Fall 2006

Employment Criteria Used by Georgia Public Shcool Superintendents in High School Principal Selection

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EMPLOYMENT CRITERIA USED BY GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

SUPERINTENDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SELECTION

by

JEFFREY LYNN CARNEY

(Under the Direction Of Michael D. Richardson)

ABSTRACT

The high school principal plays an important and highly visible role in the community. High school principals are expected to provide challenging curriculum, comprehensive athletic and fine arts programs, a disciplined learning environment, increased test scores, and community involvement. With such an array of demanding expectations, the selection of the high school principal is an extremely important decision made by Georgia school superintendents. In an effort to gain a better understanding of the employment criteria used to hire Georgia high school principals, the researcher used a previously validated formal survey constructed by Dr. Linda Gresham in 2003. The survey was mailed to all 180 Georgia public school superintendents. Descriptive statistics common to quantitative research were calculated, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations. The researcher's findings confirmed that there is an abundance of certified high school principal applicants in Georgia. However, superintendents reported that the actual number of qualified applicants is much lower. Georgia superintendents value credibility, having high expectations, and the ability to see the whole picture when considering the most important selection criteria for high school principal candidates.

Criteria such as years of experience, being skilled in technology, and being

knowledgeable about innovative practices was least valued by Georgia superintendents.

The researcher recommends that Georgia school superintendents be more proactive in

recruiting high school principals by "growing their own" through more formalized

professional learning programs.

INDEX WORDS: Georgia, Public Schools, Administration, Hiring Criteria, High School Principals, Dissertation

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2006

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Electronic Version Approved:
December 2006

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Alfred Carney, who was truly inspirational to me in all facets of life. His integrity, work ethic, and loyalty to his family and country have always motivated me to do my best in everything that I do. Quite simply, he is my hero and I proudly dedicate this dissertation in his honor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following professors for their contributions, support, and encouragement throughout the program:

to Dr. Michael D. Richardson, who served as my dissertation committee chair, advisor, and teacher, for his common sense approach to making this dissertation doable. His support and advice was invaluable to me during this time;

to Dr. T.C. Chan, for serving as my long distance methodologist on my dissertation committee;

to Dr. James Burnham for serving on my dissertation committee;

to Dr. James Smith for serving on my dissertation committee.

I would also like to acknowledge the following family members:

to my wife, Beth, who seemed to always know when to give me a push to keep moving forward while at the same time keeping her distance so as to not interfere with my work on this dissertation. Although she didn't take the classes that I did in this program, my wife probably deserves this degree as much as I do.

to my two sons, Jeffrey and Emory, for their understanding during this process of why I've missed many of their soccer games, baseball practices, and activities. Instead of complaining about how much time I had to spend working on this dissertation, they would only ask, "Are you finished writing your book, Dad?" Now that this process (or my "book") is complete, I look forward to shifting more of my time and energy back to my sons as they progress through middle and high school.

to my parents, Alfred and Ann Carney, who have always been my primary inspiration in everything that I do. Their love, support, and encouragement have provided the foundation upon which I have been able to succeed in life.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of my classmates in Cohort VIII-A that came to be known as "the fam". In particular, I'd like to acknowledge Dr. Linda Gresham, for providing unbelievable support and encouragement during our class meetings and later in the dissertation process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the release of <u>A Nation at Risk</u> (National Commission on Excellence in

Education, 1983), educational reform in the United States has been brought to the

forefront of society. During the remainder of the 1980s and 1990s, the nation continued

in an educational reform debate in great depth (Bjork & Ginsberg, 1995). Concern for the

performance of schools led to a focus on improving curriculum, instruction, credentials,

accountability, and assessment. Accordingly, considerable specific attention is devoted to

finding ways to improve the quality of leadership in schools and school systems (Murphy

& Shipman, 1997).

Nationally, there are approximately 14,000 public school superintendents that

have an average salary of $121,794 (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). In this survey

conducted on behalf of the American Association of School Administrators, the

researchers found the median age of superintendents to be 52.5-which is the oldest

median age ever recorded in the survey that is conducted every ten years. Additionally,

this study found that both female and minority superintendent representation has

increased over the past ten years. Females comprised 13 percent of superintendents in

2000-double the number from ten years earlier. Minority superintendents increased their

representation by 30 percent.

Superintendents exercise numerous responsibilities that have an important impact

on the success of a school district. The Education Commission of the States (2003) notes

that one of these responsibilities includes the hiring of principals to lead and manage

secondary schools. In this study, researchers noted that over 70% of current superintendents are former secondary principals. So, by further examining the position of high school principal, one can gain an understanding into the qualities of many of our future superintendents.

<div align="center">Role of the Principal</div>

The role of principal has become diverse and increasingly complex. Principals are faced with increased responsibilities related to marketing their schools, political involvement in generating financial support, involvement with social service agencies in meeting the needs of students, working with site-based councils within their schools, and sound fiscal decision making (Doud & Keller, 1998). Additionally, Hausman, Crow, and Sperry (2000) concluded that the principal deals with decentralized school structures, changing environmental boundaries, less homogenous schools, closer contact with stakeholders, and a market-driven view of education.

<div align="center">Importance of Principal's Role</div>

The principal, as leader of a school, impacts the performance of students and faculty members while also influencing the participation of parent volunteers and community stakeholders (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). With attention turning to the effect of school administrators on school performance, educational administration programs are challenged to ensure that prospective principals will be able to work in restructured school contexts, learn new roles, and mitigate the effect of bureaucratic controls that stifle the teaching and learning process (Ponder & Young, 1996). School enrollment is at an all time high, more schools are being built, and the necessity of a strong leader is constant (Blackman & Fenwick, 2000).

Organizations require shifts in roles, relationships, and responsibilities (Murphy & Shipman, 1997). The result is a challenge for school principals to replace the traditional focus on stability with a focus on change in their schools (Fullan, 1998). The existing bureaucratic system of administration is no longer functional nor is it relevant for present times (Connell, 2000). To be able to effectively lead, principals must possess special skills to focus on continuous improvement in a climate of change (Whitaker, 2001).

<div align="center">Reasons for Principal Shortage</div>

Although there has been an increased awareness of the importance of the school principal, fewer qualified people want the principal's job (Newsom, 2001). Finding good principals is becoming more difficult (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). According to Goldstein (2002), many schools across the nation opened without the leadership of a permanent principal. Additionally, many teachers who seek administrator certification do not plan to seek an administrative position after completing degree requirements (Cooley & Shen, 1999).

Concern about the growing issue of principal supply and demand precipitated action on the part of Whitaker (2001) to discern reasons that kept qualified applicants from applying for available principalships. The respective findings concluded that the time commitment, high stakes testing, school report cards, increased violence, and a lack of respect in society all contributed to reasons for a qualified person not to seek a principalship. Additional discouraging factors include low compensation, long hours, and stress on the job (NASSP, 2001).

The Principal Selection Process

Although school councils are becoming increasingly responsible for interviewing prospective principals, potential candidates must still meet the expectations of the local superintendent (Davis, 2000). In many school systems, the principal selection process is subject to intense internal and external pressure that impacts efforts to employ individuals on the qualities they possess. Superintendents are sensitive to local politics and to the political composition of the local school boards (Eaton & Sharp, 1996). Many superintendents look for a good fit between the community and the principal candidate. A good fit is the candidate's ability to mesh with the personalities, culture, and needs of a particular site (Potter, 2000).

Importance of Selecting High School Principal

According to Georgia law, superintendents are appointed by the local school board (O.C.G.A. 099-8-5.3). To maintain an appointment, Georgia superintendents rely on their hired principals to produce positive results and advance school improvement initiatives. Results of highly publicized test scores, such as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores are published annually and are used as a benchmark in assessing student performance in a system (Whitaker, 2001). Part of the superintendent's performance, in turn, relies upon these scores and on other indicators of success at the high school level. Given this relationship and the corresponding lack of information both in Georgia and the nation, there would seem to be a need to know the criteria that Georgia school superintendents use to select high school principals. Yet, a search of the literature provides very little specific information.

Statement of the Problem

The high school principal plays an important and highly visible role in the community. High school principals are expected to provide challenging curriculum, comprehensive athletic and fine arts programs, a disciplined learning environment, increased test scores, and community involvement. Due to the older age of the students and the societal problems that the students encounter in today's world, the leadership position of a high school is extremely complex and directly affects how those students succeed in the community in which they live. With such an array of demanding expectations, the selection of the high school principal is an extremely important decision made by Georgia school superintendents.

There are many criteria that superintendents can use in the selection of high school principals. Several of the criteria that must be considered in this selection process include prior experience, communication skills, instructional leadership abilities, decisiveness, and organizational planning skill. Very few studies have been done to determine what criteria are considered or if superintendent demographics play a role in the selection of Georgia high school principals. Therefore, the question to be examined in this study is: What employment criteria do Georgia public school superintendents use in high school principal selection?

Research Questions

The role and responsibilities of the high school principal are many and critical. In order to understand how hiring choices are made, the following overarching question will be investigated:

According to the perceptions of Georgia public school superintendents, what skills are perceived as the most desirable when seeking to select a high school principal?

To assist in answering this question, the following sub questions will guide the research:

1. What is the geographic profile of Georgia superintendents?

2. How do Georgia superintendents' perceptions differ between certified and qualified high school principal candidates?

3. What are the most important selection criteria to Georgia superintendents in selecting Georgia high school principals?

4. How are recruitment efforts used by Georgia public school superintendents in selecting high school principals?

The Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several dimensions. First, the study should be of interest to colleges and universities that offer graduate degree programs in educational administration. With such hiring criteria defined by Georgia superintendents, college educators would be able to better prepare prospective high school principals as they move through graduate programs of study. In addition, the study should also be of value to individuals who aspire to the position of high school principal. With such knowledge, aspiring principals will be better prepared in the application and interview phase of securing a high school principalship.

At the state level, the Georgia Department of Education would benefit from a comprehensive investigation into the specific criteria that local school Superintendents use in selecting high school principals. With the impending retirement of large numbers

of administrators, such criteria would offer the Department of Education ideas for planning professional learning and leadership training courses. This, in turn, would have statewide budgetary implications due to the development and implementation of such training focused on the criteria established by local superintendents when hiring high school principals.

This study should be most beneficial to local school board members who must approve principalship appointments after an essential matching of skills, values, and educational environment is done. The successful placement of the appropriate candidate could very well determine whether or not the school board members satisfy their respective constituency and, in turn, may affect their longevity in office.

Superintendents would find this study significant since it would provide statewide insight into the process of selecting high school principals. By reflecting upon the survey responses, Georgia superintendents could compare personal selection practices to those of fellow superintendents that they are competing against for high school principal applicants. Also, there may be superintendents in Georgia who have not served long enough to select a high school principal. For such a situation, this study's findings would serve as a guideline for selection criteria that may need to be considered by the superintendent.

This study would be significant to the researcher because it would explain not only what selection criteria is important for a high school principalship, but also possibly reveal demographic patterns of Georgia superintendents as they relate to the desired selection criteria. Should this researcher seek other high school principal positions in Georgia, it would be most beneficial to know how the respective superintendents use the

various criteria that must be considered for the job. Also, as a prospective superintendent, this researcher would gain valuable knowledge from currently practicing superintendents in the very important area of high school principal selection processes. Finally, conducting this survey would allow this researcher the opportunity to gain valuable insight by networking with practicing superintendents statewide.

Procedures

In this descriptive study, the researcher used mixed methodology. The survey was primarily quantitative in nature due to the researcher's desire to survey every Georgia superintendent. However, the last statement on the survey was qualitative. After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University, an adapted survey was mailed to each superintendent in Georgia. The survey was based upon the research questions and a related literature review to identify employment criteria used by Georgia public school superintendents in high school principal selection processes. Each survey was coded for tracking purposes so that follow-up postcards could be sent after a two-week period reminding the respondents to return the completed survey.

