouping begins by the sixth or seventh grade. Given the impact of dominant and subordinate status, researchers have found that adolescents of color are more likely to be actively engaged in an exploration of their racial or ethnic identity than are white adolescents, which may lead to students segregating themselves (Tatum, 1992). Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers believed that schools were to instill discipline in students through “a moral sense by developing reasoning linked to just and
caring behavior” (Bear, 1998, p. 26). This relates to the perceived advantages and disadvantages by relating student behavior to the manner in which students get along. Discipline was to be designed to help children develop an instinct of care and duty to others. The instinct of care and duty was designed to lower the number of children committing the type of infractions experienced in schools of today. Therefore, the examination of school discipline follows.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported in Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools for 1996-97 that the three discipline issues most often cited by public school principals with diverse student bodies were tardiness (40%), student absenteeism or class cutting (25%), and physical conflicts among students (21%). Jagt (1996) used a national survey conducted by the NCES to examine the perceptions of school problems by elementary and secondary school principals (N=8,221). The study also inquired into whether the size or location of each school played a role in their perceptions. The results indicated that problems were more serious in secondary schools, but there was no association between the rankings. There was also evidence to support the idea that rural and urban schools had more problems than suburban ones and that problems were more severe in large (745 or more) to medium schools (300 to 744) in comparison to small (less than 300) schools. According to the study, the severity of school problems in rank order for secondary schools were as follows: detrimental family background, deviant behavior, low motivation, truancy, lack of preparation, disrespect for teachers, and school violence.

Dropping out of school was another serious school problem. Dropping out of high school was a multi-determined process, with early influences beginning in
childhood, which involved family as well as child and adolescent factors (Garner, Stein, & Jacobs, 1997). Drop-out rates varied because of anticipated opportunities and costs, but also with prospect for valued participation in a socially, economically, and culturally viable community. This means that high school students who perceive a positive affiliation with peers and teachers are less likely to drop out than others (Bryk & Thum, 1989). As with dropouts, when opportunity and community become less available, teen pregnancy and other social problems occur at a greater rate or becomes more common (Bickel, Weaver, & Williams, 1997).

By reviewing several data sources on school crime studies, Kaufman (1999) found that in 1996-97, 10% of all public schools reported at least one serious violent crime such as murder, rape, robbery, or fighting with weapons. Another 47% reported a less serious violent crime, which included thefts, larceny, and physical attacks or fights without a weapon to the police. In response to the problems of school crime and violence, a variety of programs and strategies for prevention were established. These programs range from having much stricter codes of student conduct to instructional programs to using state-of-the-art technology to build schools equipped with numerous security measures. The effectiveness of crime prevention programs is yet to be determined; however, some criticisms have been voiced. For instance, zero tolerance policies have come under fire for unnecessarily punishing, academically, some first-time offenders or students who are not frequent rule breakers academically (Cauchon, 1999).

Using an exploratory factor analysis, Bartsch and Cheurprakobkit (2002) examined the attitudes of 207 middle and high school principals in Texas in regard to four school problems: school loyalty, drugs, student-to-student problems and other
serious problems. Although school problems were found to be relatively minor at both levels, drug problems were rated the most serious. The principals considered a crime prevention concept that included information about crime deterrence, crime prevention, social control, and conflict resolution as the most important. The study concluded that schools should make crime prevention information more available to students, in addition to other strategies.

Further studies of more common discipline problems have been conducted and found that bad behavior limits learning in the core subjects of math, reading, social studies, and science (Whitmire, 1998). This Educational Testing Service (ETS) study included survey information that found widespread evidence of discipline problems in which 29% of 10th graders said it was acceptable to copy homework or come to class late, and 16% felt there was nothing wrong with talking back to teachers. Other findings included that schools with zero tolerance policies on gang membership did not enjoy fewer serious discipline problems.

Last, Openheimer and Ziegler (1998) identified five factors associated with students who are suspended: (1) a history of poor behavior, (2) academic achievement below grade level, (3) repeating a grade, (4) attending multiple schools, and (5) attending schools with high rates of suspension.

Legal Decisions

On May 17, 1954, nine Supreme Court justices announced a decision in a case that became a symbol for a new era in race relations among Americans. The unanimous decision rendered in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) set into motion the wheels of change that eliminated the separate but equal accepted practice that existed at
that time, in 17 states (McGill, 2004). The Brown case was not the only school desegregation case, and its effects may not have had the same far-reaching effects as the 1964 Civil Rights Act. However, the Brown decision was a momentous symbol because it asserted the equality of all Americans under the law. The Brown decision did not immediately integrate all schools, but the 1964 Civil Rights Act dissolved the last resistors. By 1974 public education was more integrated in the South than in the North, where controversial decisions about busing shifted school integration conflicts to large cities (McGill, 2004).

According to Clegg (2002), approximately 400 school districts in the U.S. at that time were under court order for desegregation cases. Desegregation orders result from a court’s finding that the district discriminated in the past. The order was designed to require that discriminatory practices cease and present effects be erased. Therefore, the courts ruled that districts could remedy adjudicated discrimination by using racial preferences; however, race-based criteria should address the particular forms of discrimination identified by the court (Clegg, 2002). In other words, districts not then under a desegregation order could not use race-based criteria as a factor for making admission or transfer decisions.

In 1999, a number of federal courts around the U.S. struck down policies that used race as a factor in school program decisions (Duff, 1999). Two 1999 cases in South Carolina spotlight more current rulings in this area. Most school districts were forbidden from taking race into account, but districts under a court order were allowed to do so. In Tuttle v. Arlington County (1999), the use of race-weighted lotteries to determine enrollment at a magnet school was found in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of
the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In the second case, *Eisenberg v. Montgomery County Public Schools* (1999), the Fourth Circuit concluded that the district’s use of race as a factor in deciding student transfers was unconstitutional, even when the purpose was to maintain racial balance (Duff, 1999).

**Diversity Policy/Program and Appreciation**

In response to changing student demographics, school systems across the U.S. began to implement policies designed to help support diversity in their schools. In St. Paul, Minnesota City Schools, a panel of educators, organized by the superintendent, recommended that the district build an accountability system for minority student achievement, hire more minority teachers, and modify its curriculum to address the needs of a racially diverse and socio-economically diverse student population (Richardson, 1994). The panel found the multicultural curriculum to be 20 years old, as well as, evidence supporting the district’s failure to create an accountability system for minority student achievement to be the reasons for low performance by its minority children (Richardson, 1994).

Wake County Public Schools in North Carolina was urged to rethink its nationally recognized student assignment procedures in 2003. In the year 2000, the system replaced a race-based assignment plan with one that integrated schools based on a student’s socioeconomic status (Reid, 2003). According to Wake County, its demographics, at that time, for the 109,000 student district were 59% white, 29% black, 6.5% Hispanic, 4% Asian and fewer than 2% multiracial. Because of a lack of planning for changing student diversity, students have had to change attendance zones several times, which has led to changes in the make up of schools (Reid, 2003).
In the area of programs, the Piscataway, New Jersey Township School System organized a diversity day training program for all staff members. The diversity day was designed to encompass frank discussions about race, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, and individual differences (Rodriguez, 1998). According to the organizing superintendent, in a district where 44% of students were white, 30% were black, 20% were Asian, and 8% were Hispanic, the district felt morally and ethically bound to pursue diversity training (Rodriguez, 1998).

Finally, in the spring of 2002, in Georgia’s Taylor County High School, the high school held their first integrated prom (Knight Rider, 2002). According to the dance’s organizer, Amy Hardman, in the 1970’s the school stopped sponsoring the dance and different parents began to hold racially separate dances. With the help of students and teachers, the first integrated prom was held on Saturday, May 4, 2002.

Summary

In concluding this review of research and related literature concerning student diversity, the researcher subdivided the related literature into three main areas of investigation: perceived advantages and disadvantages of student diversity, school and district policy regarding diversity, and documentation of an appreciation or awareness of diversity. In the first area of investigation, the related literature reviewed information on the changing role of the principal, migration and minority influence, Georgia student demographics as well as principals’ perceptions of school problems. The second area of investigation examined the need for diversity sensitivity in schools, reviewed district policies regarding diversity, and examined legal criteria placed upon school districts and leaders in regard to diversity. The final area related information of districts and schools
showing an appreciation or awareness of diversity. Table 2.1 illustrates the major literature review analysis.
Table 2.1

Major Literature Review Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author / Year</th>
<th>Major Finds from Study</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archinstein, 2004</td>
<td>“Practice Shock” as a disadvantage</td>
<td>N = 30</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartsch &amp; Cheurprakobkit, 2002</td>
<td>Ranking of most serious school problems</td>
<td>N = 207</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings &amp; Enger, 1995</td>
<td>88% perceived ISS as effective</td>
<td>N = 97</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clegg, 2002</td>
<td>400 districts under court orders of desegregation</td>
<td>N = U.S. School Districts</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diem, 1988</td>
<td>ISS as “dumping ground” perception of teachers</td>
<td>N = 188</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallam, 2001</td>
<td>Minority boys at risk for mistreatment at school</td>
<td>N = 3700</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herzog, 2000</td>
<td>78% had peer mediation programs</td>
<td>N = U. S. Elementary Schools</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagt, 1996</td>
<td>Rural and urban more discipline problems than suburban</td>
<td>N = 8221</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnston, 1989</td>
<td>78% of students in ISS not on grade level</td>
<td>N = 150</td>
<td>quantaitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knightridder, 2002</td>
<td>Rural school holds first integrated prom</td>
<td>N = 1</td>
<td>newspaper</td>
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</table>
## Table 2.1 (cont.)