The survey itself consisted of two superintendent demographic questions followed by approximately 32 selection criteria issues that superintendents consider when hiring a high school principal in Georgia. The last question was open ended to allow for a qualitative response. Validity of the original survey was established by Dr. Linda Gresham in 2003. Since the current researcher's survey included only minimal changes, the original survey validity remained intact. The survey was mailed to each

superintendent with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. The responses were entered into the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS Base 12.0, 2003).

Limitations

The following limitations are associated with this study:

1. Only superintendents in Georgia were surveyed in this study. Every state has different hiring practices of high school principals and may have different educational priorities.

2. The focus was only on criteria for hiring Georgia high school principals and not those at other educational levels.

Delimitation

1. The superintendents may not have been given enough choices on the survey.

Definition of Terms

The terms that have been used throughout this study are common to available literature and to the field of education. The terms defined in this section are those that require a clearly stated definition in relationship to this study.

1. <u>Certified</u>- Educators who apply for and receive a state certificate or license that permits them to fill a leadership position.

2. <u>Georgia High School Principal</u>- The position of highest authority in a public high school with a minimum qualification of holding a valid L-5 certificate.

3. <u>Georgia Superintendent</u>- The appointed leader of a school system. In Georgia, all Superintendents must have a valid L-5 certificate and are appointed by the local Board of Education for a term of not less than one year but not more than three years. In addition to other duties, the superintendent

makes recommendations to the board regarding the selection of high school

principals.

4. Hiring- Responsibility of the local Board of Education based upon the

   recommendation of the school superintendent.

5. Principal Selection- the process of actually screening, interviewing, and

   selecting the candidate for a high school principalship.

6. Qualified- In addition to being certificated, these individuals have the

   requisite skills needed to be an effective principal as determined by the

   superintendent.

7. Selection Criteria- The skills and qualities of candidates for high school

   principalships that are valued by the superintendent in the hiring process.

8. Skills- Abilities, qualities, traits, and strengths that are sought by

   superintendent in prospective leadership candidates.

9. SPSS- The Statistical Package of Social Science program that calculates

   mathematical tendencies based on input of data.

Summary

The current environment in education includes an emphasis on accountability for

school leadership. Public school superintendents have the challenging task of staffing

schools with effective principals. As the population of superintendents continues to get

older, so does the population of qualified high school principals.

As the role of principal changes and becomes more complex, the need for a

qualified pool of applicants-especially for the secondary level-becomes more pressing.

However, finding qualified candidates is becoming harder because many educators that

possess the leadership certification never intend to seek an administrative position. For reasons such as the time commitment, increased accountability, and lack of respect, certified candidates are often choosing to not apply for principalships.

Due to the combination of an increased need for new principals and a corresponding shortage of qualified applicants, Georgia superintendents and school board members have a vested interest in selecting the right person to lead each high school. The challenge is to find the right fit between the candidate and the needs of the school. By defining the desired criteria for Georgia high school principals, superintendents should be better able to evaluate and recommend leadership candidates that effectively represent the needs of both the school and community.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Over the years, the role of principal has changed considerably. As far back as the 1830s, principals began serving as the controlling head of the school due in large part to the Common School Report and the writings of Horace Mann (Bruckner, 2003). Through the decades of 1920-1940, the principal's role evolved into being an efficient manager of resources and the supervisor of teachers. Eventually, the principals' role went through various stages of being bureaucratic (1950s and 1960s), humanistic and socially relevant (1970s), and the visionary instructional leader of the 1980s-1990s (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

In 2002, there were approximately 105,000 active principals in the United States, of whom approximately 80,000 were working as site-administrators at American public schools (Kelley & Peterson 2002). Most of these educational leaders came to their current positions through a multi-staged selection process that encompasses self-selection into the field of educational administration, admission into a state-accredited, university-based preparation program, state licensure and certification, and selection by local school district superintendents. Not only is the road to the American principalship a lengthy one for the aspiring candidate, it ends with a critical employment decision on the part of

superintendents (and/or their school boards and other district personnel). As Pounder and

Young (1996) asserted:

> Effective recruitment and selection of school administrators continues to be one of the more challenging human resource administration functions in educational organizations. This challenge is due, in part, to the inexact `science' of attracting, screening, and identifying quality candidates to fit the complex leadership needs of schools today. (p.279)

In this chapter the researcher will present the relevant literature concerning public

school superintendents' perceptions of the criteria for hiring principals in an era of

qualified candidate shortage. The review at hand consists of the current principal shortage

in the context of the principal's role, the research on principal effects, principal

preparation programs, and professional standards/proficiencies that various organizations

have formulated for guiding and assessing principal performance. Finally, the school

district selection of principals including recommendations for both the improvement of

the process and the enhancement of the principal applicant pool is discussed.

<div align="center">Principal Shortage in the Context of the Principal's Role</div>

Miklos (1996) wrote that "administrative positions are perceived as an attractive

alternative to other opportunities within education; consequently, supply of

administrators is normally not a problem" (p.22). In support of this contention, Miklos

cited research conducted some eight years earlier, in 1988, which found that there were

312,000 educational administration certificate holders in the United States available to fill

about 190,000 positions at district and building levels. It must be noted that this study not

only included principals, but also superintendents, assistant principals, and other

administrative personnel. Moreover, Miklos(1996) acknowledged because of the uneven

distribution of certified administrators and positions, there may be undersupplies in some states and oversupplies in others.

From what can be garnered, however, the condition of under-supply has become increasingly prevalent. A nation-wide telephone survey of more than 400 superintendents conducted by the Educational Research Service (1998) for the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals reported that half of the school districts questioned said that they faced a shortage of qualified candidates to fill open principal positions. In some school districts, the principal shortage has reached crisis proportions. Thus, for example, an article appearing in the New York Times (Goodenough, 2000) reported that the school system of New York City began the 2000-2001 school year with 163 schools headed by a substitute principal. The Education Research Service (1998) survey noted that shortages existed in all types of schools (urban, rural, and suburban) and at all levels (elementary, middle and secondary). Smaller scale studies by Bowles, King and Crow (2000) and by Whitaker (2000) have indicated that principal shortages are particularly acute at the high school level and within lower socio-economic status, urban districts.

One dimension of the problem revolves around the existing principal corps, the graying of the principalship and correlative tendency for disproportionate retirement, aggravated by a rise in principal resignations. Thus, according to Steinberg (2000), in the state of Vermont, some 20 percent of all public school principals retired or resigned at the end of the 1999-2000 school year. Sheldon and Munnich (1999) estimated that 75 percent of the principals working in Minnesota in the year 2000 would be lost to retirement or attrition by the year 2010 during a period when that state's public school student

enrollments are expected to grow. Some 86 percent of the superintendents queried by

Sheldon and Munnich said that filling principal positions with qualified applicants was

either difficult or very difficult. A study conducted under the auspices of the National

Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) concluded that during the decade

of the 1990s more than half of all public school principals in the United States left their

jobs and projected that for the 2001-2010 period, the principal attrition rate would remain

in excess of 40 percent (Educational Research Service, 2000).

In his study of public school principals in the state of Washington, Barker (1997)

reported that in the 1995-1996 school year, approximately 30 elementary and secondary

principalships across the state were held by retired educators called back to `fill in' for the

year because of a disappointing search for a new principal. Barker also noted the

heightened retirement/resignation rate for principals was accompanied by a noticeable

decline in the size of the pipeline for their replacement. In Washington, Barker found, the

number of students enrolled in the internship stage of university principal preparation

programs dropped significantly in the 1990s: in 1993-1994, there were 300 principal

interns in Washington's public school system; one year later, there were only 240. These

circumstances led the district superintendents to register their dissatisfaction with both

the quantity and the quality of principal applicant pools.

The core of the problem however, is that fewer classroom teachers, the long-

standing base for aspiring principals, want to undertake the job of running and being

accountable for public schools. On this front, Barker wrote:

> The teachers and counselors who sought the principalship in the past are not
> stepping forward to embrace this role. Life in public schools is sufficiently
> complex and demanding for these educators now; they are watching school

administrators carefully. What they observe is new and more complex demands and higher expectations from more diverse constituencies. (1997, p. 86)

In essence, Washington's dilemma, mirrored in states across the nation, is that there are more principal positions open and fewer qualified individuals willing to fill them.

Attesting to the scope of the principal shortage, Whitaker (2001) carried out a nation-wide survey of 108 school superintendents. Of these, only 10.2 percent reported little or no shortage of principal candidates; 39.8 percent said that their districts faced a moderate shortage of qualified, aspiring principals; and 50.0 percent characterized their school system's principal shortage as somewhat extreme or extreme. Whitaker also found that not only are the numbers of applicants for principal positions decreasing, the quality of applicants also poses some concern. Of the 108 school superintendents included as subjects in Whitaker's study, 30 superintendents rated the mean quality of recent principal candidates as poor or fair; 54 superintendents said that it was good; 18 superintendents indicated that it was very good and only two superintendents characterized the current principal applicant pool as excellent. Among the former, the main complaints centered upon lack of applicant experience and lack of knowledge and skills in the areas of instruction and assessment.

One aspect of the present principal shortage in the United States is demographic in nature. According to Kelley and Peterson (2002), the age profile of American school principals is becoming increasingly slanted upward to individuals nearing the traditional retirement age. Part of this phenomenon is due to the greater proportion of women in the principalship; females tend to become principals at a later stage in their educational careers than males.

But demographics alone have not captured all of the causes for the absence of available qualified principals relative to available positions. In his survey of 90 principals attending the Principal Leadership Summit in Washington D.C. in 1999, Kennedy (2000), asked his informants to indicate the reason why so many of their colleagues were retiring or resigning from their positions. The five most frequently given reasons were: (1) the changing demands of the job; (2) inadequate salary; (3) time pressures; (4) lack of support from parents and the community at large and the negativity of media toward schools, and (5) a general lack of respect accorded to principals by the public.

Virtually all recent surveys of principal job satisfaction, intentions to quit, and actual quits have underscored the importance of remuneration relative to both job demands and to the rewards of working elsewhere in the public school system, for the most part as classroom teachers. From these, researchers have surmised that the major factors preventing candidates from entering the principalship are compensation and the prinicpal's role (Kelley & Peterson 2002). Consider, for example, that:

> Although principals have advanced degrees, average ten years of classroom teaching experience, and manage huge staffs, they trade their 180-190 day work year for one that exceeds 220 days; take on enormous responsibilities and headaches; lose their job security; and they may earn just a little more or even less on a day-to-day basis than they do as a teacher. (Tirozzi & Ferandino 2000, p.1)

According to Newsom (2001) the role of an average principal includes working at least 54 hours a week and, moreover, less experienced principals work even longer hours.

The superintendents in Whitaker's (2000) study stated the main reason for the shortage of principals was inadequate salary. Principal salary (or total remuneration) varies from one school district to another, and given the short supply of qualified candidates, this has resulted in intense competition for qualified educational leaders,

cross-district cannibalization, and a dynamic that lends itself to greater and greater

incumbent dissatisfaction. One superintendent of a district 60 miles distant from a major

urban area told Whitaker:

> We run into a problem with salary because we hire a principal at a competitive
> salary, then next year we may have to actually bring in a person at a higher salary
> just to get him. The problem is that you get caught in a bind because the other
> principals want their salaries bumped up too and if they don't get more salary,
> they might leave. So it's becoming more and more a recruitment issue and is
> becoming a situation where districts are stealing from one another. (p. 88)

In particular, the superintendents from rural districts included in Whitaker's investigation

emphasized the difficulties of being unable to offer higher salaries to principal candidates

as a competitive disadvantage against their better-endowed suburban counterparts.

According to Tracy and Weaver (2000), it is not salary per se, but its inadequate

compensation for the demands of the job that has pushed incumbent principals from their

positions and deterred their potential replacements from preparing or applying for the

principalship. These researchers assert that "Principals in American public schools face

intense, multiple demands, role ambiguity, and a dissonance between what they are

expected to do and the resources that they have available to do it, including time. All of

this yields physiological and psychological stress, and, ultimately, the phenomenon of

burn-out."

Questioned about their perceptions of factors discouraging applicants from

applying for open principal positions, Whitaker's sample of school superintendents

alluded to such factors as the position's time commitment, high-stakes testing, school

report cards, increased violence, a lack of public respect for education, and overall job

pressures. In a study of Chicago-area principals, Oberman (1996) asked his study subjects

to identify the single factor that would be most likely to cause them to leave their jobs.

The most frequent response from these current site administrators was overall stress and the burden of the job.

The prevalence of excessive job stress in the modern principalship was apparent to Whan and Thomas (1996) when they reported that the stress experienced by principals mounted during the period of school reform and educational accountability associated with the publication of <u>A Nation at Risk</u> in 1983. Whitaker also elaborated on this subject:

> School reform efforts have had a direct impact on the stress felt by principals and the desire of teachers to move into administrative ranks. Increased time demands, heightened accountability pressures, and the overall changed nature of the role of the principal have compounded the problem of finding individuals to fill principalships. (2001, p.83)

A full grasp of the conflicts that American principals confront today requires the consideration of a succession of changes to the principal's role that has occurred especially since the 1960s. The transformation of the principal's role, evidenced by the following studies, is the direction to which the review now turns.

Transformation of Principal's Role

As many educational scholars (Hallinger 1992; Hallinger & Heck 1996; Williams-Boyd, 2002) have recounted, for most of the twentieth century, the American principalship was conceptualized as a managerial position whose incumbents were expected to embody the norms and to replicate the competencies found among sound business administrators. The controlling mission of the principal was that of program manager charged with the maintenance of organizational stability through the proficient direction and implementation of compartmentalized corporate functions such as planning, budgeting, staffing, and controlling.

As Williams-Boyd (2002) has stated, the advent of the effective schools movement in the 1970s brought with it a basic revision of what principals were expected to do and of how they could best fulfill changed expectations. Williams-Boyd further maintains that rather than serving as efficient business administrators upholding the status quo, principals were directed to assume the role of instructional leaders who effectively pursued school improvement by promoting professional development and closely supervising classroom practices of their respective teaching staffs. A substantial proportion of the variance in such quantitative measures of student learning outcomes on standardized tests was attributed to the strength (or weakness) of the instructional leadership enacted by school principals.

According to Glasman and Heck (1996), by the end of the 1980s, an alternative model of the principalship arose as an outgrowth of the school restructuring movement and its call for site-based management. Under the framework of shared, collegial, or distributed decision-making, principals were told that they must relinquish strong instructional leadership as a professional model in favor of transformational leadership. The paramount mission of the principalship became that of a visionary change agent who focused upon the creation of a total quality school culture and attendant school climate governed by shared values, chief among that was democratic participation by all stakeholders, most notably by teachers. Thus, Glasman and Heck reported:

> For the 1990s, the focus on the principal's role appears to be shifting from the effective-schools model that dominated the 1980s to the leadership role required in restructured schools. In contrast to the "strong leader" view of the principal who defines the school's vision along rather narrow lines (from the early effective-schools research), the principal in the emerging view leads far more subtly and collegially than in the years before.(p.381)

The model of the principal as transformational leader has been subsequently altered into that of a facilitator of teacher leaders who are viewed by some as the real instructional leaders of any given school. Whether one considers it as a separate stage or merely as an extension of the transformational leader paradigm, during the past few years, the concept of the teacher leader has come into growing prominence (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Williams-Boyd, 2002). The core contention here is that principals are not instructional leaders or even co-equal with teachers in decisions about classroom activities. Instead, the principal is now said to be a coordinator of teachers who are instructional leaders (Williams-Boyd, 2002). In contrast to the principal as instructional leader model, the principal's role is limited to helping teachers discover and construct professional knowledge and skills.

Although these alternative and somewhat mutually exclusive ideals of the principal's role arose in historical succession, they are all in current circulation. As Barbara Taylor proclaimed in the January 2002 issue of <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u>, what she calls the the Effective Schools Process is still alive and well as is the contention that principals should still concentrate upon instructional leadership. Indeed, the National Forum on Educational Leadership (1999) reaffirmed that the most important task of the principal is to provide instructional leadership. However, principals find themselves caught between the recommendations for leadership style embodied in the effective schools literature, including close but supportive supervision of teaching practice, and the substantially looser style championed by advocates of transformational leadership or teacher-leader precepts (Blasé & Blasé 1999).

Not only does this role conflict generate stress in itself, it also tends to generate conflicts over what and how individuals should be taught before they enter educational administrative service, disparities in the criteria for evaluating their performance on the job, and a high degree of variation in the attributes sought by superintendents and other others engaged in the selection of applicants for principal positions (Kennedy, 2000). To gain a stronger understanding of the proper criteria for assessing individual applicants, attention must be given to administrator or principal effects to determine what the body of literature explains about the influence of principals upon valued educational outcomes, including student academic achievement.

<div style="text-align:center">Principal Effects</div>

Over the past decade, research has reiterated the principals' importance in promoting school effectiveness, restructuring, school improvements, and the implementation of reform (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). As Williams-Boyd (2002) has stated, most reviews of principal studies have found that while principal leadership does not directly impact student academic performance, the majority of researchers have concluded that it has a significant and significantly positive indirect influence.

A widely cited review of the correlation between principal job performance and student learning outcomes remains that of Ogawa and Hart (1985). Writing at a time when the principal as instructional leader model had not yet been seriously challenged, Ogawa and Hart found that ratings of principal instructional leadership did, in fact, correlate directly with student scores on standardized tests. In the conclusion to their study, Ogawa and Hart demonstrated that when operationalized on the basis of ratings for

principal instructional leadership variables, stronger principal behavior displays a correlation with better student achievement as reflected in standardized test scores.

Eight years later, Brewer (1993) prefaced his own study of the High School and Beyond (HSB) database by noting that a principal's influence on student achievement may be very direct or, on the other hand, very indirect. On the one hand, Brewer reasoned, principals may have direct impact upon students by serving as a mentor or role model. But little research has been pursued along these lines, largely because the size of public high schools and time demands of the (principal's) job means principals are usually viewed as being removed from direct contact with most students (p.281).

> At the other extreme," Brewer remarked, "principals may indirectly affect all students merely by ensuring that schools run smoothly on a day to day basis. Clear and consistent school rules and policies tend to improve the general disciplinary climate of the school and contribute to improved staff and student morale" (p.281).

Most of the research reviewed by Brewer suggested that principals have a significant influence on student achievement and these effects occur through several channels, the strongest of which may be principal's input to teacher selection and the principal's role in setting academically-oriented school goals. Testing explicit hypothesis based upon these findings, Brewer reported:

The HSB data used here allow the impact of principals via the teacher selection process and through goal setting to be measured. These channels of principal influence are found to have a sizeable, statistically significant effect on student achievement gains. In addition, higher principal salaries seem to be associated with better student performance. (p.288)

Brewer further noted "in addition to these findings on goal setting and teacher selection, there is some weak evidence that instructional leadership impacts student achievement" (p.287). The finding that principals who set and pursue academically oriented goals have a positive influence upon student learning outcomes is a central proposition of the instructional leader model of effective principals.

Several researchers investigated whether principal behavior is thought to influence student academic achievement through the influence of teacher behavior. Blasé and Roberts (1994) reported positive correlations between principal instructional leadership and teachers' consideration of and tolerance for students, planning activities, pedagogical creativity, and monitoring of student learning, all of which are purported to have a positive influence on student academic achievement. Sheppard's (1996) meta-analysis of research studies yielded the finding that there were strong relationships between effective instructional leadership behaviors by principals and teacher commitment, professional involvement, and innovativeness. Among the former, principals engaged in framing school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, supporting professional development of instructional staff, and providing incentives for learning. Using a transformational leadership model, Leithwood (1994) also reported that principal transformational leadership was positively correlated with measures of improvement in teachers' classroom behaviors, attitudes, and effectiveness as reflected in student achievement.

One of the most widely cited reviews of principal effects in the literature was conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1996). This meta-analysis included some forty research investigations, three-quarters of which conceptualized the principal's role in school effectiveness in terms of instructional leadership. In preface to their analysis, Hallinger and Heck wrote: "robust conceptualizations of principal leadership suggest that the effects of principal leadership will occur through the principal's effort to influence those who come into more frequent direct contact with students" (p.24). By "those who come into more frequent direct contact with students," Hallinger and Heck meant classroom teachers. From the studies that they reviewed, taken independently of each other, Hallinger and Heck found that:

> Principal leadership makes a difference (when it) is aimed toward influencing internal processes that are directly linked to student learning. These internal processes range from school policies and norms (e.g., academic expectations school mission, student opportunity to learn, instructional organization, academic learning time) to the practices of teachers. (p.38)

Nevertheless, when they synthesized the results of these forty studies through meta-analytical procedures, Hallinger and Heck discovered that only one principal behavior, school goals, had consistently positive, independent effects on school effectiveness.

Goal-setting is a broad process that affects students and teachers as well as school organizational culture and climate. As such, it is consistent with both the instructional leadership and transformational leadership models of the principal's role (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Generally speaking, however, goal-setting works through other variables such as teacher self-efficacy and job commitment. Hence, influence of principals upon student achievement takes place indirectly according to Hallinger and Heck. Their analysis stated that several variables were implicated in a causal chain that begins with

principal instructional leadership. Such leadership may have an influence upon both teacher effectiveness and student academic achievement. These researchers also state that principal leadership could make a difference in student learning. What Hallinger and Heck's meta-analysis indicated, however, is that we must study the conditions under which this effect is achieved. Context, particularly facets of the school's socioeconomic environment, appears to influence the type of leadership that principals exercise.

Given the likelihood that principal leadership behavior or style operates through teacher attitudes, behaviors, and/or styles, several researchers have used teacher samples in their research on principal effects. In their survey of 800 classroom teachers, Blasé and Blasé (1999) reported that their study's subjects were particularly positive toward two aspects of principal behavior: (1) encouragement of teacher reflection upon their professional practices, and (2) support for professional development programs. The teachers who took part in their mail questionnaire study consistently rated principals who encouraged them to become aware and critically reflect on their learning and professional practice as effective. High teacher ratings of principals were associated with the provision of supportive feedback that was specific and detailed, based upon actual classroom observation, and expressed in a non-judgmental manner with the availability of follow-up sessions (Blasé & Blasé, 1999,). Supportive principals in this study made frequent, informal visits to classrooms in which they were actively engaged in lesson sessions, asking questions and interacting with students (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). An additional type of principal behavior that Blasé and Blasé's subjects found especially useful was support for their professional development.

According to teachers (Blaise & Blasé, 1999), effective instructional leaders used six teacher development strategies: emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, supporting collaboration among educators, developing coaching relationships among educators, encouraging and supporting redesign of programs, applying the principles of adult learning, growth and development to all phases of staff development, and implementing action research to inform instructional decision making.

Several well-documented studies of teacher job turnover found that teachers tended to remain at schools in which their efforts are well supported by site-administrators independent of variations in district socio-economic status. Some of these same studies show that schools with poor principal leadership experience inordinate difficulties in attracting and, above all, retaining qualified teaching personnel (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997; Sclan 1993). In a nation-wide survey conducted by Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996), teacher perception of administrative support was far more important determinant of teacher turnover than such powerful predictors as class size, student behavior and parental involvement combined.

Davis and Wilson (2000) studied the relationship between principal empowerment efforts and teacher behavior in a sample comprised of 660 elementary school teachers and 44 principals. They reported that principal behavior does indeed count by indirectly influencing variables that are associated with effective schooling, including teacher attitudes, behaviors and skill sets. Nonetheless, it also shows that neither the pure instructional leader nor the pure transformational leader model of the principal's role is superior to its rival. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that no one principal leadership style is effective under all circumstances and that the effectiveness of

any given style is contingent upon the situation in which it is manifested (Glasman &
Heck, 1996).