### Major Literature Review Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author / Year</th>
<th>Major Finds from Study</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Type of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McFadden, 1992</td>
<td>Minority males had more office referrals (African American and Hispanic)</td>
<td>$N = 4,391$</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meacham, 2003</td>
<td>Identified advantages of student diversity</td>
<td>$N = 117$</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCES, 1997</td>
<td>Identified discipline problems in high school</td>
<td>$N = U.S.$</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reid, 2002</td>
<td>Elimination of race based admission</td>
<td>$N = 1$</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson, 1994</td>
<td>District initiative addressing student diversity</td>
<td>$N = District$</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodriquez, 1998</td>
<td>District felt compelled to pursue diversity training</td>
<td>$N = District$</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinberg, 1996</td>
<td>Minority students made lowest grades regardless of income except Asian</td>
<td>$N = 9$</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam, 2004</td>
<td>Students from diversity high schools have greater freshmen college achievement</td>
<td>$N = 1700$</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatum, 1997</td>
<td>Students actively engaged in identity search/students segregated by race</td>
<td>$N = 48$</td>
<td>quantitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research was designed to study perceptions of selected Georgia high school principals regarding student diversity. The researcher was motivated by the fact that for over a century, the U.S. has received immigrants from all over the world. The result of this migration has been that American schools have become hosts for the most diverse student bodies in the world. According to Barron (2002), 20% of the total school population was comprised of children for whom English was not the primary language. It is also estimated that by 2050, descendants of these students will comprise 40% of the nation’s population (Barron, 2002).

In the past decade, Georgia’s student diversity increased by the following percentages: (1) the Black population increased 1.18%; (2) the Asian population increased .86%; and (3) the Hispanic population increased by 3.64% (PAGE, 2003). Increases in student diversity have made principals aware of the need to facilitate environments that provide students the greatest opportunities for success. The No Child Left Behind law requires each state to describe how it will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, or socio-economic status, have equal opportunity or success (EdGov, 2004). This study was designed to examine selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity.

Research Questions

The proposed study was designed to answer the following major research question:
What are selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity?

Three related sub-questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?
2. What are some of the district/school policies, if any, regarding diversity that impact principals?
3. What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 display the qualitative analysis for the above stated research questions.

**Procedures**

**Research Design**

In order to answer the research questions of this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design. The researcher chose qualitative inquiry due to its focus on the pragmatic, and its interpretation being grounded in the real life experiences of people. Because this study focused on individual lived experiences, in-depth interviews were the recommended form of inquiry (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The interviews posed ten open-ended questions to allow the nine principals the opportunity to develop primary categories and themes in regard to principal perceptions of student diversity. These interviews were transcribed and evaluated utilizing qualitative research methods.

**Population**

It had been determined that there are one hundred fifty-nine separate county school districts within the State of Georgia. In addition to the county school districts,
Table 3.1

Qualitative Analysis Research Question One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Advantages</td>
<td>Banks, 1996; (McGill, 1954); Meacham, 2003; Rolon, 1995; Tam, 2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disadvantages</td>
<td>Achinstein, 2004; Bennett, 1993; McAlister, 2000; Morgan, 1995; Tatum, 1997</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Demographics</td>
<td>Cruz, 1999; Steinberg, 1996</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Appreciation for Diversity</td>
<td>Artilles &amp; Trent, 1994; Ferguson, 1998; Hallam, 2001; Hertzog, 2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, OA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*OA = overarching research question
Table 3.2

Qualitative Analysis Research Question Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. District Policy</td>
<td>Fuentes, 1998; Reid, 2003;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rodriguez, 1998; Richardson, 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Legal Issues</td>
<td>McGill, 2004; Clegg, 2002;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duff, 1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School Specific Policy</td>
<td>Duff, 1999; Knightrider, 2002;</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richardson, 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evaluation of Policy</td>
<td>Duff, 1999; Reid, 2003;</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richardson, 1994; Hallam, 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McAlister, 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*OA = overarching research question*
Table 3.3

Qualitative Analysis Research Question Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Evidence of appreciation</td>
<td>Herzog, 2000; Radin, 1998</td>
<td>3, OA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participant observation</td>
<td>Marshall &amp; Rossman, 1999</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*OA = overarching research question
there are an additional twenty-one, city-school districts within the state of Georgia. The researcher eliminated consideration of specific counties and concentrated on determining the nine high schools from the Central Savannah River Area that would represent a purposeful sample meeting the specific criteria identified below. The sample area of the CSRA was determined by the supervising committee to contain enough student diversity to validate the study. Next, the supervising committee and the researcher determined that the nine schools selected should represent the greatest amount of student diversity available within the consenting schools. Representatives from the Georgia CSRA RESA provided the researcher with contact information for each high school located within the CSRA.

Each high school was classified by its location as the following: suburban, urban or rural. Another major criterion in the selection process of each participating school was the tenure of the principal. In order to be selected, it was recommended that each participating school’s principal should have served at least three consecutive years in his or her position. There were 25 high schools in the CSRA sample area. Therefore, the researcher, with assistance from relevant dissertation committee members, implemented a selection process that produced the maximum amount of student demographic diversity, while maintaining the initial integrity of the sample. This selection procedure reduced the sample into the purposeful sample number of nine participants. By increasing the amount of diversity in the sample, credibility and validity controls to the sample were increased (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The purposeful sample was designed to ensure that specific demographic requirements were met in regard to the criteria set for
respondents and to ensure that participants represented the most diversity available within the sample.

Participants

The participants in this research were practicing high school principals in the Central Savannah River Area. The respondents totaled nine, and represented five county school districts and nine high schools. Each principal, except one, met the initial criteria of serving in his/her current school as principal for a minimum of three years. It was agreed upon by the researcher’s supervising committee to allow one respondent who had served only one year at her current school to participate because she had over 10 years of experience as a principal within the same school district. The sample consisted of three females and six males, with a racial composition of three black and six white, which closely resembled the composition of principals around Georgia. The average number of years as a principal was 10, and the average number of years at their school was 6.6. This information is displayed in Table 3.4. Table 3.5 displays each participant’s school size, student demographics as reported on the demographic data sheet, and each school’s location.

Instrumentation

There are one hundred fifty-nine separate county school districts within the State of Georgia. Additionally, there are another twenty-one school districts within the State of Georgia that are separate from those county school districts which are classified as city districts. The initial methodology used in this study was to derive a purposeful sample in terms of their amount of diversity, size and classification as the following: suburban, urban, or rural. In order to determine these criteria, the researcher
Table 3.4

Respondent Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years Principal at Current School</th>
<th>Total Years as Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5

Respondents’ School Size, Student Diversity and Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Med.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
used information provided by the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). This agency provides educational services for 12 counties. The nine schools selected were categorized in the following manner: small high schools (less than 500 students), medium sized high schools (between 500 and 999 students), and large high schools (1,000 or more students).

Data Collection

All high school principals in the CSRA were mailed a demographic data survey sheet requesting preliminary data with regard to the following: first, the length of time as the participating school’s principal, the total time as a school principal, and relevant demographic information in regard to race/ethnicity. The demographic data sheet also asked each principal to provide the researcher with a percentage of the racial make-up of their school, and the total number of students attending their school. Principals who returned the demographic data sheet gave preliminary consent to consideration for further participation in the study.

The questions for the in-depth interviews were developed from the literature in conjunction with Dr. Michael D. Richardson from Georgia Southern University. The researcher then obtained approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board at Georgia Southern University. Next, the researcher mailed each high school principal in the CSRA a demographic data sheet (see appendix C) that requested demographic information about the principal and his/her student body. The data sheet also informed respondents that returning the sheet would represent their consent to further participation in the study.
After making a first and second request for information, the researcher closed consent requests with an 80% return rate. The information from each principal was then reviewed by members of the researcher’s supervising committee and a purposeful sample was derived. The purposeful sample was selected in order to provide the researcher with the greatest amount of demographic variation with regard to student diversity and the diversity of participating high school principals as well. The researcher then scheduled the in-depth interviews, which were conducted over a one week period in late January thru early February displayed in Table 3.6. The setting for each interview was the office of each participating principal. Decisions made with regard to participation were based upon each school’s classification, the size of each school, and the tenure of its principal. Interviews of school principals were conducted after each gave his/her written consent for such an endeavor, by returning the preliminary demographic information request form.

The interviews consisted of ten open-ended questions designed to allow the participants the opportunity to develop primary categories and themes in regard to their perceptions of diversity. During the in-depth interview, each participant was asked five questions from the following areas of investigation: advantages and disadvantages associated with diversity and district policies regarding student diversity. A participant observer perspective was used to gather the artifactual data, and relevant field notes to support interview information (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The third and final research question was designed to allow the researcher to use a participant observer perspective to gather artifactual evidence, field notes of observations of information garnered during the in-depth interviews, as well as an appreciation or awareness of diversity.
Table 3.6

Dates of In-Depth Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 31, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 31, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 1, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 1, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 2, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 3, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 3, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>February 4, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>February 4, 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Smith (1995), diversity involves any individual difference that flows from a difference in culture, race, religion, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability. Under this explanation of diversity, the participant observer perspective was used to allow the researcher to tour each school and take pictures of artifacts representing an appreciation of diversity, and each responding principal provided the researcher a copy of county employee handbooks, student codes of conduct, and school specific handbooks where applicable.

Participants were asked questions to gather any specific instances or activities associated with their student populations. The participants were also asked questions designed to gather information on educational experiences that have influenced their decision-making strategies. Participants were asked questions in the area of diversity policy, and more specifically, who made the diversity policy and how the policy was implemented. Principals were given the opportunity to outline any policies or programs that were currently in use. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and tape recorded with the agreement that all information given by the principals would remain confidential, and that photographs taken would not contain anything identifiable.