Sergiovanni (2001) stated that principals' leadership styles depend upon the
context of the situation. In some instances, e.g., schools in which disciplinary problems
occur with abnormal frequency and/or a large percentage of students may be
characterized as at-risk for academic failure, a strong instructional leadership style with
close supervision by the principal may work best. In others such as schools in which
disciplinary problems are rare and students come from advantaged backgrounds, a looser,
more collegial or transformational principal style may prove more effective. On this
count, Sergiovanni (2001) asserted:

> Not every situation a principal faces requires the same leadership strategy. The
> principal of a highly competent and well-motivated faculty will have to proceed
> one way and the principal of a developing and uncommitted faculty will have to
> proceed another way. As is the case with most craft like fields where one must
> create her or his practice in use depending on circumstances, no one best approach
> to leadership will work. Instead, principals must practice leadership in light of the
> context they face.(p.131)

Bossert (1996) reported that in some studies of principal leadership approaches,
important contextual factors---such as the socioeconomic composition of the school or
range of teachers' abilities and tenure---shaped what administrators could accomplish.

Bossert's remark about what principal's could accomplish raises one final theme
that warrants attention--the discrepancy between what principals know they should do
and what they actually do. As recently as 2001, researchers came to the conclusion that
most principals are not strong instructional leaders (Miller, 2001). Based upon self-
reports, teacher perceptions, and researcher observations, and despite more than two
decades of effective schools model dissemination, the collective reporting by researchers

supported this same conclusion (Firestone, 1996). For example, according to Ornstein (1993), public school principals generally spent only 3 percent to 7 percent of their time observing teachers working in classrooms; rather, most principal time was spent on tasks that Ornstein characterized as school operations. As Firestone (1996) asserted, exercising leadership in the area of instruction is made difficult in the way schools are structured.

In investigating the reality of the principal's professional role, it has been found that despite detailed accounts about how principals should act, the daily work of principals is little understood and yet extremely complex and demanding (Kelley & Peterson 2002). These researchers identified three striking attributes of the public school principal's job in their statement that brevity, variety, and fragmentation characterize their daily work. As for brevity, Kelley and Peterson first noted that school site administrators spent about half of their time dealing with problems or activities that have not been scheduled. They observed that much of the principal's day is spent on interactions lasting less than a minute, with little time for longer reflection on issues. Principals are expected to address problems and questions quickly, often with little time for careful consideration of alternative solutions (Kelly & Peterson, 2002). Principals also have varied responsibilities, shifting rapidly from deciding curricular issues, to addressing a building maintenance problem, to responding to the complaints or requests of teachers, community members, local government leaders, and other educational administrators. Furthermore, the workday of the typical public school principal features extreme fragmentation, interruptions caused by needs, demands, and problems that come to the principal's office for resolution because no other organizational role is assigned to address them. Miller (2001) observed that school principals have been increasingly

forced to address student discipline problems and parental complaints/inquiries. Miller noted that until principals significantly reduced the time they spent on parent concerns and other non-instructional management issues, imploring them to engage in more instructional leadership has done little.

Principals themselves were aware of the discrepancy between their ideal roles as instructional and/or transformational leaders and their actual performance due to the demands of the job. From his review of the relevant literature, Hallinger (1992) concluded that self-reports from principals indicated that relatively few met their own sense of the profession's standards for instructional leadership. Thus, for example, when principals are asked about how much time they should devote to instructional leadership, they invariably answer, more than they actually are (Glatthorn, 1998).

In their study, Gates and Sisken (2001) surveyed more than 300 elementary and secondary school principals in Texas. The researchers distinguished between four principal leadership styles geared toward decision-making: (1) "telling," merely imposing a decision; (2) "selling," persuading staff that a principal decision is desirable; (3) "participatory," making decisions in concert with teachers; and (4) "delegating," placing decision-making power in the hands of teachers. Most of the principals in the survey endorsed the value of a participatory style, consistent with the transformational model of the principalship. Nevertheless, only 22 percent actually implemented this style, while 71 percent "sold" their decisions to teachers, 7 percent simply "told" teachers that a decision had been made, and none of the study subjects routinely delegated decision-making authority to teachers. On the basis of these results, Gates and Siskin (2001) concluded

that principals in their survey endorsed teacher participation in school-wide decisions, but did not practice it.

Similarly, Sergiovanni (2001) cited a study of California elementary school principals that provided a quantitative measure showing that the subjects spent much less of their time on the job engaged in instructional leadership activities than they felt that they should. In this study, principals reported that they should spend 25.9 percent of their time on instructional issues and curriculum development: in fact, they spent only 14.5 percent. A similar disparity was reported for principal time spent on school-wide planning, evaluation, and reform. On the other hand, the subjects said that they spent much more time than they would prefer on (1) budget, administration, maintenance, (2) parent engagement, relations, and (3) student contact and discipline (Sergiovanni 2001).

Lastly, according to Williams-Boyd (2002), while most principals endorsed the view that their strong instructional leadership might contribute to improvement in the academic performance of their students, they also concurred with her that instructional leadership is the task for which most designated leaders are least equipped. This, in turn, leads to the subject of how principals are equipped for their jobs: principal preparation programs.

<center>Principal Preparation Programs</center>

According to Kelly and Peterson (2002), before one can become a public school administrator in the United States, he or she most often must enter into a formal program of preparation in educational administration. Initial formal selection of future administrators, (including principals) occurs after admission to programs of study for leadership certification. Recruitment into graduate programs involves primarily self-

selection; few university departments recruit students systematically or aggressively. Also, the most commonly used criteria for admission into certificate-granting educational administration program is the candidate's under-graduate grade point average. Once admitted, these same candidates in education administration programs usually teach part or full time during the day while attending classes at night. This situation results in a limited exposure to the actual duties and responsibilities of the school principal (Miklos, 1996). After acceptance into such a program, a considerable span of time divides the aspiring principal from the assumption of an actual job in his or her chosen profession. Students who enter an administrator graduate program usually complete it within three calendar years and most are ready to apply for administrative positions within three years of certification. However, even if there were a sudden, unexpected surge in accepted applications for educational administration programs, the current principal shortage would not be significantly alleviated from the supply side until another five or six years has elapsed (Barker, 1997).

All 50 states require school administrators, including principals, to hold a certificate issued by state educational authorities (Miklos,1996). Kelly and Peterson (2002) note that requirements for certificates initially entail the completion of graduate course work in educational administrator programs authorized by the state and at least some in-class teaching experience. Most states also require certificate applicants to take and pass written examinations. Kelley and Peterson have synthesized a more detailed but still composite account of principal licensure/certification from their survey of requirements in eight states:

> Typical requirements include teacher certification and experience, a master's degree, and administrator training in an approved program, with continuing

professional development needed to retain the license. Most frequently, there is a requirement of three years of teaching experience for principal licensure; the range is from one to seven years. In most states, the initial license is issued for five or fewer years, with renewal granted for additional coursework or participation in other professional development activities. As of 2000, three states---Louisiana, New Jersey, and Texas---remained the only ones that issue lifetime administrator licenses (2002, pp. 276-277)

As of the year 2000, twenty-three states required administrators to take at least one of five different examinations for licensure. These include the National Teachers Examination, the California Test of Basic Skills, Program for Licensing Assessments for Colorado Educators, individual state exams, and one or more from the PRAXIS series of the Educational Testing Service. (Kelley & Peterson, 2002)

Largely due to the range of functions that they will be expected to perform as principals, students in principal preparation programs are exposed to a highly diversified body of course content. According to Miklos (1996), topics frequently included in educational administration courses are administrative theory, personnel, finance, politics, law and leadership. Somewhat greater stress is placed on curriculum development and instructional supervision at the master's level, whereas administrative theory and business/finance receive more emphasis at the doctoral level. However, while the standard curriculum of educational administration programs is extensive, it may well be deficient in certain crucial areas. For example, Glanz (1995) reported that the textbooks utilized in principal preparation courses are noticeably lacking in both the quantity and the quality of empirical studies underlying the principles, precepts, and practice of instructional leadership.

Sirotnik and Miller (1993) portrayed the common attributes of principal preparation programs in a synopsis that embodies strong, if implicit, criticism of them.

It involves part-time students taking courses at night or on weekends, taught by adjunct faculty. Reading and academic work is often theoretical, textbook-based, and minimal. Sequencing and scheduling is determined by students according to the scheduling demands of a busy professional (typically classroom teaching) rather than by issues of curriculum content and educational purpose. Field experiences are short, poorly organized, disconnected from the curriculum and planned according to the availability of small blocks of time for working teachers. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are seldom planned, coordinated, or linked in a coherent manner. (p.142)

The perceived quality of principal preparation programs varies with the collective standpoint of different study samples. Whitaker's (2001) survey of school superintendents found a moderately high level of satisfaction with principal preparation programs. Nevertheless, even among Whitaker's superintendent subjects, the major criticism of such programs was that they place too much emphasis upon classroom lecture, texts and research and too little attention on the development of practical skills from clinical experience in the field (2001).

There is a concerted effort on the part of many state educational authorities effort to enhance school administrator preparation programs. These actions include closing programs, requiring significant restructuring, or developing performance-based licensure programs (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). As one might anticipate, a unifying element in these principal preparation reform drives is to ensure that training and certification are linked closely to administrator performance (Miklos, 1996, p. 28).

The Danforth Foundation's Educational Leadership program has been the epicenter of a broad alliance to update, upgrade and revitalize preparation programs. According to Daresh (1997),

In recent years, the Danforth Foundation launched a major initiative to support innovative principal preparation programs; the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) sponsored a review of the ways school administrators are being prepared across the nation; the National Policy Board for Educational

> Administration was created; and states across the nation engaged in efforts to strengthen standards designed to verify the quality of preservice preparation training received by aspiring administrative certificate and license holders. Both the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) have designed new programs to help identify, recruit, and prepare future principals. (p.3)

Based upon the work of the Danforth Foundation, the UCEA, the NASSP and the NAESP, Daresh has articulated ten recommended practices for preparing principals, five of them aimed at improving the content of pre-service programs and five at the improvement of pre-service program delivery. The former can be summarized as follows: (1) preservice programs should emphasize the development of reflective skills; (2) preparation programs should help people acquire skills as moral and ethical leaders; (3) principles of adult learning should guide practice in preparation programs; (4) curricula should be coherent, integrative, and sequenced logically; and (5) greater emphasis should be placed on learning about teaching and learning processes in schools (Daresh, 1997). From this standpoint, aspiring principals should reflect upon the why (rather than simply absorb the what) of professional standards/principals; they should be endowed with moral and ethical understandings that enable them to see that leadership involves more than simply accomplishing an assigned task (Daresh 1997).

As for the five program delivery recommendations, Daresh (1997) summarized them as: (1) opportunities for more clinical learning should be made available to aspiring principals; (2) experienced administrators should serve as mentors to aspiring leaders; (3) aspiring principals should proceed toward their goals in cohorts; (4) authentic assessment techniques should be used to track student progress; and (5) pre-service preparation should be viewed as part of a bigger picture of continuous professional development that extends throughout the educational administrator's career. There is, in fact, no substitute

for spending time in the field, through both pre-service courses and in extended principal internship experience. According to Daresh, during these phases and for some time thereafter, prospective and novice principals should be given the opportunity to learn from a mentor, and veteran principals should be encouraged to keep their own skill sets fresh through mentoring. As a frequently mentioned aspect of principal preparation reform, Daresh further promotes cohort learning in administrator education programs which means that fixed groups of students work together, taking classes, designing projects and learning in the field (often through mentor relationships).

Several specific programs of principal preparation are currently under development, and many of them have been either spun out from or based upon the University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). In addition to the original University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program, these include East Tennessee State University's administrative endorsement program, the California State University (Fresno) principal preparation program; the University of Louisville's Identifying Educational Administrators for Schools program, Wichita State University's administrator preparation program, and San Antonio's Region 20 Educational Service Center (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). According to Kelley and Peterson (2002) all of these exhibited marked departures from long-standing or traditional principal preparation programs.

> Unlike the prototypical preparation program, each of these programs was characterized by significant coherence in curriculum, pedagogy, structure and staffing. Significant collaboration was involved in developing of the program vision…In several of the programs, the experiential component was viewed as the core. The internships themselves tended to be much longer than in a the typical program (usually six hundred hours or more over at least one year)…The programs were virtually all cohort-based, with typical cohorts of about twenty to twenty-five students…The cohort structure…provided a significant support and

professional network for graduates in the early stages of their administrative careers.(p.299)

The screening of candidates for these programs, moreover, is substantially more rigorous and practical than its counterpart. In some cases, district leaders had to identify participants in order for them to apply, and applicants must submit recommendations from their principals, another teacher, and a teacher that the principal selects. They are also interviewed and screened for their potential as a moral leader (Kelley & Peterson, 2002). Placement rates for participants were much higher in the model program(s) than in traditional ones and each of these programs was developed through strong collaboration with local districts (p.301).

Having suggested that principal preparation programs are currently being brought into line with the needs, expectations, and relevant candidate selection criteria of working school districts, it should be noted that some scholars, for example Bjork and Ginsberg (1995), have expressed profound skepticism about the prospects for change outside of a few model programs. After noting that departments of educational administration have been criticized for their unwillingness to undertake program changes and for remaining unaltered for decades, Bjork and Ginsberg (1995) cautioned that fundamental changes in educational preparation programs in the United States is unlikely. From their standpoint, powerful institutional and political forces oppose genuine reform in how aspiring principals are prepared to assume their roles.

<center>Professional Standards for School Principals</center>

Elliott (1996) asserted that principal evaluation is still an emerging line of inquiry. On this count, Glasman and Heck (1996) elaborated "despite current interest in appraising the principal's leadership role…the empirical study of principal evaluation has

been slow to develop, has not experienced a high degree of systemization, and has not

been guided by firmly established theoretical foundations" (p.370). On this count, Heck

and his colleagues noted that researchers have not really identified what instructional

leadership is (Heck, Larsen & Marcoulides 1990).

In 1985, Hallinger and Murphy published what has become one of the most

widely employed scales for measuring principal effectiveness under the instructional

leadership model, the Principal Instructional Management Scale or PIMS. The PIMS

measures principal effectiveness along ten dimensions based on how well the principal is

perceived to:

> (1) frame the school goals, (2) communicate the school goals, (3) supervise and
> evaluate instruction, (4) coordinate the curriculum, (5) monitor student progress
> (6) protect instructional time, (7) maintain high visibility, (8) provide incentives
> for teachers, (9) promote professional development, and (10) provide incentives
> for learning. (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, p. 218)

In response to mounting criticism about the quality of recent educational

administration graduates, several professional associations have recently formulated

revised or reworked professional standards for school principals. According to Kelley and

Peterson (2002):

> In an attempt to improve the preparation of school leaders, a number of groups
> have developed standards for practice that define what good principals should
> know and be able to do. Some have been long and detailed, such as the list of
> proficiencies published by the National Association of Elementary School
> Principals (NASP); others have been short and broadly defined like the standard
> of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and the
> Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). (pp.262-263)

Most of these new standards take the instructional leader conception of the

principalship as the core paradigm from which standards are derived. Though, as

Sergiovanni (2001) noted, the number of competencies associated with effective

instructional leadership has grown substantially due to the transformational model. Thus, in 1986 the National Association of Elementary School Principals enumerated 74 proficiencies that effective principals should display, but by 1995 the NAESP's roster encompassed 96 proficiencies.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration formulated one of the earliest standards for the post-1970s principalship for educational administrators. It has five overarching dimensions: (1) strategic leadership, (2) instructional leadership, (3) organizational leadership, (4) political and community leadership, and (5) internship. Under the instructional leadership heading, for example, the NPBEA standard specifies the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to design with others appropriate curricula and instructional programs, develop learner-centered school cultures, assess outcomes, provide student personnel services, and plan with faculty professional development activities aimed at improving instruction (Kelley & Peterson, 2002).

The standards of principal competencies by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1997) address leadership behavior, communications skills, group processes, curriculum and instruction, and assessment. The standards also included administrative and management functions including organizational management, fiscal management, and political management. In each of the resultant eight areas, the NAESP's standards identified at least a dozen competencies. Thus, under leadership behaviors, the NAESP enumerated 14 specific proficiencies. These included demonstrates vision and provides leadership that appropriately involves the school community in the creation of shared beliefs and values, demonstrates moral and ethical judgment; understands the dynamics of change and the change process; and advances the profession through

participation as a member of local, state and national professional groups (National

Association of Elementary School Principals, 1997).

One widely used set of model principal standards is that of the Interstate School

Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders and Council of

Chief State School Officers, originally published in 1996. The standards define the ideal

school administrator as an educational leader who fulfills six generic missions:

> Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
>
> Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.
>
> Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
>
> Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
>
> Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
>
> Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (Council of Chief State School Officers 1996, p.iii)

Murphy (2002) maintained that the establishment of the ISLLC Standards

led to one of the most effective measures of school leaders. Over thirty states adopted the

ISLLC standards as the basis for redesigning the principalship. Kentucky and North

Carolina utilized the program to redefine how they grant licenses, manage professional development, and administer administrative preparation programs (Murphy, 2002).

In their efforts to screen and to select promising principal job applicants, school district decision-makers had access to the evaluations of candidates given by external agencies. More specifically, in the mid-1970s, the National Association of Secondary School Principals introduced user assessment centers---a standardized set of procedures and multiple activities including simulation exercises---as an aid to selecting school administrators (Wendel & Sybouts, 1988). The NASSP Assessment Center was a widely used assessment center for school administrator selection and also the most thoroughly validated (Pounder & Young 1996). Professional evaluators rated administrative candidates on 12 skill dimensions, though factor analysis suggested that raters did not distinguish between candidate's skills on 12 independent dimensions but assessed candidates on one overall leadership factor. The results of assessment center validation studies suggested that selection systems for managers that focus on behavior-based measures (rather than written test scores) resulted in the highest validities (Schmitt & Cohen, 1990). The standard practice of school districts in selecting principals, one that relied on formal paper credentials and interview impressions, did not yield consistently accurate predictions on an aspiring principals future job performance. As Miklos(1996) observed, assessment reports on candidates tended to be used more in preliminary screening than in the final selection decision. Examination of this final decision process bears further investigation in the next section of this study.

The Principal Selection Process

By the time that aspiring principals come before a district superintendent and/or a principal selection group (e.g., school council), they have gone through a pre-selection process that most likely entailed admission into an educational administration program, successful completion of that program, principal certificate examinations, and possibly an internship and/or formal proficiency assessment by an external body (Starratt, R.J., 2003). In addition, the candidate may already have experience working as a principal. Nevertheless, in the career of any aspiring principal the second crucial selection decision occurs when an individual is invited to accept a particular administrative appointment (Miklos, 1996).

Whenever possible a school district will seek to attract a number of applicants to an opening or impending opening in the principalship. That being so, one important preliminary step must be taken before actual recruitment activities begin...districts must identify potential sources of applicants (Pounder & Young, 1996):

> These sources include referrals from existing employees, promotion of qualified employees within the school district, college and university placement offices, employment offices (public and private), firms or individuals such as retired administrators who specialize in recruiting and screening administrative candidates, professional associations, community groups, and special interest groups.(p.286)

In many instances, the core group of a principal recruitment/selection pool has been comprised of in-district personnel such as classroom teachers, assistant principals, and department heads that hold principal licenses/certificates issued by state educational authorities. These candidates have considerable district knowledge about the position being offered, and, at the same time, current employees are potential candidates for whom the largest amount of job relevant information is available (Pounder & Young,

1996). However, these same researchers warn that exclusive recruitment of in-house or local candidates has the potential of creating a work force that cannot always move beyond the standard method of organizational thinking.

According to Johnson and Douglas (1990), the trend of using in-house candidates was known as the grow-your-own movement and originated in Kansas. Teachers who have become identified with leadership potential in a grow-your-own program have the support of the school district to become candidates for available administrative positions.

It must be recognized that no set of decision-making procedures is foolproof in the sense that its implementation will ensure that a good candidate is chosen for the principalship. In a study of teacher-leader selection procedures, Pounder (1989) observed that:

> Traditional selection procedures suggested that many of the typical screening criteria used in selection systems are proxy measures for the candidate characteristic or behavior desired. That is, even when school districts articulate behavioral expectations required for an educator position, the traditional evidence of those expectations may inadequately capture the desired behavior. (p. 130)

Such proxy measures would include the use of the candidate's college and post-graduate grade point averages to infer administrator intelligence, the use of years of teaching experience to infer instructional expertise, the use of extracurricular involvement as a gauge of professional commitment, and reliance upon interview performance as source of inferences about the candidate's personality. The less accurately the proxy measure captures or reflects the desired educator behavior itself, Pounder and Young (1996) have asserted, the less likely selection decisions made on the basis of these proxy measures will predict future job performance.

Beyond these findings and the consensus that the process through which principals are selected varies substantially from district to district, one knows very little else about the crucial subject of how instructional or transformational school leaders have been chosen. Most literature was devoted to systematizing processes and procedures for screening, evaluating, and selecting the final candidate (Pounder & Young, 1996).

Recommendations for the Improvement of the Principal Selection Process

Based upon reported deficiencies in practices followed in fields other than public education, some scholars formulated recommendations to improve the principal recruitment/selection process. Pounder and Young (1996) suggested the augmentation of paper credentials and proxy indicators by simulated exercises and/or situational observations by noting:

> Selection techniques should be designed to more nearly capture actual or simulated job behaviors than relying exclusively on high inference proxy measures….for instance, observation of on-the-job behavior could be evaluated using respected performance evaluation tools; video-tapes and simulation activities could be evaluated similarly as a selection procedure. In considering administrator candidates, districts may send representatives to the candidate's actual job site to observe and interview the candidate as well as members of his/her school community. Or, hypothetical problem situations or role—play activities may be incorporated into the selection procedures. Similarly, candidates may be required to submit portfolios of relevant work activity they have completed including descriptions and evaluations of programs they have implemented, copies of parent newsletters or other communication documents, performance evaluations, or other job-relevant performance indicators.(p. 301)

Under circumstances in which qualified principal applicants were in short supply, Whitaker (2001) asserted that any effort to enhance the validity and reliability of the selection process was futile unless it is undertaken as part of a far broader effort to expand and upgrade the pool of qualified applicants. Furthermore, Whitaker (2001) strongly suggested that school districts experiencing problems in recruiting and retaining

qualified principals reexamine the principal's role with an eye toward reducing demands

and pressures, provide ongoing support and mentoring for current principals, encourage

and develop teachers and assistant principals, develop grow-your-own programs with

universities, increase salaries, benefits and incentives, design more flexible retirement

systems, and encourage the media to focus on the realities of school leadership.

Unfortunately, all of these well-intended proposals are constrained by practical

limitations such as already stretched school district budgets limiting or altogether

negating the prospects of improving the applicant pool by offering higher remuneration

(Kelly & Peterson, 2002).

A frequently noted practical suggestion for reforming the process through which

public school principals are recruited and selected is through a grow-your-own initiative

that provides them with social support. On this count, Barker (1997) has stated that

districts should promote the concept of recruiting one's replacement as everyone's role; be

aggressive about mentoring 3 to 4 year veteran teachers for administration by their

seventh year not their tenth. More formally, in response to the current principal shortage,

an increasing number of school districts are working with universities to develop

programs for teachers in their districts to become certified as principals (Whitaker 2001).

According to Newsom (2001), grow-your-own principal development programs typically

have three major features: classroom work, where aspiring principals learn from experts

in the field; a full-time internship, where they work alongside veteran school

administrators; and a network, where program graduates can share information with

colleagues and get feedback from mentors.