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, each tape was marked for identification and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and proofread by an official court reporter to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. The researcher then spot checked several tapes with transcripts to assure the integrity and accuracy of the transcription process. The transcription process utilized state-of-the-art transcription equipment. Participants were allowed to review the beginning of each tape to ensure that all comments were audible.
The transcripts were evaluated using concepts developed by Tesch (1990) of decontextualization and recontextualization. This process involved the development of patterns, categories, and themes in the transcripts while, by the same token, reconstructing the interviews to create a consolidated overview of what all principals said in the creation of one body of information. Methods of reduction in interpretation of information developed by Marshall and Rossman (1989) were also used to develop more categories, themes, and patterns that emerged. Once the patterns and themes were identified, the researcher had all findings and summaries reviewed by a professional colleague holding an earned doctorate from a major Research University to address validity issues as a second reader. The digital photographs taken during the tour of each participating school were coded, and field notes were used to document the location of each photograph. Concerns about reliability and validity were addressed by implementing the process of triangulation as defined by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) to examine the following three areas: first, what was known about the study; second, what was unknown about the study; last, what the researcher wanted to know. Further reliability issues were addressed through the use of a second reader.

Summary

This researcher intended to examine the perceptions of selected Georgia high school principals with regard to student diversity. It was determined that the researcher would investigate the following areas: advantages and disadvantages associated with diversity, district policies regarding diversity impacting principals and artifactual evidence representing an awareness or appreciation for diversity. In order to develop a complete examination of principals’ perceptions, a purposeful sample of nine high school
principals was interviewed. The initial demographic information of each school documented on the returned demographic data sheet was used to ensure that the demographics in the sample closely resembled the overall demographics of the state of Georgia.

The selected schools/participants were categorized as follows: principals of small high schools with less than 500 students, principals of medium high schools with student populations ranging between 500 to 999 students, and principals of large high schools with student bodies of 1,000 or more students. Each participating school was classified by its location as suburban, urban, or rural. Each principal was asked a total of ten open-ended questions designed to garner his/her perceptions of student diversity. Qualitative research techniques were used to investigate the respondents’ perceived advantages and disadvantages of student diversity and district/school policy impacting principals in regard to diversity. The participant observer perspective was used to gather other data of each participant’s appreciation or awareness for student diversity. The researcher will report in Chapter IV the findings of this research study.
CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This researcher examined the perceptions of selected high school principals with regard to student diversity. The researcher focused on nine high schools in five school districts located in the Central Savannah River Area of southeast Georgia. The respondents’ leadership experience varied from one to twenty-nine years in his/her current school.

The amount of experience each respondent had with diversity varied. Two of the respondents had experience working with primarily two racial groups, and one respondent had experience working with three racially diverse groups. Four respondents had experience working with four racially diverse groups, while two respondents had experience working with five racially diverse groups. The designation of location was equally divided among the three categories of suburban, rural, and urban. Additionally, four schools were classified as large, three schools were classified as medium, and two schools were classified as small.

This chapter represents an analysis of the data collected through a participant observer perspective used to conduct in-depth interviews, gather field notes, and any artifactual evidence of an appreciation for diversity. A qualitative approach was used in this study in order to provide a greater depth of understanding concerning the perceptions of high school principals in regard to student diversity. The in-depth interview questions revolved around the research questions identified by the investigator. Interviews were designated as respondents 1 through 9. All respondents were asked the same questions in
the in-depth interview, without deviation, to aid in the validity and reliability of their responses. When brief responses were given, respondents were probed for more information. After each interview, the researcher was escorted throughout the entire school in search of artifactual evidence which supported an appreciation for student diversity. The researcher’s documentation of artifactual evidence consisted primarily of photographs taken after the in-depth interview during the principal-led tour of each school. During this time, a participant observer perspective was used to gather field notes to help explain the photographs. The researcher also secured written documentation from the respondent which included student and teacher handbooks.

The fundamental research question of this study was the following: What are the selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity? Additionally, three subquestions were designed to examine the fundamental research question:

1. What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?
2. What are some of the district/school policies, if any, regarding diversity that impact principals?
3. What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

Analysis

After refining the research tool by reviewing the research design with the researcher’s supervising committee, a participant observer perspective was chosen as the means by which to conduct in-depth interviews of respondents and to tour each school facility to document an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. Tape recorded interviews, artifactual evidence, and field notes were coded and securely stored at the end
of each day. The data was initially organized based on the school represented. In order to report this data, each respondent’s information was numbered and dated, each interview transcript had the lines numbered to assist in referencing, and the location of digital photographs was documented using field notes.

Editing the Text

Each respondent was assigned a number, 1, 2, 3, etc., and the remarks of each are represented by that assigned number throughout the findings of the data analysis. In the citations for the quotes by the respondents, the respondents are designated as R.1, R.2, R.3, etc. Accompanying each respondent’s designation are the dates of the interviews (1-31-05), page numbers from transcribed tapes p.1, 2, 3 etc., as well as the line number L1, L2, L3 etc. The researcher edited the contents by omitting any references to actual persons, school districts, schools, etc. with generic terms to insure the respondent’s confidentiality. Finally, the researcher placed lengthy amounts of text into brackets in order to aid the reader in understanding.

Research Question 1

What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?

The researcher sought to identify the advantages and disadvantages perceived by high school principals with regard to student diversity. Despite the fact that there seemed to be no one mutually agreed upon advantage or disadvantage among researchers in regard to student diversity, respondents did point out several advantages and disadvantages that they related to student diversity. These advantages and disadvantages were much the same as those mentioned by researchers and educators throughout the related research. With this view in mind, the researcher designed in-depth interview
questions 1 through 5 to examine the following areas: advantages, disadvantages, school problems, school demographics, and appreciation for diversity through the use of an in-depth interview question.

Advantages

In-depth interview question 1: What do you perceive as an advantage of student diversity? Despite the fact that researchers were not in clear agreement with regard to any advantages that may be associated with student diversity, several characteristics were revealed time and again in the interviews conducted by the investigator. A breakdown of the like responses from the participants reveals the following categories: respondents 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 felt that the advantage of student diversity was the fact that it prepared students for the real world of work. Next, respondents 2, 7, and 8 alluded to the fact that the advantage of student diversity was in the understanding and appreciation that students gain from being around students within a different race, culture, or background. Respondent 9 found that student diversity just makes school more interesting.

In the category of preparing students for real life and the world of work, an analysis of the five responses found the following quotes: “Once students leave high school they will be better prepared to get along with others at work, in the military, or college” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 20, L 23-25). Other responses included the following; “Students need to know how to work, play, live, and learn from people of different cultures” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p.50, L 3-5). “Students may need to be able to work with everyone because the nation is getting more diverse” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 25, L 3-4). “Diversity prepares students to live and work in a larger world” (R. 5, 2-2-05, p.56, L 5-
Diversity prepares students for the real world, and it helps students understand where they fit in” (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 6, L 3-5).

Under the category of the understanding and appreciation that students gain from being around students within a different race, culture, or background, respondent’s responses were as follows: “Diversity allows a better understanding of where everybody else is coming from,” (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 28, L 3-4). Two other respondents supported this contention by stating, “Student diversity gives students the opportunity to learn from people of different country’s, cultures, belief systems, and more about where they come from” (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 11, L 9-11). “Students have a better idea of where others come from when they go to school with people different than themselves” (R. 8, 2-4-05, p.62, L 1-2). Also worth noting was the comment of respondent number 9. This principal stated that student diversity’s advantage is the fact that it made school more interesting. “One thing about student diversity is that it makes school a lot more interesting” (R. 9, 2-4-05, p44, L 24-25).

Disadvantages

In-depth interview question 2: What do you perceive as a disadvantage of student diversity? An examination of the responses for in-depth interview question 2 revealed the following categories: respondents 4, 7, 8, and 9 referenced problems that may occur because of student diversity, respondents 1, 2, and 5 did not associate any disadvantage with student diversity and respondents 3 and 6 found the only disadvantage of student diversity to be a lack thereof.

The responses under the category of disadvantages can be explained by the following interview citations. Respondents 4 and 7 referenced the time it takes students
to trust each other, “It takes a diverse group more time to understand and trust each other” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p.25, L 12-13).

Ignorance about things different from you, people may have an idea in their minds or certain perceptions of other people regardless of what race we’re dealing with. I think some people don’t overcome that ignorance even when they become adults (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 11, L17).

Respondents’ 8 and 9’s comments were coupled together under this category because each principal felt the problems that arise are from close-mindedness. “The problems that occur from refusing to be open-minded are what I associate with student diversity. Some people refuse to accept the differences in all of us, and this causes a problem in terms of language used or name calling because of customs that aren’t common between the different races ” (R. 8, 2-5-05, p. 62, L 15-16).

Student diversity's disadvantages are the problems that may arise from differences of opinion. This is usually because of individual differences or cultural differences. Therefore, you have more disagreements or something like that but that is not necessarily a bad thing. It may help lead to a better understanding of other people (R. 9, 2-5-05, p. 45, L 7-8).

Three respondents’ answers can be placed in the category of no disadvantages being related to student diversity. “I don’t see any because you have to be able to deal with all people of all races and ethnicity. So it’s not a disadvantage, it’s an advantage” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p.21, L 5-6). “I don’t perceive any disadvantages at all, however: people may try to make it an issue when it comes to stereotyping a particular group” (R. 2, 1-31-05, p.29, L 11-13). Last, respondent five stated simply, “I cannot think of any” (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 57, L 13-14).

The final category, under disadvantages of student diversity, makes mention of the need for diversity. “It is a disadvantage only when you don’t have any” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 50, L 9-10) and
Lack of diversity from a student perspective can be a real problem for them especially if they’re part of a group that’s much smaller in representation to the whole. Then they may feel isolated or singled out (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 2, L 21-25).

School Problems

In-depth interview question 3: What school problems, if any, do you perceive relating to student diversity? The responses varied in the category of school problems high school principals associate with student diversity. Four respondents perceived the biggest problem in dealing with diverse student populations as being that they originate from behavior within the same group. “Most school problems occur within each group” (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 30, L 19-20). Respondents 1, 3 and 9 each had similar responses to in-depth interview question number 3 by making comments such as: “Students seek people of their own race or culture when they initially make friends” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 21, L 21-22). “Social situations are sometimes based on racial differences because of stereotypes” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 50, L 21-22).

Not having organizations that are diverse because certain groups of people migrate to different athletics or clubs and that sort of thing. We don’t really have the acting out behavior problems because of it. It does concern me that some of our sports and clubs are more segregated than we would like (R. 9, 2-4-05, p. 45, L 16-17).

The second largest group of respondents identified related school problems to be placed in the category of a feeling of discomfort where other diverse groups are concerned. “One of my biggest problems is the animosity I encounter from one group to another” (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 56, L 23-24). “Any smaller sub group may feel like they are being mistreated even if it is not so” (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 3, L 9-11).
One respondent stated the biggest problem he can associate with student diversity was in dealing with English as a second language students adjusting to their new surroundings.

We don’t have that many school problems except when some students first get here, especially the ESOL students coming in. Having to adjust to the learning system, learning how to find their way throughout the school or being able to deal with the students that are in the majority here (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 25, L 21-23).

Another respondent alluded to having problems incorporating a general appreciation for student diversity.

The biggest problem I face as a school principal is really trying to get the word out about diversity and the appreciation of cultures without making a big deal about it. That focuses on the wrong thing. I say that because some schools when you talk about diversity may just think black and white. I’ve got a large Asian, Indian, and Muslim population and with what’s happened since 911, it has been very delicate to deal with (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 12, L 3-4).

Last, respondent 8 identified that the time lost dealing with diversity issues may take away from time scheduled for instruction. “Dealing with problems of a diversity nature may impact the amount of time the teacher spends on instruction” (R. 8, 2-4-05, p. 63, L 13-14).

School Demographics

In-depth question 4: *What is the racial/ethnic composition of your school?* This question was designed to allow each participating principal to verbally provide the researcher with student demographic information for their school. By having each respondent answer the question, the researcher sought to compare the information given during the interview questions with the written information originally supplied to the researcher on the mailed demographic survey to ensure that each respondent was familiar with the demographics of their student bodies. The comparison would be used to find
any discrepancy between the original information reported and the student population of the school during the time of the interview. The information gathered with this question allows the researcher to gauge the awareness of each respondent with regard to their student diversity. It is important to note that during the in-depth interview with respondent number 3, their response to this question was, “Whatever I wrote on the information sheet you mailed out” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 52, L 16). Simply stated, if the principal does not have knowledge of his/her school’s diversity, responses given may not be a valid indication of what actually takes place at their school. Table 8 displays the comparison of information on the original demographic sheet, and information reported by the respondents during the interview.

Appreciation for Diversity

In-depth interview question 5: What procedures, if any, do you use to aid your school’s appreciation of diversity? The information found in this area was also used to examine research question number 3. This information aided the researcher by allowing him to have a better idea of where to begin to look for documentation of an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. The responses in this section were placed into five different categories.

Three respondents described the procedures used at their school to demonstrate an appreciation for diversity which generally lay in their use of their foreign language department. “We have our foreign language department spotlight whatever culture their studies encompass” (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 32, L 3-5). “We try to incorporate that into our foreign language department, and they hold ceremonies and assemblies geared toward
**Table 4.1**

**Student Demographic Profile Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Type</th>
<th>White</th>
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<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Multi-Racial</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 Interview Report</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No response by participant

R = Respondent
their subject’s culture” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p 51, L11-12). While another respondent reported their Spanish Department expresses an appreciation for the Latin Culture:

Because we have a large amount of ESOL students that speak primarily Spanish, we encourage our Spanish teachers to do things that encourage an appreciation for the Latin culture. Our Spanish program produces different shows, plays and cooks different ethnic foods that we share among the entire student body. It’s just limited what we do to show an appreciation for it (diversity) (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 26, L 10-14).

Two respondents’ answers to in-depth interview question 5 were categorized as use of clubs to show an appreciation for diversity. According to both respondents in this category, their schools rely on clubs and organizations to allow students to find where they fit in. “We have different clubs to help our students relate; otherwise, we don’t do anything special” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 22, L 3-4). The other respondent in this category stated, “We do not use any particular procedure, but we do have a lot of clubs and organizations for students to choose from” (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 5, L 2-3).

Another category identified for this question had two similar responses as well. Respondents 5 and 8 stated that they did not use any particular procedures. “None, we don’t really address that” (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 57, L 10), and “No particular procedures are used” (R. 8, 2-3-05, p. 64, L 3-4). Respondent 7 reported that their main procedure with regard to diversity appreciation can be found in their use of student mentors. According to this respondent, new students with a limited English proficiency are paired with students who are currently being successful in the school environment.

We feel that it is important to incorporate them into our student body as soon as possible with someone that can be a student resource. We are 80% white. If an African American or any other race of student comes in, we try to pair them with a positive role model. It may be an athlete, a scholar or someone that they may have something in common with. We encourage the students to show new students the positive things about our school (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 13, L 1-5).
Last, respondent 9 summarized their diversity appreciation in the following:

The main procedure used by our school involves reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure that what we are doing does not promote segregation among the student body. As a principal one thing we should do is attempt to model an appreciation for diversity ourselves (R. 9, 2-4-05, p. 46, L 5-8).

Research Question 2

What are some of the district/school policies, if any, regarding diversity that impact principals?

With the second research question, the researcher sought to identify any current policies/practices regarding student diversity that principals have in place. In this area, there were many different ideas shared ranging from nothing to formalized programs. With this in mind, the researcher designed area two to examine district policy, legal issues, school policy, policy evaluation, and future policy recommendations.

District Policy

In-depth interview question 6: *Are there any district policies that affect student diversity?* In reviewing the respondent information for the area, four categories were found. Two of the categories had three respondents each, one with two similar responses, and a category highlighted by one respondent. One of the two categories with three respondents associated zoning procedures and busing requirements as its primary district policy regarding student diversity. “Yes, we have a district policy regarding zoning and busing regulated by the Feds. That is what is in place right now.” (R, 1, 1-31-05, p.22, L 14-17). The other two respondents responded in turn with the following: “Yes, we have a district policy regarding busing” (R. 2, 2-1-05, p. 32, L 22-23), and another respondent gave the researcher firsthand information about the impact of desegregation in the state of
Georgia around 1970. This principal, being a part of the first classes to actually go through integration, stated,

I believe we are under a court order in regard to busing stemming back to the 1970’s. I was a high school senior in 1970 and I have first-hand knowledge of the integration and desegregation of the schools in our county. We are still under that court order that resulted that particular year (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 51, L 20-25).

The next category involving three similar responses was the category of no awareness of any type of district policy regarding student diversity. The matching responses to in-depth interview question 6 were, “Not to my knowledge” (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 57, L19), “None that I’m aware of” (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 6, L 17), and “I don’t know of any” (R. 8, 2-4-05, p. 64, L 18).

Respondents 4 and 7 related their district policy in the area of student diversity to federal regulations. Respondent 4 stated that their district policy comes directly from the federal government, “Only the federal regulations that are given to us” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 26, L 20). While respondent 7 associated the district policy regarding diversity with the equal opportunity laws regulated by the federal government,

Federal things, as far as I know whether it’s athletics where everyone has an equal right. We don’t pick out a particular race. District policy requires every kid to be treated equally under the law and have an equal opportunity to participate in whatever. We just have to make sure that all of our students are treated the same in regard to equal opportunity (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 14, L 12-13).

The information provided by respondent number 9 was not categorized with any other response. The solitary response category may have incorporated some parts of the answers given by other respondents but was unlike any of the other responses. Respondent 9 responded by saying, “Yes, we have a policy where we do not isolate any students. In other words, wherever possible, we try to ensure that one race or one gender is not the only one in a class” (R. 9, 2-04-05, p. 47, L 2-4).
Legal Issues

In-depth interview question 7: Are there any legal issues that affect student diversity in your school or district? Fifty years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision eliminated separate but equal policies, and forty years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the investigator found it important to examine any legal decisions impacting student diversity and principals. In this category, the researcher discovered three categories of responses.

The first category consisted of five similar responses from respondents. The five respondents all alluded to court ordered desegregation orders that they have been under since the early 1970s. Respondent numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9 all answered the question almost exactly the same by informing the researcher of court orders. The most common response was, “Yes, we are under a court order for desegregation of our schools and buses” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 23, L 8-10), (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 33, L 11-12), (R. 3, 2-1-05, p.53, L 3), (R. 8, 2-4-05, p. 64, 25). Respondent 9 added,

We’ve been under a court order for desegregation since the late 1960’s or 70’s. I’m not sure of the history behind that, but we continue to be under the order. We just had an Office of Civil Rights site review because of our court order. They couldn’t find any violations, thank goodness. We didn’t expect them to (R. 9, 2-4-05, p.47, L 7-12).

The next category consisted of respondents that did not have any legal action in reference to student diversity. Respondents 4, 5, and 7 all responded with one word answers of “No” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 27, L 2), (R. 5, 2-2-05, p.57, L 25) and (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 14, L 14). The final category for in-depth interview question number 7 consisted of one respondent. “We have a civil rights report to complete each year; however, I do not think that this report affects our student diversity” (R. 6, 2-3-04, p. 6, L 4-6).
School Specific Policy

In-depth interview question 8: *Has your school implemented any school specific policies in regard to student diversity?* The question was motivated by information gathered by the researcher in his review of literature. By investigating this area, the researcher found the following categories: six respondents did not have any specific school policy, and the remaining three respondents could not be collapsed into mutual categories; therefore, there were three additional singular response categories. Under this category, respondents 1, 2, 5, and 8 answered with “No” or “None” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 23, L 14), (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 34, L 15), (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 59, L 20) and (R. 8, 2-4-05, p. 64, L 4). When probed for more information, neither respondent gave any further relevant information. The two other respondents in this category responded by saying, “No school policy; all of our policies come from the district” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 53, L 12-13) or “No, but we do use the county policy” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 27, L 6-7).