Newsom (2001) described a model grow-your-own principal development program established in 1995 as the North Carolina's Principal Fellows Program centered on the campus of the University of North Carolina. This program requires two years to complete on a full-time basis, about twice as many hours in total as traditional programs; hence, participants must take a leave of absence from their full-time jobs, typically classroom teaching posts. Under the North Carolina program, state government pays each fellow a $20,000 a year scholarship loan to pay for tuition, fees and a very modest portion of living expenses. Students are relieved of paying this scholarship/loan if they work for four years as a school-based administrator in a North Carolina public school district. The program also includes a two-year internship as an assistant principal during which time paid aspiring principals are exposed to all aspects of the position which they may occupy in the immediate future (Newsom 2001).

Similarly, with the premises of the grow-your-own approach to principal development, it has been acknowledged that the demands placed upon principals vary from one district to another and from one school to another within a given district. On this topic, Kelley and Peterson (2002) observed:

> Schools vary considerably on many dimensions and effective leadership is enacted in a particular context. Skills and knowledge should be developed so that principals can lead effectively in their particular context. Specifically, schools differ in their leadership demands, depending on such factors as level (elementary, middle, and high schools); the socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic characteristics of students and community; school size; the professional culture of the school and the governance model driving the system. (p. 269)

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Across the country, school districts are reporting principal shortages of qualified candidates at all three levels (elementary, middle, and high). Many principals are

expected to leave the field in the coming years due to retirement, dissatisfaction with the role, time commitment, and increased responsibilities. The pool of high quality principal candidates has been noted as shallow. While there are numbers of certified candidates, the overall issue of candidate quality remains bleak. Reasons for quitting the principalship include the demands of the job, low salary, time pressures, lack of support and lack of respect from society, in general.

Principal effects on student achievement were noted as being positive but indirect through goal setting and teacher selection. However, most principals weren't noted as strong instructional leaders. More often than not, principals spent their time dealing with issues that had not been scheduled. Such fragmentation of the workday made it difficult for principals to act as instructional leaders.

Researchers indicated that the numerous principal preparation programs found throughout the country often lacked substantial practical experience. While some type of licensing exam was usually required for certification, the screening for such programs was not usually rigorous.

Professional standards for principals were developed by numerous organizations such as the ISSLIC Standards that centered upon an instructional leader having six basic missions. Assessment centers were used to give an outside opinion on principal competencies. Also, grow-your-own strategies were discussed in order to take advantage of knowledgeable in-district personnel that are often already familiar with the district's culture and operations.

Finally, suggestions to improve the principal selection process included augmenting the traditional hiring criteria with situational observations. Also, it was

recommended that districts reexamine the role of the principal to lessen the demands and include other educators in the collaborative, decision-making process. By doing so, a district would possibly help retain current principals by making the administrative expectations more achievable.

Although existing research reported a shortage of qualified public high school principal applicants, the body of empirical studies concerning how high school principals are recruited and selected by superintendents remained thin. The studies that have been published to date generally faulted both principal preparation programs and district hiring decision processes. Nevertheless, knowledge of how superintendents find and choose high school principals is an area where many questions remain. Therefore, the specific criteria that superintendents perceive as important for hiring high school principals in Georgia needs further review and will be the subject of this study.

Table 1: Studies Related to Employment Criteria for High School Principals

Major Study	Type of Research	Outcome
Blasé & Blasé, 1999	Qualitative	Teachers like for principals to encourage reflection and support professional development.
Brewer, D.J., 1993	Quantitative	Principals "matter" through goal setting and teacher selection.
Education Commission of the States, 2000	Quantitative	Effective communication and managing discipline were important hiring criteria for high school principals.
Educational Research Service, 1998	Quantitative	Acute shortage of high school principals
Gates & Sisken, 2001	Quantitative	Principal leadership styles.
Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000	Quantitative	Overview of principals and superintendent statistics
Hallinger & Heck, 1996	Quantitative & Qualitative (Mixed method)	School wide goal on student learning is most important. Principal should be instructional leader.
Kennedy, 2000	Quantitative	Reasons for quitting principalship (demands, salary, time, lack of support).
National Forum on Educational Leadership, 1999	Quantitative	Instructional leadership is most important factor.
Ogawa & Hart, 1985	Quantitative	Principal effects impact 2-8% of student achievement scores.
Pounder & Young, 1996	Quantitative	Challenges to principals include new initiatives, changing student characteristics. Districts must recruit principals.
Whitaker, 2000	Quantitative	Main reason for principal shortage was inadequate salary.
Whitaker, 2001	Quantitative	Reexamine role of principal; support and mentoring; develop grow your own programs; increase salary and benefits.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the research questions that will be answered by this study, and to describe the procedures, research design, and participants. The instrument and data collection procedures were explained, and a description of the procedures used in data analysis were provided. This description encompassed the research methodology. To gather data for this descriptive study, the researcher sent surveys to all of the 180 Georgia public school superintendents.

Research Questions

The study was designed to answer the following major research question: According to the perceptions of Georgia public school superintendents, what skills and qualities are perceived as the most desirable when seeking to select a high school principal? Several subquestions guided the study:

1. What is the geographic profile of Georgia superintendents?

2. How do Georgia superintendents' perceptions differ between certified and qualified high school principal candidates?

3. What are the most important selection criteria to Georgia superintendents in selecting Georgia high school principals?

4. How are recruitment efforts used by Georgia public school superintendents in selecting high school principals?

Research Design

The design of this descriptive study was mixed methodology in nature. The majority of the survey questions were quantitative in nature. However, the last question was qualitative because it allowed for the expression of the respondent's opinion. The purpose of the research was to study Georgia public school superintendents' perceptions of employment criteria for hiring high school principals. The researcher used the research questions and the related literature review to provide the guidelines for adapting a survey that identified the most desirable employment criteria. Versatility, efficiency, and generalizibility are the three reasons given for the value of survey research (Cresswell, 1994a. The expected rapid turn-around in data collection, the ability to identify the perceptions of a selected population of participants, and the relative ease in analyzing the data characterized the survey design as the preferred type of data collection procedure.

Dr. Linda Grisham developed the <u>Superintendent's Survey</u> for her 2003 dissertation study. This researcher obtained permission from Dr. Gresham to alter and use the questionnaire for this study at Georgia Southern University. The researcher reduced the scope of selection criteria from the original survey. The adapted instrument focused solely on high school principal selection criteria and was used to survey superintendents in Georgia school districts after the conclusion of the 2004-2005 school year.

The survey consisted of two questions addressing the demographics of the responding superintendents. Also included were four sections that included a total of 29 statements to determine employment criteria of Georgia high school principals. The last section of the survey included three questions about high school principal recruitment. A

four point Likert scale was chosen "for its appropriateness in collecting information on perceptions" (Popham, 1993, p. 53). Even-numbered responses eliminate the mid category response, thus forcing respondents to make a choice (Popham, 1993). Responses for the superintendent perceptions were scored by tabulating the numerical value from number "4" representing most important to number "1" representing least important.

Due to the fact that Dr. Grisham's survey was only minimally changed for this study, the current survey validity had already been established. The survey was sent for approval to the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). On May 27, 2005, the research proposal was formally approved. On June 1, 2005, the initial survey mailing was done to all of the Georgia School Superintendents. After two weeks, another coded survey as sent to the non-responding Superintendents for completion. As of July 8, 2005, the survey was closed with a response rate of 81%.

Following the return of the surveys, the information gathered was sorted into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS Base 12.0, 2002). This process allowed the researcher to reduce the amount of information into organized patterns.

Population

All 180 Georgia public school superintendents made up the population of this study because of their knowledge of the quality and quantity of available candidates for high school principal positions. The 180 superintendents came from Georgia pubic school systems that vary in size, student population and geographic location.

Participants

The superintendents receiving the survey represented rural, urban, suburban, and small town settings of the state. Due to the relatively low number of Georgia School

superintendents, every superintendent in the state was surveyed. The data that was gathered from the respondents gave an accurate statewide view of employment criteria for Georgia high school principals. Superintendents from varying geographic areas in Georgia will be able to compare answers with other superintendents to gain a better understanding of employment criteria of Georgia high school principals.

<center>Instrumentation</center>

Based upon research questions and a corresponding literature review, Grisham's Superintendent's Survey (2003) was adapted to answer questions specifically regarding high school principal skills and qualities. By selecting this type of survey instrument, the researcher was able to make inferences about characteristics, attitudes, or behaviors from the population that is being surveyed. For the original survey, Dr. Grisham had conducted a field test of the survey items with a small group of current and former superintendents. Since Grisham's survey was only minimally changed, the validity of the survey for this study remained intact.

The survey instrument was divided into six sections. The first section included two demographic statements of the represented school systems in the form of multiple-choice questions. The second section included three items with a four point Likert-type scale that ranged from "Most Important" to "Least Important". The scale was used to determine whether or not a shortage of qualified or certified high school principal candidates existed in Georgia. Due to the demographic questions, possible geographic high school principal shortages were better recognized.

The third through fifth sections of the instrument employed a four-point Likert-type scale of "Most Important" to "Least Important" for the purpose of measuring the

superintendents' perceptions of employment criteria when selecting high school principals.

The sixth section of the survey contained two statements asking the respondent to use a four point Likert-type scale of "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". This served the purpose of measuring the superintendents' perceptions regarding the recruitment of high school principal candidates. The last statement was an open-ended question regarding where Georgia school superintendents found their high school principals.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Packets were mailed by the United States Postal service to each of the 180 Georgia public school superintendents. Each survey was coded with an identification number with the knowledge of the participant in order to identify the respondent as the survey returned. A log was maintained to account for respondents and to identify non-respondents for subsequent mail-outs. The survey packet contained the following materials:

1. a letter requesting the superintendent's assistance through participation in the study with the assurance of confidentiality.
2. a two-page survey entitled "Georgia School Superintendent's Survey".
3. a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of survey.

Approximately two weeks from the first mailing date, another coded survey was sent to the Superintendents that had not returned their original survey. After four weeks from the initial mailing, a follow-up letter was sent to any remaining non-respondents along with another copy of the survey.

Data Analysis

After the surveys were completed and returned, the data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Base 12.0, 2002). Columns in SPSS represented data from the survey and data from the superintendent's directory. Demographic data was used to present a descriptive profile of Georgia public school superintendents. Basic descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were utilized in the data analysis. In addition, the data provided insight into the employment criteria of high school principals as perceived by Georgia superintendents.

Reporting the Data

Information from the surveys was summarized and analyzed to determine which criteria Georgia school superintendents use to find qualified high school principal candidates. Georgia school superintendent perceptions provided information with regard to areas of the state that are reporting a principal shortage. Findings were reported both in text and table formats in Chapter IV. The research questions were answered by each of the items on the instrument. The final question served as a qualitative measure and has been reported by the corresponding research question. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

Summary

This chapter included a restatement of the research questions, the research design, instrumentation, procedures, participants and methods of analysis. This study used a non-experimental survey design of inquiry. Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used in this mixed methodology study. Participants were all 180 superintendents in Georgia during the 2004-2005 school year. The Superintendent's Survey, developed by

Dr. Linda Grisham at Georgia Southern University in 2003, was adapted to survey the superintendents in Georgia school districts during the spring of the 2004-2005 school year. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics. Specific findings and expanded data analysis have been presented in Chapters IV and V.