The singular response categories expressed are varied. First, respondent number 6 stated that there were not any particular school policies except to make individuals aware of non-discriminatory practices in their student handbooks and faculty handbooks (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 8, L 15-17). Respondent number 7 discussed how he attempts to hire individuals that help to represent the racial/ethnical composition of his student body.

At the school level, I try to hire teachers that resemble the make up of the school. I have a large Asian/Indian population; therefore, I thought it was important for me to hire someone in that racial category (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 16, L 8-11).

The final single response category comes from respondent 9 who informed the researcher that before she became principal, her school had a black and a white homecoming queen; however they always had an integrated prom.
10 years ago we had a black and a white homecoming queen, but since I’ve been here that practice has been eliminated. We have always had an integrated prom (R. 9, 2-4-05, p. 47, L 21-24).

Policy Evaluation

In-depth interview question 9: If you have any student diversity policy, are they evaluated? If so, how? Due to the fact that none of the respondents have a formal school policy set to deal with student diversity, the major finding in the area can only be described as nonexistent. However, the researcher will relate how this lack of policy and evaluation processes impacts this study in the areas reserved for discussion.

Policy Recommendations

In-depth interview question 10: Are there any policies or programs, relevant to student diversity, you would like to see implemented in your school or district? By allowing respondents to recommend any policy or practice they believe would positively impact student diversity, principals were allowed to give information they may have gathered from literature or personal wishes. With this in mind, three categories were determined from their responses.

First, respondent 3 stated that she would need more time to actually think about that topic before she responded, “I would like to give that more thought because our district does such a good job with it” (R. 3, 2-1-05, p. 54, L 6-7). Second, three respondents were placed in the category of not knowing or expressing a need for any future policy. “No, I do not see a need for anything” (R. 1, 1-31-05, p. 23, L 18), “No, I don’t know of anything that is better than what we already do. I hope I’m not being naïve” (R. 2, 1-31-05, p. 46, L 7-9), or “No, we have enough programs as it is” (R. 4, 2-1-05, p. 27, L 18-19).
The remaining category consists of respondents that actually described or mentioned future policies/practices they would like to see. Respondent 5 suggested that rural high schools should make an effort to show their students the importance of understanding the larger world.

I would like to see an emphasis on educating the rural high school student on the world in a larger context and having them to experience new things. We are attempting to partner with a school in Atlanta that is very, very diverse, and we want to take our entire student body to visit, but not all at the same time (R. 5, 2-2-05, p. 60, L 18-23).

Respondent 6 would like to see more mentoring in the high school setting.

I would like to see more mentoring. It would benefit diverse high schools greatly. Because minority groups suffer in that regard, mentoring may help students with selection of courses. We have some super role models here for our students; however, not much time is spent mentoring (R. 6, 2-3-05, p. 9, L 5-9).

Respondent 7 recommended more opportunities for cross-cultural experiences for high school students to prepare them for the real world.

I think there is a need for more cultural interaction among students; this only prepares them for the real world. Honestly, I think a lot of little things could be done, especially in high school. People think that warm fuzzy things don’t make a difference, but they can (R. 7, 2-3-05, p. 17, L 18-22).

Respondent 8 stated that there is a need for more implementation of foreign-language activities.

“Foreign language activities, especially in Spanish, I think need to be implemented. At our school, we are seeing an increase in our Spanish population and this is an area where we have very limited knowledge. I think now is the time for us to stop and reflect back on what we are doing and perhaps add some type of program that shows a greater appreciation for their culture” (R. 8, p. 65, L 11-15).

Last, respondent number 9 contends that any program that focuses on student appreciation and acceptance of student differences would be useful.

“Programs of any type that focus on student acceptance or appreciation will only help to make your educational program stronger. I also want to continue on the
students accepting one another. We already see more signs of student acceptance through increases in inter-racial dating. However, this is not a big taboo anymore, when someone sees an inter-racial couple people don’t fall out and die when they see it. Most of the time, people don’t even notice” (R. 9, 2-4-05, p. 48, L 8-13).

Research Question 3

What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

The third and final research question was designed to allow the researcher an opportunity to use a participant observer perspective to gather artifactual evidence, to scribe field notes of observations, to help categorize information garnered during the in-depth interviews, as well as take digital photographs of items that express an appreciation or awareness of diversity. Participant observation is, to some extent, an essential part of all qualitative studies and requires firsthand involvement within the study (Marshall & Grosman, 1999). According to Smith (1995), diversity involves any individual difference that flows from a difference in culture, race, religion, sexual orientation, class, age, and ability. Under this definition, the researcher further used his participant observer perspective to tour each school and take digital photographs of artifacts representing an appreciation of diversity, and each responding principal provided the researcher a copy of county employee handbooks, student codes of conduct, and school-specific handbooks where applicable.

Written Documentation

The review of the findings related to research question number 3 will begin with an explanation of what was found by means of written documentation, followed by a review of the digital photographs taken by the researcher. Throughout the in-depth interview process, respondents alluded several times to information in regard to federal
law being placed in relevant written documentation that is given to all employees and students. This written documentation is displayed by use of student handbooks and teacher/employee handbooks. Review of county handbooks consisted of five different county employee handbooks rather than nine because some of the respondents were contained within the same school district. Each county handbook provided employees with all of the federal guidelines established by Title VII and equal employment opportunity law. The text of these handbooks also informed each employee of the proper procedures for reporting possible violations, but made no mention to other policies in regard to student diversity except for federal policy regarding equal treatment for all students. These handbooks also outlined some procedures for special education students, gifted and English as second language students.

The researcher did not find any school specific policy relating to student diversity. Under research questions 1 and 2, the researcher did not find any formal school related policy geared toward diversity; therefore, this finding was not surprising. A review of school specific handbooks was limited to six books because four of the respondents do not produce a school-specific teacher handbook. The employee handbook from the district office serves as the handbook for all schools. These handbooks did contain the federal guidelines with regard to race.

Also reviewed were student codes of conduct from five school districts. This number was once again smaller than the sample because of the inclusion of more than one school per district. The handbooks were developed by each school district and were designed to keep students and parents informed about student infractions and prescribed
punishments for violation of appropriate rules. These handbooks also contained within their text a brief statement regarding equal opportunity law.

The final set of handbooks examined contained school specific student information. The set of student handbooks were limited to seven because two of the respondents do not produce a school-specific student handbook. Their policy and procedures were contained in the county student handbook only. All of these handbooks provided for progressive discipline methods to be undertaken before out-of-school suspension is given.

Digital Photographs

Further use of a participant observer perspective, by the researcher, was designed to document artifactual evidence, with digital photographs, geared toward an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. Throughout the investigation of research questions 1 and 2, the researcher found that a majority of responding principals believed that appreciation and awareness of diversity primarily lies within extra-curricular activities, clubs, and foreign language classes. With this in mind, the researcher toured the entire school building, with the responding principal serving as the guide. In an attempt to make the school observations as comparable as possible, the researcher limited the tours of each school to 30 minutes. This allowed the researcher enough time to canvas the entire building without spending an excessive amount of time in any one area. This method also limited the amount of time the respondent had to pinpoint areas for review. In another attempt to keep the participant observer perspective equitable within each school site, three pictures representing an appreciation or awareness of diversity for a total of 27 photographs were taken.
The researcher categorized each photograph by its location within the school. A numerical categorization of the photographs, from the most common to the least common places where the photographs were taken, developed four categories that were represented by five photographs each. The categories with five photographs were foreign language, administrative offices, social studies classrooms, and the media center. The main hallway in the school had the second largest number of photographs with four. The vocational hallways of the nine respondents yielded two photographs, while the cafeteria produced one photograph of posters or student-made bulletin boards. It is important to note that one of the artifacts found in an administrative office was an official American Indian Dream Catcher.

The next largest category, student classroom hallways, appears to be an understandable place for a school to express its diversity appreciation or awareness. Like most of the artifactual evidence, photographs were taken primarily of posters with the exception of a student-prepared bulletin board, and a club t-shirt displayed in glass cases. The final two categories consisted of two areas – the vocational technology wing represented by two “world of work” posters, and the lunchroom, which displayed a group of diverse students participating in a ROTC poster in a glass case. Again, the main modes of presentation were student posters. Table 9 displays the artifactual evidence found.

Summary

This study utilized a qualitative methodology to investigate the perceptions of selected Georgia high school principals in regard to student diversity. The focus of the
Table 4.2

Table of Digital Photographs

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<th>Category</th>
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research was nine high school principals from five county school districts located within the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). From a review of related literature, ten open-ended in-depth interview questions were designed to garner information about student diversity in each high school and district. The researcher used the in-depth interview tool to collect data from each principal. The researcher also used a participant observer perspective to examine relevant written documentation in the form of student and teacher handbooks. This perspective was also used during the principal-led tour to take photographs of artifacts representing an appreciation or awareness of diversity. The data gathered became the basis for information used to answer the basic research questions of this study. During this research study, repeated responses, patterns, or items were placed into categories and themes developed.

The research was designed to garner what advantages and disadvantages high school principals associate with student diversity, the policies that impact principals and student diversity, and to document artifactual evidence of an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. The major advantage of student diversity noted by respondents was that it prepared students to work in the real world. Also worth noting was that a large number of respondents stated that student diversity helped students to develop an understanding and appreciation for all people. The disadvantage of student diversity outlined by respondents was any problem that students may have with each other because of differences which lead to alienation or segregation. Respondents found that most of these problems began within each group and then manifests into groups having conflicts with each other. Other principals did not associate any disadvantage with student diversity except a lack thereof.
Another area investigated was the policies, if any, impacting principals in regard to student diversity. In this area, several respondents mentioned that they were under court orders for busing, zoning, or desegregation others made mention of the federal guidelines in place for educational institutions as the only guiding factors for policy. Also worth mentioning, was the fact that none of the nine respondents had any formal policy for managing student diversity.