Table 2: Analysis of Questionnaire Items

Item	Research	Research Question
1. Type of district	Holliman, 1996	1
2. Geographic region	Holliman, 1996	1
3. Shortage of candidates	Miklos, 1996; ERS, 1998; Whitaker, 2001	2
4. Quality of candidates	Newsome, 2001, Barker, 1997	2
5. Certified candidates	Miklos, 1996	2
6. Innovative processes	Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Daresh, 1997;Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; NAESP, 1997;	3
7. Experience in curriculum	Taylor, 2002; Miller, 2001; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; NAESP, 1997	3
8. Establish goals	Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; NAESP, 1997	3
9. Visionary	Kelley & Peterson, 2002; ISSLLC, 1996	3
10. Team builder	Gates & Sisken, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001; Williams-Boyd, 2002	3
11. Skilled in school improvement process	Barker, 1997; National Forum on Educational Leadership, 1999; Daresh, 1997	3
12. Skilled in data collection	NAESP, 1997; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Daresh, 1997	3
13. Experience as Principal or Assistant Principal	Kelley & Peterson, 2002, Steinberg, 2000; ERS, 1998	3
14. Credibility as a leader	Kelley & Peterson, 2002	3
15. Intelligence	Schmitt & Cohen, 1990	3
16. Approachable/Visible	Hallinger & Murphy, 1995, Kelley & Peterson, 2002, Gates & Sisken, 2001	3
17. Communication skills	Gates & Sisken, 2001; Daresh,	3

	1997; Kelley & Peterson, 2002	
18. Listening skills	Gates & Sisken, 2001; Daresh, 1997; Kelley & Peterson, 2002	3
19. People oriented	Daresh, 1997; Blasé & Blasé, 1999	3
20. Interaction with community	ISSLC, 1996; Kelley & Peterson, 2002	3
21. Enthusiasm for work	Gates & Sisken, 2001	3
22. Flexibility/adaptability	Gates & Sisken, 2001	3
23. High Expectations	Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Gates & Sisken, 2001	3
24. Tenacity	Whitaker, 2001	3
25. Ability to delegate	Gates & Sisken, 2001	3
26. Accountability	Kennedy, 2000; Whitaker, 2001	3
27. Skilled in budget process	NAESP, 1997	3
28. Skilled in state and federal laws	NAESP, 1997; ISSLC, 1997	3
29. Skilled in technology	Daresh, 1997; Bossert, 1996	3
30. Awareness of whole picture	ISLLC, 1996; Kelley & Peterson, 2002	3
31. Skilled in organizational theory	NAESP, 1997; Schmit & Cohen, 1990	3
32. Growing our own	Kelley and Peterson, 2002	4
33. Actively recruiting	Pounder & Young, 1996; Miklos, 1996; Daresh, 1997	4
34. Where find principals?	NASSP, 2000; Kennedy, 2000	4

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA AND THE DATA ANALYSIS

The main purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Georgia school superintendents with regard to employment criteria used in selecting high school principals. For this study, a survey was sent to all 180 Georgia school superintendents during the months of June and July 2005. Of all the surveyed superintendents, 145 (81%) of them responded so that their perceptions could be studied. In this chapter, the researcher reports and analyzes the data collected from participants on the survey instrument. The following sections will be discussed: research questions, findings, and response to the research questions.

Introduction

Using a validated formal survey constructed by Dr. Linda Gresham in 2003, the researcher adjusted the survey items to specifically address high school principal candidates. The final instrument contained two demographic items in part A which identified the setting of each school system. These descriptions included rural, urban, suburban, and small town. The next item addressed geographical regions of the school systems that included northeast, northwest, west central, central, east central, southeast, and southwest. The purposes of the demographic items were to determine if principal shortages (Part B) were evident in rural, urban, suburban, and/or small town districts and to determine if principal shortages existed in the different geographic regions of the state.

Part B of the instrument addressed whether or not a principal shortage existed in the respective Georgia public school systems. The superintendents were asked to identify any shortages of candidates for the high school principalship, any shortages of qualified

candidates for the high school principalship, and any shortages of certified candidates for the high school principalship.

Part C of the instrument included ten of the most desirable high school principal instructional criteria. Part D of the instrument included nine of the most desirable high school principal interpersonal skills criteria. Part E included seven of the most desirable high school principal administrative and management criteria. All three of these sections were designed using a Likert scale. The final section on the instrument (Part F) addressed current high school principal recruitment practices. Two of the items in this section were designed using a Likert scale. The last item was an open-ended question that added an element of qualitative research to the study.

Responses to the survey questions were coded and analyzed with the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Base. 12.0, 2002). Frequency distributions and analyses were performed on the quantitative data to report numbers and percentages of responses.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

According to the perceptions of Georgia public school superintendents, what skills and qualities are perceived as the most desirable when seeking to select a high school principal? Several sub questions will guide the study:

1. What is the geographic profile of Georgia superintendents?

2. How do Georgia superintendents' perceptions differ between certified and qualified high school principal candidates?

3. What are the most important selection criteria to Georgia superintendents in selecting Georgia high school principals?

4. How are recruitment efforts used by Georgia public school

superintendents in selecting high school principals?

Findings

Of the 180 Georgia public school superintendents who were contacted by mail,

145 (81%) of them completed and returned the survey. More than half of the surveys

were received from rural superintendents. Of the 145 superintendents that identified their

respective school system classification, 77 (53.1%) reported from rural districts; 29

(20%) reported from small town districts; 27 (18.6%) reported from suburban districts;

and 12 (8.3%) reported from urban districts (see Table 3).

Table 3

Georgia Public School System Classifications as Reported by Superintendents

Classification of Georgia School Systems	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Rural	77	53.1%
Urban	12	8.3%
Suburban	27	18.6%
Small Town	29	20.0%
Total	145	100.0%

For the purpose of knowing the general locations of the school systems, the state

was divided into seven regions: northeast, northwest, west central, central, east central,

southeast, and southwest. Of the 145 surveys that were returned, 30 (20.7%) of the

responses came from Georgia public school superintendents who represented school

systems from the northeast region of the state; 23 (15.9%) of the surveys represented

school systems in the northwest region of the state; 12 (8.3%) of the surveys represented

school systems in the west central region of the state; 17 (11.7%) of the surveys came

from school systems in the central region of the state; 11 (7.6%) of the surveys came

from school systems in the east central region of the state; 27 (18.6%) of the surveys

were received from the southeast region of the state; and 25 (17.2%) of the surveys

represented school systems in the southwest region of the state. Based upon these

responses, over 105 (72.4%) of the respondents were dispersed across the four corner

regions of the state: northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest. The central, west

central, and east central regions accounted for only 40 (27.6%) of the responses (See

Table 4).

Table 4

Georgia Public School Systems by Geographic Regions as Reported by

Superintendents

Geographic Region of Georgia School System	Number of Responses from Each Region	Percentage of Responses
Northeast	30	20.7%
Northwest	23	15.9%
West Central	12	8.3%
Central	17	11.7%
East Central	11	7.6%

Table 4 *(continued)*

Southeast	27	18.6%
Southwest	25	17.2%
Total	145	100.0%

Adequacy of Number of Candidates

Georgia public school superintendents were asked on the survey if the number of applying high school principal candidates was adequate. According to Table 5, 91 superintendents, or approximately 66% of the 138 who responded on this item, reported that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to their district is adequate. However, 47, or approximately 34% of the superintendents reported that they "somewhat disagree" or "strongly disagree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to their district is adequate.

Table 5

Georgia Public School Superintendents' Perceptions of the Number of Candidates for the High School Principalship

Rating	Frequency of Response	Number of Candidates is Adequate
Strongly Agree (4.00)	23	16.7%

Table 5 *(continued)*

Somewhat Agree (3.0)	68	49.3%
Somewhat Disagree (2.00)	32	23.1%
Strongly Disagree (1.00)	15	10.9%
Total	138	100.0%

Adequacy by District Setting

Of the 75 superintendents (See Table 6) who responded from rural systems, 50 (approximately 66.7%) of them reported that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying in their district is adequate. Out of the eleven urban superintendents that responded to this item, five (approximately 45.5%) of them reported that there were an adequate number of high school principal candidates applying to their districts. Out of the twenty-five suburban district superintendents that responded to this item, 14 (approximately 56%) of them reported that there were an adequate number of high school principal candidates applying in their system. Also, 20 of the 24 (approximately 83.3%) small town superintendents that responded to this item reported that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that there is an adequate number of high school principal candidates in their systems. This figure was much larger than the other district settings. Small town districts have fewer high schools than larger districts; thus, the small town districts have fewer high school principal positions to fill. When vacancies do arise in small town districts, there are a

greater number of candidates per available high school principal position. The larger, urban districts are more densely populated and contain a greater number of high schools than small town districts. Due to the greater number of high schools, urban districts have more of a challenge in finding an adequate number of high school principal candidates. Also, with a larger base of applicants, urban district superintendents may not be as aware of potential individual applicants as compared to small town superintendents. This may help to account for differences in perception of the adequacy of the number of high school principal candidates.

Table 6

Adequate Number of High School Principalship Candidates by School District Setting as Reported by Georgia Public School Superintendents

Setting of School District	Number of Districts Responding	Adequate Number of Candidates	Percentage of Each Setting Reporting Adequate Number
Rural	75	50	66.7%
Urban	11	5	45.5%
Suburban	25	14	56.0%
Small Town	24	20	83.3%
Total	135	89	

Adequacy by Geographical Regions

As reported in Table 7, 17 northeast Georgia superintendents, or approximately 62.9%, responded with "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to this district was adequate. In Northwest Georgia, 15 (or approximately 68.2%) superintendents responded with "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to the district was adequate. Eight of the eleven (72.7%) west central Georgia superintendents responded with "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to the district was adequate. Ten of the 16 (62.5%) responding superintendents located in central Georgia responded either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to the district was adequate. In east central Georgia, ten of the eleven (90.9%) responding superintendents answered with "somewhat agree' or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates applying to the district was adequate. Nineteen of the 27 (70.4%) southeast Georgia superintendents responded either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal applicants was adequate. Finally, 12 of the 25 (48%) southwest Georgia superintendents responded either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of high school principal candidates was adequate.

The responses from the southwest Georgia region are significantly lower than the other regions of the state. This possibly could be due to the rural nature of the region and the resulting smaller population within which to find an adequate number of high school principal candidates. Being located near the Florida panhandle, the southwest Georgia

school systems most likely have to compete with the bordering state of Florida to attract

suitable numbers of candidates. Also, systems located in other regions of Georgia are

closer to major metropolitan areas that might prove more enticing to potential high school

principal candidates-both for location and pay purposes. North Georgia regions are near

Atlanta, east Georgia regions are near Augusta, west Georgia regions are near Columbus,

central Georgia regions are near Macon, and southeast regions are in close proximity to

Savannah. The only somewhat comparable city in the southwest region is Albany.

Without such a major city nearby, the southwest Georgia school superintendents would

most likely have a smaller pool of applicants from which to select a high school principal.

Table 7

Adequate Number of High School Principal Candidates by Geographical Regions as
Reported by Georgia Public School Superintendents

Geographical Regions of Georgia	Number of Districts Responding from Each Region	Number of Districts Reporting Adequate Number from Each Region	% of Region Responding with Adequate Number of Candidates
Northeast	27	17	62.9%
Northwest	22	15	68.2%
West Central	11	8	72.7%
Central	16	10	62.5%
East Central	11	10	90.9%
Southeast	27	19	70.4%

Table 7 *(continued)*

Southwest	25	12	48.0%
Total	139	91	65.5%

Adequacy of Number of Qualified Candidates

The results of the data on the overall qualifications of Georgia high school principal candidates are reported in Table 8. According to the data analysis, 59 superintendents, or approximately 42%, either "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of qualified candidates applying to the district is adequate. However, 80 superintendents, or approximately 58%, responded that they "somewhat disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that the number of qualified high school principal candidates applying in the district was adequate.

Table 8

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report on Their Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Qualified High School Principal Candidates

Rating	Frequency of Response	Percentage Reporting a Shortage
Strongly Agree (4.00)	13	9.3%
Somewhat Agree (3.00)	46	33.1%

Table 8 *(continued)*

Somewhat Disagree (2.00)	55	39.6%
Strongly Disagree (1.00)	25	18.0%
Total	139	100.0%

Adequacy of Number of Qualified Candidates by Classification

Superintendents from all four district-types (rural, urban, suburban, and small town)

reported that the number of qualified high school principal candidates applying in the

district was not adequate (see Table 9). Of the 77 rural superintendents responding, only

35 of them (approximately 45%) responded that the number of qualified high school

principal candidates was adequate. Only three of the 12 (25%) urban superintendents

responded that the number of qualified high school principal candidates was adequate.