The last area investigated by the researcher sought to find an appreciation or awareness of diversity in each school by reviewing written student and teacher handbooks as well as taking photographs of diversity-related artifacts. This area found no profound difference in discipline policy or requirements for teachers or students. Most respondents mentioned that the county requires them to place Equal Opportunity information in each handbook. The photographs of artifactual evidence of an appreciation or awareness of diversity revealed that this type of evidence was primarily displayed through the use of posters, bulletin boards, and student produced art. The primary locations of the artifacts were the media center, foreign language halls, administrative offices, and social studies classes. Except for the foreign language hall, the areas most associated with artifacts representing an appreciation or awareness for diversity was different from what principals reported. In accordance with the findings presented in Chapter IV, it was obvious to the researcher that not much was being done in the area of diversity.
Category 1

Foreign Language

R. 1, 1-31-05

Figure 4.1: Poster Display Outside Spanish Classroom
Figure 4.2: Poster Display on the Foreign Language Hall
Figure 4.3: Bulletin Board in Spanish Classroom
Figure 4.4: Student Painting in French Classroom
Figure 4.5: Importance of Spanish Poster in Classroom
Category 2
Administrative Offices
R. 2, 1-31-05

Figure 4.6: Tribute to First Black Graduates of U. S. Military Academy in Main Office
Figure 4.7: Embroidery Display in Principal’s Office
Figure 4.8: American Indian Dream Catcher Display in Assistant Principal’s Office
Figure 4.9: Poster Outside of Guidance Office
Figure 4.10: Poster Display in Guidance on Secretary’s Desk
Category 3

Social Studies Classrooms

R. 1, 1-31-05

Figure 4.11: Black History Poster on the History Hall
Figure 4.12: Student Flag Display in History Class
Figure 4.13: Black History Poster in History Class
Figure 4.14: Student Work in History Class
Figure 4.15: Black History Poster in History Class
Category 4
Media Center
R. 5, 2-2-05

Figure 4.16: Poster in Media Center
Figure 17: Poster in Media Center
Figure 4.18: Poster at Entrance to Media Center
Figure 4.19: Listing of Available Magazines in Media Center
Figure 4.20: Poster of Rainbow in Media Center
Category 5

Main Hallway

R. 5, 2-2-05

Figure 4.21: Poster in Main Hall
Figure 4.22: Poster on Elective Hall
Figure 4.23: Liberty Poster on Main Hall
Figure 4.24: Club T-Shirt Display in Main Hall
Category 6

Vocational/Technology Wing

R.1, 1-31-05

Figure 4.25: School to Work Poster in Technology Wing
Figure 4.26: Poster Display in Front of Technology Wing
Category 7

Lunchroom

R. 8, 2-4-05

Figure 27: Lunchroom Display
Chapter 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of selected Georgia high school principals with regard to student diversity. The importance of this study has been demonstrated by the changing demographics of the U.S. and especially in the state of Georgia. The researcher conducted this study through the use of a qualitative methodology which consisted of a participant observer perspective and the use of in-depth interview questions. The subjects included in this project totaled nine principals from five school districts located in a region known as the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) which encompassed a total of 12 county school districts.

Each participating principal completed a demographic survey which allowed the researcher and his supervising committee to select a purposeful sample representing the greatest amount of diversity available within the sampling area. Completion of the demographic survey also represented preliminary consent for further participation. The participants took part in an in-depth interview that consisted of ten open ended questions designed to garner their perceptions of student diversity. Each participant also allowed the researcher to tour his or her facility and document artifactual evidence of an appreciation or awareness of diversity in their school. The documentation of this evidence consisted of a review of relevant teacher and student handbooks as well as the taking of digital photographs.

As the researcher examined data gathered during the in-depth interview process and school tours using the participant observer perspective, categories and themes
emerged. Concerns about reliability and validity were addressed by implementing the process of triangulation as defined by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) and the use of a second reader. As patterns began to emerge, principals’ perceptions were grouped into categories and then placed into themes. This led to the identification of perceived advantages and disadvantages, current district or school policies that impact principals with regard to student diversity, and documentation of artifactual evidence of an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. Chapter IV provided a discussion of the findings for each of the above areas.

In the present chapter, the researcher used the findings related to the overarching research question and the research subquestions in order to draw conclusions and to consider the implications from the study. The overarching research question was as follows: What are selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity? The three research subquestions were:

1. What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?
2. What are some of the district/school policies, if any, regarding diversity that impact principals?
3. What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

Analysis of Research Findings

The research was designed to garner the advantages and disadvantages selected Georgia high school principals associate with student diversity, the policies that impact principals, and student diversity and to document any artifactual evidence of an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. The following major findings had
implications for the conclusions of this study. Under the area of advantages and disadvantages: (1) student diversity’s primary advantage is that diversity better prepares students to work in the real world, (2) the primary disadvantage was found to be any problems students may have with each other because of their differences, which may lead to alienation, segregating, or conflicts between differing groups. Under the area of policy impacting principals, the major findings were: (1) a majority of respondents remain under court orders for busing, zoning, or desegregation (2) most respondents stated that the federal guidelines direct much of their diversity related policy, and (3) none of the respondents had any formal policy in place with regard to student diversity. The last area of investigation, appreciation, or awareness of diversity had the following major findings: (1) there was no major difference in discipline policy, requirements for staff or students which was in line with principals’ responses which alluded to federal guidelines and documentation of these guidelines, (2) the primary method of displaying artifactual evidence was posters, bulletin boards or student-produced art, and these items were primarily present in the media center, foreign language halls, administrative offices, or social studies halls, (3) except for the foreign language hall, the areas most associated with student diversity related artifacts were different from the principals’ responses.

The researcher did not find much with regard to student diversity, even though, the participants selected represented the most diversity within the sample area. The quality of artifacts found represented a low level of appreciation/awareness of student diversity.

Research Question 1

What advantages and disadvantages do principals associate with diversity?
The respondents’ answers to in-depth interview questions 1 thru 5 were used to answer this research question. Below is a discussion of the findings presented in chapter IV.

Discussion

The belief that diverse classrooms help to prepare students for life after high school, as well as, a general preparation for working with individuals of different backgrounds are common advantages among researchers (Meacham, 2003 & Tam, 2004). The major perceptions of the respondents found by the researcher closely resembled those found in the literature. The second largest number of respondents perceived the greatest advantage to student diversity to be the opportunity to learn about different people and beliefs. This response also closely reflected the advantages contended by these researchers. The most common theme among principals, found in this study, with regard to their perceived advantages of student diversity, was the fact that it better prepared students to work in the real world by giving them an opportunity to learn from each other.

On the other hand, the related relevant research in the area of disadvantages associated with student diversity came primarily from the work of Achinstein (2004) and MacAlister (2000). The work of Achinstein (2004), summarized in an earlier chapter, pointed to teachers having “practice shock” when working with diverse student populations. This results in an attempt to over focus on controlling students. MacAlister (2000) contended that the disadvantages associated with student diversity were with students of minority groups feeling out of place, students being underrepresented, or feeling mistreated. Four of the respondents stated that the disadvantage of student
diversity related to a lack of understanding of diverse groups or by diverse groups toward others. Two more respondents further noted that a lack of diversity is a disadvantage for high school students as well.

From the data collected, principals perceived the disadvantage of student diversity as a lack of understanding of diverse groups which may be promoted by a lack of diversity. This does not closely resemble the information presented in the research; however, it is in line with researchers’ contentions that some diverse students may feel out of place or underrepresented in their school. There was no mention of teachers experiencing “practice shock” when dealing with diverse populations.

The work of Jagt (1996) found that, when reviewing problems in high schools, the problems were greater in rural and urban schools as compared to suburban schools, and the problems were also greater in large (745 or more) and medium schools (300 to 744). This information relates to this study by displaying the following: (1) each of the large urban high schools reported that problems that do occur usually take place within the same racial or ethnic group, (2) the three large suburban high schools did not report any specific student problems; rather, the issues stated dealt more with policies and procedures (3) the three small rural high schools each reported problems unrelated in nature. The work of Tatum (1997) described the socialization process for adolescents and contended that children from minority homes have a harder time managing the feelings and emotions associated with race identification. She also contends that by as early as middle school, students begin to segregate themselves by race, even when the same students attended elementary school together and did not segregate themselves.
Further discussion in this area also revealed the following principals’ perceptions. Four respondents directly related the problems associated with student diversity to be based on students segregating themselves from other groups while two more respondents stated that animosity or ill feelings result from the segregation. The major perception of school problems principals related to student diversity, in this study, was that student segregation may be a major cause of problems among diverse student groups. This perception correlates with the work of Tatum (1997) in that what principals said takes place in their school, actually was well documented by other researchers. This information also supported the feelings of alienation reported by McAlister (2000).

The researcher found that eight of the nine respondents provided the researcher with school demographic data that very closely resembled the information sent by mail on the demographic data form. It may have been unanimous among the respondents in their recall of their student demographic information had respondent number 3 chosen to respond. Due to the fact that eight of the nine respondents displayed awareness of the student demographics present in their school, the researcher found it safe to conclude that each respondent is aware of the their student body’s demographics, their educational needs, and the actual practices that take place in their school with regard to student diversity.

Because of the different races and cultures schools have to serve, researchers have expressed the importance for educational leaders to have procedures in place to understand and express an appreciation for diversity (Artilles & Trent, 1994; Hallam, 2001; Herzog, 2000 & Ferguson, 1998). The work of several researchers outlined earlier found that educational leaders should display an awareness or appreciation for diversity
in their schools. With this in mind, three respondents mentioned that most of what their school does to show an appreciation for diversity lies within their foreign language department implementing extra-curricular activities, and two other respondents alluded to the use of clubs and extra-curricular activities. With five of the nine respondents outlining the use of either foreign language departments or extra-curricular activities as the primary method for displaying or making students appreciate diversity, in this study, academic departments and extra-curricular activities were perceived, by principals, as the best means of expressing an appreciation for student diversity. This information directly correlates with earlier research as to how appreciation and awareness is being expressed in school. However, this perception does not follow the work of diversity-related research because it does not make the school leader (i.e. principal) take the lead or initiative in ensuring that an appreciation or awareness for diversity takes place. In other words, respondents provided the researcher with the politically correct answer but were limited in their support of what was said.

Research Question 2

What are some of the district/school policies, if any, with regard to diversity that impact principals?

The respondents’ answers to in-depth interview questions 6 thru 10 were used to answer this research question. Below is a discussion of the findings presented in chapter IV.

Discussion

In-depth interview questions 6 thru 10 were used to answer research question number 2. The work of Reid (2003), Richardson (1994) and Rodriguez (1998) outlined
several district policies that have been implemented across the United States in regard to student diversity. Much of this policy is designed to help educators understand and effectively work with diversity-related issues. Under this category, this researcher found that three respondents did not know of any district policy, while three other respondents directed their comments in the way of zoning and busing. Two more respondents were categorized as mentioning non-discrimination policy or federal law. Once again it is important to note the answer provided by respondent 9, which stated that the county had a policy in regard to isolation of students.

By coupling the category of zoning and busing with the category of non-discrimination policy/federal regulations, the researcher was able to identify the following theme. High school principals, in this study, perceived district policy in regard to student diversity to be primarily associated with policies that are developed at the federal level. This information displays a direct opposition to the work of the researchers listed above. Their work calls for district or school leadership to determine where each is falling in short in the way of diversity policy and to design their own to ensure that all student needs are being addressed.

Another area of diversity-related policy investigation found that most respondents were under some form of court order with regard to busing, zoning, or desegregation. This information coincides with the research due to the fact that all of the respondents’ schools are located in the State of Georgia, which is located in the southern region of the United States, where much of school desegregation had to be forcefully implemented (McGill, 2004). Under this category, it was determined that five of the nine respondents are under court orders for desegregation following the issuing of Title VII of the 1964
Civil Rights Act of 1964. This information closely follows the work of Clegg (2002) who found that over 400 school districts were under some form of court mandated desegregation order. The findings in this area correspond directly with the information found in the related literature summarized by Clegg (2002). Three other respondents were not aware of any legal decisions impacting diversity, while one respondent made mention of requirements set forth by the Office of Civil Rights.

With five respondents currently under court-ordered desegregation and another being monitored for compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, the impact of diversity-related policy on high school principals, with regard to legal decisions affecting student diversity in selected Georgia high schools, was concluded to be predicated on desegregation law and requirements set forth by the federal government.

In this literature review, the researcher found that there were still high schools in Georgia that had segregated proms (Knightridder, 2002). In regard to school specific policy regarding student diversity, the researcher was hard pressed to find much related literature, because many of these policies are initiated by the school district. Therefore, upon undertaking this study, the researcher and his committee anticipated that there was not much being done in this area. From categorizing the responses, the researcher found that six of the respondents stated that they did not have any school-specific policy or practice in place in regard to student diversity. However, it was interesting to note that the two large suburban schools did attempt to informally help diverse populations in their schools adjust. One small rural high school made mention of having one homecoming queen and an integrated prom. The major theme for school-specific policy regarding student diversity was that high school principals, involved in this study, did not perceive
a need for school-specific policy in regard to student diversity. Once again this finding is not in line with the work of researchers such as Reid (2003), Richardson (1994) and Rodriguez (1998). Their work calls for the implementation of school and district policy with regard to student diversity.

With a lack of formal school-specific policy with regard to student diversity, the researcher did not determine a major theme for this category. However, the researcher contends that this further exemplifies the need for more school-specific policy designed to help students and educators with regard to student diversity. It is important to note that four respondents did state that any school policy that they use is basically the policy enforced by the county. Each respondent also noted that they had no idea as to how these policies were evaluated.

Beck, (1993) calls for the administrative head (principal) of any school to have a vision for future programs and ways to help all students be successful. With this in mind, principals were given an opportunity to recommend any school or district policy they would like to see implemented with regard to student diversity. The respondents did provide enough information for a list of recommendations to be developed in the area of programs, policies, or procedures to aid student diversity. Their list of recommendations includes: (1) rural schools making an effort to globalize student learning, (2) more high school mentoring programs for minority students, (3) additional cross-cultural experiences for students, (4) small high schools to implement more foreign languages and (5) programs that focus on student acceptance of one another. With five out of nine respondents making recommendations for future programs, policy, or procedures, for the purpose of this study, the contention was that most respondents perceive a need for more
programs, policies, or procedures. While this contention reflects the work of diversity-related research, it is important to note once again that this belief is not being carried out.

Research Question 3

What artifactual evidence of an awareness or appreciation for student diversity is present in each school?

Discussion

The researcher sought artifactual evidence of awareness or an appreciation of student diversity in each school as well as an accurate depiction of what goes on each day in the participating high school and how it relates to information garnered during the in-depth interview by way of written documentation. A review of school and district literature did not find any major discrepancies in information, school policies and procedures, or student discipline. During in-depth interviews, respondents alluded to information from the federal government in regard to Equal Opportunity law being required by their district to be placed in all handbooks. The researcher found that much of what the respondents reported by way of federal policy and law was incorporated into the documentation for each responding school. This was not surprising, due to the mandating of public organizations following prescribed law.

It was surprising; however, to find that not every school was required to produce its own handbook. From the review of district and school written documentation, the researcher found that relevant federal laws, such as Equal Opportunity and non-discrimination laws, are generally expressed by each participant in his/her handbook. It was also concluded that each participating high school did not have much deviation from school policies in the way of student discipline. This lack of deviation in school policy
and school disciplinary procedures may represent a cookie-cutter fashion to handling these issues. This style of handling diverse population directly opposes the work of MacAlister (2000), and Radin (1998). However, it is important to note here that all participating schools’ codes of student conduct promoted the use of diverse strategies like in-school- suspension and the use of peer mediation to help work with students in the area of discipline which matches the work of Herzog (2000).

Further review of the written documentation examined by the researcher showed a high regard for the use of alternative strategies when dealing with discipline issues. Because each respondent had alternatives to out-of-school suspension listed and provided his/her students with peer mediation programs, the researcher contends that all respondents perceive a need for making stakeholders aware, by way of documentation, of the different strategies used in regard to discipline. Furthermore, specific mandated federal policies in the area of law were placed in written form by the district. Respondents and their school districts written documentation valued the use of alternative measures when dealing with student diversity and discipline once again matching the work of Herzog (2000).

A review of the digital photographs taken by the researcher on the principal-led tour of each school facility yielded 27 digital photographs. The artifactual photographs were placed into seven categories based upon where the artifact was located in the school. Based upon the in-depth interview, most corresponding principals believed that the foreign language department or extra-curricular activities were better suited to help display an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. The seven categories determined by the location where digital photographs were taken were as follows: (1)
five photographs on the foreign language hall, (2) five photographs in administrative offices, (3) five photographs on the social studies hall, (4) five photographs from the media center, (5) four photographs taken in the main hall, (6) two photographs from the vocational/technology wing and (7) one photograph from the lunchroom. The quality of all of the artifactual evidence found did not surprise the researcher. Some of the posters were very slight in their regard to student diversity while others were student diversity specific. From the artifactual evidence found, and a review of relevant written documentation provided by each respondent, the researcher has found that high schools participating in this sample have not adequately addressed the issue of student diversity through artifactual evidence. Although each respondent did agree that student diversity was important, it was hard to find consistent evidence throughout any school that displayed a high level of commitment to educating students or dealing with diversity issues.

From the data gathered in the in-depth interview, the researcher anticipated the foreign language department to have the highest representation of photographs. However, the administrative offices, social studies departments, and media center were equally represented. The large number of photographs taken in these areas displayed an appreciation or awareness of student diversity that was not expected from respondent information or garnered from related research.

Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the results of the study are discussed in relation to each research question and then the overarching research question of principals’ perceptions.
1. The subjects of this qualitative study were nine Georgia high school principals from the Central Savannah River Area who had an average of six years experience in their current position. Contained within this sample were three high schools classified as suburban, urban, and rural, with two schools having less than 500 students (small), three schools having more than five hundred but less than 1000 students (medium), and four schools having more than 1000 students (large). One-third of this sample was female and one-third was also African-American. From the information gathered, it can be concluded that high school principals, in this study, perceived being better prepared for the real world as the primary advantage of student diversity.

2. From the data the researcher gathered with regard to the disadvantages associated with student diversity, the major theme was the problems within homogeneous groups that may lead students to feeling alienated and having those problems spread to heterogeneous groups. Therefore, the researcher concludes that high school principals, in this study, perceive the problem of student alienation and conflicts that rise from alienation to be the primary disadvantage of student diversity.

3. The most common type of policy found, in this study, related to student diversity was brought about from legal decisions made in the late 1960s to early 1970s. The majority of these policies fell under discrimination law as well as busing and zoning. Some respondents did report an effort to promote student diversity and an appreciation for people of diverse cultures or races. However, in this study of high schools in the southeastern region of Georgia, no formal school specific or
district policies were found. Therefore, the researcher concludes that high school principals, in this study, do not perceive a need to have any formal policies or practices in place to address student diversity, unless mandated by the federal government.

4. By examining each school/district student/employee handbook, the investigator found that all respondents addressed diversity related issues through written documentation if mandated by the federal government. Therefore, the researcher concludes that high school principals and their districts adequately addressed the areas of documenting mandated federal laws in regard to diversity. The researcher further concludes that participating high school principals and their school districts have addressed the need for diverse strategies in regard to discipline.

5. Through the use of a participant observer perspective, the researcher was able to tour each school facility with the principal to locate and photograph items displayed within the school representing an appreciation for or awareness of student diversity. From a review of the artifactual evidence found, it was hard to find consistent evidence throughout any school displaying a high level of commitment to an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. This revelation does not weaken the study. Conversely, it strengthens the relevance of the investigation into diversity related issues. Therefore, the researcher concludes that high school principals, in this study, although they may be aware of diversity and be able to “talk the talk”, they have not addressed the needs of diverse students or “walk the walk”.
6. With regard to the overarching research question, the following perceptions can be concluded from the information received in this study. It can be concluded that principals perceived that student diversity better prepared their students for the real world but may cause student segregation or make some students feel alienated. Respondents did not see a need for more diversity-related policy, rather, an adherence to federal guidelines or law was perceived to be the most important. Lastly, principals perceived that expressions of an awareness or appreciation for diversity should be addressed through extra-curricular activities or foreign language departments.

Implications

Because of the changing demographics for some school districts and the limited influx of minorities for others, principals may be faced with new and significant challenges, unlike what many have ever experienced. Dealing with these changes is a responsibility all educators must bear, but it is especially important for the principal because it is the principal who is the instructional leader in a school and has the greatest impact on the school climate (Bolman & Deal, 1994). The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will add to the body of knowledge concerning student diversity and the perceptions of high school principals.

Several implications were derived from the data found, in this study, as it relates to the two main categories of school officials for whom the implications are most important as identified in the significance of the study. From the data, the researcher revealed the perceptions of principals from five different school districts; however, the perceptions may have an impact on a broader population. The two major groups for
whom the information in this study has implications are principals and policy-makers. Based on the findings of the study, the following implications should be considered:

1. The first group identified was policy makers and, most importantly, building principals. For principals, the information found in this study implied a need for more awareness of student diversity issues in order to aid student success, because, as stated in the significance of study, high schools represent the last opportunity for many students to receive a free and appropriate education.

2. Because all of the respondents were veteran administrators, perhaps their length of time out of graduate preparation programs had an impact on their ability to prepare for diverse students. This also implies a further need for veteran administrators to receive training on diversity-related issues.

3. School leadership preparation programs need to develop course content that will not only educate potential leaders about diversity-related issues but also provide each potential leader with a framework for helping students and staff appreciate/understand student diversity.

4. The implications for school policy with regard to the advantages of student diversity, center on student demographics. Therefore, policy makers should recognize that as schools are built and school zones re-designed, research with regard to aiding diverse student bodies must be reviewed and incorporated into the decision-making process.

5. Another area examined found few, if any, disadvantages associated with student diversity. Armed with this information, teachers, administrators, and policy makers should begin to celebrate and embrace the needs of diverse students and
not delegate it to someone else in order to help prepare students for life beyond high school and help to reduce problems between students.

6. The researcher did not find any specific district or school specific policy in place; however, a majority of the respondents were under court ordered desegregation. For principals and policy makers alike, this implies an over-reliance on the federal government with regard to student diversity-related issues. Therefore, policy makers need to review their current policies to ensure that they are not outdated.

7. The researcher found artifactual evidence showing that respondents believed that their foreign language department, clubs or extra-curricular activities were primarily responsible for fostering an appreciation or awareness of student diversity. This implies that although educational leaders may be aware of student diversity, efforts made in its promotion are reserved for other individuals.

8. The lack of a presence of an appreciation for student diversity implies an increased need for policy makers to consider promoting awareness of diversity-related issues when making policy.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following recommendations for high school principals and relevant policy makers. Due to the limitations of this study expressed in an earlier chapter, the researcher acknowledges that the information is not the only study that can be used to help administrators and policy makers in regard to student diversity. However, the researcher addressed the following areas in an attempt to give principals, policy makers, and possibly future researchers information in regard to selected Georgia
high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity, The researcher accomplished this by examining the advantages and disadvantages associated with student diversity, school/district policy impacting principals in regard to student diversity, and documenting awareness or appreciation for diversity present in respondents’ schools. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following recommendations for fellow researchers:

1. Replicate the qualitative study in 2010 to determine any changes in the perceptions of student diversity by high school principals.

2. Use the same qualitative format to interview high school principals within different regions of the state that are experiencing more student diversity.

3. Use the same qualitative format to interview high school principals that have recently graduated from school leadership preparation programs.

4. Decrease the impact of the limitations mentioned earlier by addressing the limitations placed upon this study because of time, perspective, location, and size. By addressing these limitations, perhaps, the researcher may find that expanding the scope of this research increases the amount of data produced.

The following recommendations for implementing the results of the study were:

5. Incorporate more awareness and appreciation for diversity into high schools through an increased the promotion of the advantages of student diversity.

6. Increase the amount of awareness/appreciation for student diversity in the policy-making processes geared toward student diversity.

7. Reviewing current school or district policy geared toward student diversity, because many of the policies are more than 30 years old and may be outdated. School boards need to be in constant review of their student demographics to
ensure that their current policies and procedures best serve their students because parents and students may seek out schools with higher evidence of an appreciation or awareness for diversity.

8. Increasing the number of places where awareness and appreciation artifacts can be found in schools.

9. Increasing the quality/relevance of artifacts displayed in each school.

10. Promoting an appreciation or awareness of diversity within all facets of school life and not stereotyping diversity to certain aspects of school life such as clubs and foreign language departments as found in the relevant research and in the respondents’ perceptions.

Dissemination

The researcher chose to write specifically to the general scientific community (fellow-investigators) and to general practitioners (high school principals). This study will be bound and published for reference purposes in the library of Georgia Southern University. The investigator has safely stored all transcripts and data used to produce this body of research and will destroy all information six months after completion of the study. A copy of the completed dissertation will be made available to Dissertation Abstracts International.

Furthermore, the researcher welcomes the opportunity to convey the information to all persons of interest. The researcher intends to present this body of research at state or national conferences held throughout the summer, such as the annual summer Georgia Association of Educator’s conference at Jekyll Island, Georgia. The researcher would also like an opportunity to present this information to school boards experiencing
diversity-related issues as well as seek publication in local, state, regional, or national educational publications.

Concluding Thoughts

This examination of selected Georgia high school principals was designed to gather information about perceived advantages and disadvantages of student diversity, district/school policy impacting principals, and expressions of awareness or appreciation present in each school. This qualitative study consisted of nine high school principals with three or more years of experience as principal at his/her current school, with the exception of one participant. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the experienced high school principals to determine their perceptions of student diversity. The study was of particular interest to the researcher when serving as a high school assistant principal, then as a middle school principal in Georgia at the time of the research.

In 1954, the Supreme Court struck down school segregation rendering it unconstitutional. Then in 1964, the federal government went one step further with the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. These rulings and laws, 50 years later, have shaped many of the requirements placed upon modern-day schooling. Furthermore, it made it possible for all students to have equal protection of their rights as it relates to a free and appropriate education.

In interviewing high school principals and touring their facilities, the researcher found that the impact of civil rights legislation continues to have an impact on the school leaders of today. Through this study, the researcher attempted to capture the richness and complexity of dealing with student diversity by examining nine high school principals’
perceptions of student diversity. The researcher attempted to identify perceived
advantages and disadvantages of student diversity, diversity related policies which
impacted principals, as well as, documented artifactual evidence of an appreciation or
awareness of student diversity.

There are many aspects to student diversity that are worthy of examination that
may not have been covered by this research study. Therefore, the researcher looks
forward to continuing research on student diversity, as well as, helping others in their
pursuit of understanding student diversity in public schools.
REFERENCES


Eisenberg v. Montgomery County Public Schools 197 F. 3d 123 (4th Cir. 1999).


Tuttle v. Arlington County 195 F. 3d 698 (4th Cir. 1999).


APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL FORM
Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-581-5465
Fax: 912-581-0719
Oversight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

To: Ronald Wiggins
4707 Raintree Drive
Evans, GA 30809

cc: Dr. James Burnham, Faculty Advisor
P. O. Box 8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: September 14, 2004

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: H05088, and titled “Georgia High School Principals’ Perceptions of Student Diversity”, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a Research Study Termination form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER
Dear Fellow Principal,

I am a Georgia Southern University doctoral student and a middle school principal. If you are receiving this information, then you should currently be serving as a high school principal in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). I am conducting research for my doctorate in educational Leadership and could greatly benefit from your participation in this endeavor. My dissertation will be a qualitative study, using in-depth interviews and a tour of your school to examine selected Georgia high school principals’ perceptions of student diversity.

The information gathered in this research study will be a confidential any coding used will be the sole property of the researcher. Participants will not be identified by name or any other identifying characteristics. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw or decline to continue at any time. Your participation is totally voluntary and designed to be of minimal risk to each participant.

If you would like to be considered for participation in this research study, please complete the attached school demographic data sheet and return it in the self addressed envelope. Once everyone has had a chance to respond selected participants will then be contacted by phone to schedule interviews.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (706) 855-0950 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Jim Burham at (912) 681-5567. For concerns about your rights as a research participant, in this study, please contact Julie Cole at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465. If I can be of any assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Wiggins
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA PROFILE
CSRA High School Demographic Data Profile

School Name __________________________

Number of Students ______

Location (select one): ___ suburban  ___ urban  ___ rural

What percent of each group is represented in your school?

___ White ___ Black ___ Asian ___ Hispanic ___ American Indian
___ Multi-racial

Respondent Information

Gender (check one): ___ Male  ___ Female

Race/Ethnicity (check one): ___ White ___ Black ___ Asian ___ Hispanic ___ American Indian
___ Multi-racial

Years as Principal of this school: ______

Total number of years as a principal ______

*By returning this information to the researcher, each respondent agrees to further consideration as a possible participant in this study. Please return to researcher by Friday, December 17, 2004.