Similarly, eight of the 27 (approximately 30%) suburban superintendents responded that

the number of qualified high school principal candidates was adequate. Finally, 13 of the

29 (approximately 45%) small town superintendents responded that the number of

qualified high school principal candidates was adequate.

Table 9

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report by District Settings on Their

Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Qualified High School Principal Candidates

Classification of School District	Number of Districts Responding	Number Reporting Adequate Number Of Qualified Candidates	% Reporting Adequate Number of Qualified Candidates
Rural	77	35	45.5%
Urban	12	3	25.0%
Suburban	27	8	29.6%
Small Town	29	13	44.8%
Total	145	59	40.6%

Adequacy of Number of Qualified Candidates by Geographic Region

Information regarding the locations by region of Georgia public school systems

that reported an inadequate number of qualified high school principal applicants is

displayed in Table 10. The problem of having an inadequate number of qualified high

school principal candidates was most acute in the southwest region where only seven of

the 25 (approximately 28%) superintendents responded that the number of qualified high

school applicants was adequate. Four of the eleven (36.4%) superintendents in east

central Georgia responded similarly. In southeast Georgia, 11 of the 27 (approximately

40.7%) superintendents responded that the number of qualified high school principal

candidates was adequate. In northeast Georgia, 13 of the 30 (43.3%) responding

superintendents reported that the number of qualified high school principal candidates was adequate. Eight of the 17 (47.1%) superintendents from the central Georgia region responded that the number of qualified high school principal candidates was adequate. Two regions reported less of a problem with having an adequate number of qualified high school principal candidates. In the northwest region, 12 of the 23 (52.2%) responding superintendents reported that the number of qualified high school principal candidates was adequate and seven of the 12 (58.3%) responding superintendents in the west central region reported an adequate number of qualified high school principal candidates.

Table 10

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report by Geographical Regions

on Their Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Qualified High School Principal

Candidates

Geographical Regions of Georgia	Number of Districts Responding from Each Region	Number of Districts Reporting Adequate Number of Qualified Candidates	% of Region Reporting Adequate Number of Qualified Candidates
Northeast	30	13	43.3%
Northwest	23	12	52.2%
West Central	12	7	58.3%
Central	17	8	47.1%
East Central	11	4	36.4%
Southeast	27	11	40.7%

Table 10 *(continued)*

Southwest	25	7	28.0%
Total	145	62	42.8%

Adequacy of Number of Certified Candidates

Of the 139 Georgia public school superintendents that responded to the survey 102 (73%) reported they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal candidates was adequate (See Table 11). However, only 59 (42.5%) of the 139 respondents reported either "somewhat agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" that there was an adequate number of qualified high school principal candidates. This difference clearly indicates that the responding Georgia school superintendents perceive a much larger pool of certified candidates than qualified candidates for selection of a high school principalship.

Table 11

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report on Their Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Certified High School Principal Candidates

Rating	Frequency of Response	Percentage Reporting an Adequate Number Of Certified Candidates
Strongly Agree (4.00)	31	22.3%
Somewhat	71	51.1%

Table 11 (*continued)*

Agree (3.00)

Somewhat Disagree (2.00)	25	18.0%
Strongly Disagree (1.00)	12	8.6%
Total	139	100.0%

Adequacy of Number of Certified Candidates by Classification

The various public school districts in Georgia and the perception of the respective superintendents who report the perceived adequate number of certified high school principal candidates are reported in Table 12. Sixty-seven of the responding 75 (89.3%) rural superintendents answered that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal candidates is adequate. Similarly, 22 of 28 (78.6%) small town superintendents in Georgia responded that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal candidates is adequate. In suburban districts, 17 of 25 superintendents (68%) reported to "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified candidates is adequate. Finally, six of the 11 (55%) responding urban superintendents reported that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal applicants is adequate. Superintendents in rural, urban, suburban, and small town districts reported a distinct perceived difference between the number of qualified high school principal candidates and the number of certified high school principal candidates applying to their systems.

Table 12

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report by District Settings Their

Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Certified High School Principal Candidates

Setting of School District	Number of Districts Responding	Number Reporting an Adequate Number Of Certified High School Candidates	Percentage Reporting an Adequate Number of Certified Candidates
Rural	75	67	89.3%
Urban	11	6	54.6%
Suburban	25	17	68.0%
Small Town	28	22	78.6%
Total	139	112	80.6%

Adequacy of Number of Certified Candidates by Geographic Region

When asked if the number of certified high school principal applicants was

adequate in the various geographic regions of the Georgia public school system, the east

central region responded most affirmatively (See Table 13). In this region, ten of eleven

(91%) superintendents reported to "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number

of certified high school principal candidates applying to the system was adequate.

Similarly, 18 of 22 (approximately 81.8%) superintendents in northwest Georgia

"somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the number of certified high school

principal candidates was adequate. In the southeast region of Georgia, 21 of 27 (77.8%) superintendents "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that there was an adequate number of certified high school principal candidates. Eight of eleven (73%) west central Georgia superintendents "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the number of certified high school principal candidates was adequate. In the northeast and central Georgia regions, 19 of 27 (70%) and 11 of 16 (69%) superintendents, respectively, either "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the number of certified candidates applying to be a high school principal was adequate. The perception was least favorable in the southwest region where 15 of 25 (60%) Georgia school superintendents "somewhat agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the number of certified high school principal candidates was adequate.

Table 13

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report by Geographical Regions Their Perceptions of an Adequate Number of Certified High School Principal Candidates

Geographical Regions of Georgia	Number of Districts Responding from Each Region	Number of Districts Reporting an Adequate Number of Certified Candidates	Percentage of Region Reporting Adequate Number of Certified Candidates
Northeast	27	19	70.4%
Northwest	22	18	81.8%

Table 13 *(continued)*

West Central	11	8	72.7%
Central	16	11	68.8%
East Central	11	10	91.0%
Southeast	27	21	77.8%
Southwest	25	15	60.0%
Total	154	60	37.0%

Most Important Employment Criteria

In order to determine the most important employment criteria used in the high school principal selection process by Georgia superintendents, the survey was divided into three sections: Instructional Criteria, Interpersonal Criteria, and Administration and Management Criteria. For each section, a Likert scale was designed with options from "Most Important" which was given a value of 4.00, to "Least Important" which was given a value of 1.00.

Most Important Instructional Criteria

When asked to select the instructional criteria that were considered the most important to Georgia superintendents when hiring a high school principal (See Table 14), 126 of the 145 (86.8%) respondents identified credibility as a leader as "most important". Georgia superintendents considered innovativeness as being the least important hiring criteria for high school principals. Only 37 (25.5%) of the 145 responding Georgia superintendents identified innovativeness as "most important".

Table 14

Georgia Public School Superintendents' Responses to the Most Desirable

Instructional Criteria for High School Principal Candidates

Instructional Criteria	Number of Responses	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Number who selected item as *most important*	SD
Credibility as a leader	145	2.00	4.00	3.8621	126	.5130
Team Builder	145	2.00	4.00	3.8414	124	.4027
Ability to Establish Goals	145	2.00	4.00	3.4000	96	.5878
Skilled in SIP Process	145	2.00	4.00	3.6552	93	.4913
Visionary	145	2.00	4.00	3.5172	80	.5665
Insight/Experience In Curriculum	145	2.00	4.00	3.5172	78	.5414
Skilled in Data Analysis	145	2.00	4.00	3.4828	75	.5665
Intelligence	145	2.00	4.00	3.4483	69	.5519
Experience as Principal or Asst. Principal	145	1.00	4.00	3.3793	69	.6777
Skilled in Innovative Practices	145	1.00	4.00	3.3117	37	.629

Most Important Interpersonal Criteria

When asked to select the most important interpersonal criteria, 121 of 145 (83.4%) responding Georgia public school superintendents reported that optimistic/high expectations was most important (See Table 15). These same respondents also reported that 119 of the 145 (82.1%) Georgia superintendents answered that the ability to interact with the community, parents, and staff was considered a most important criteria. Georgia public school superintendents reported that only 90 of the 145 (62.1%) respondents selected the criteria of tenacity as "most important". Of the nine interpersonal criteria on the survey, the difference in the mean scores between the highest and lowest criteria only measured .2207. Such a close dispersion would indicate that the responding superintendents found it difficult to separate and classify interpersonal skills of high school principal candidates.

Table 15

Georgia Public School Superintendents' Responses to the Most Desirable

Interpersonal Criteria for High School Principal Candidates

Interpersonal Criteria	Number of Responses	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Number who selected item as *most important*	SD
High Expectations	145	3.00	4.00	3.8345	121	.3729
Interaction with Community	145	3.00	4.00	3.8207	119	.3849

Table15 *(continued)*

Enthusiasm	145	3.00	4.00	3.7931	115	.4065
Communication Skills	145	3.00	4.00	3.7724	112	.4207
Approachability	145	2.00	4.00	3.7655	113	.4566
People Oriented	145	2.00	4.00	3.7448	109	.4531
Listening Skills	145	2.00	4.00	3.7310	107	.4603
Flexibility	145	2.00	4.00	3.6181	91	.5154
Tenacity	145	2.00	4.00	3.6138	90	.5026

Most Important Administrative and Management Criteria

In determining the most important administrative and management criteria, 115 of the 145 (79.3%) responding Georgia superintendents reported that the ability to see the whole picture was "most important" (See Table 16). The areas of being skilled in the budget process and in technology were not considered as important as the other criteria when identifying qualified candidates for the high school principalship in Georgia. In fact, of the 145 responding superintendents, only 17 (11.7%) selected "skilled in technology" as the most important criteria. This finding is somewhat surprising given the amount of attention and funding that technology has been given over the past several years. However, it is evident that the responding superintendents feel that high school principal candidates should be able to generally oversee issues such as technology while being more concerned with being able to "see the whole picture" and having the "ability to delegate".

Table 16

Georgia Public School Superintendents' Responses to the Most Desirable

Administration and Management Criteria for High School Principal Candidates

Instructional Skills	Number of Responses	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Number who selected item as *most important*	SD
Ability to See Whole Picture	145	2.00	4.00	3.7793	115	.4483
Accountability	145	2.00	4.00	3.6389	97	.5498
Ability to Delegate	145	2.00	4.00	3.3310	52	.5278
Skilled in State & Federal Laws	145	1.00	4.00	3.1862	41	.6008
Skilled in the Budget Process	145	2.00	4.00	3.0276	23	.5394
Skilled in Organizational Theory	145	1.00	4.00	2.9862	30	.6665
Skilled in Technology	145	1.00	4.00	2.9448	17	.5625

High School Principal Recruitment

The last section of the survey included three items regarding high school principal recruitment in Georgia. A Likert scale was designed with options from "Strongly Agree" which was given a value of 4.00, to "Strongly Disagree" which was given a value of 1.00.

Of the 144 responding superintendents, 79 (54.9%) agreed that their school systems did an adequate job of "growing our own" high school principal candidates from within our current employee pool (See Table 17). When asked if their system was actively recruiting potential high school principal candidates, only 53 of the 142 (37.3%) responding Georgia school superintendents answered affirmatively (See Table 18). Finally, when given the opportunity to explain where superintendents find the best candidates for a high school principalship, 111 of 145 (76.6%) respondents elected to explain, in short answer-form, their source for qualified candidates. The vast majority of the explanations included comments such as "in house" or "from within our school system". Several superintendents mentioned that they look to nearby school systems for accomplished administrators that are familiar with the school community.

Table 17

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report on Their Perceptions of Their System Doing an Adequate Job of "Growing Our Own" High School Principal Candidates

Rating	Frequency of Response	Percentage Reporting Their System Doing Adequate Job Growing Own
Strongly Agree (4.00)	9	6.3%
Agree (3.00)	70	48.6%

Table 17 *(continued)*

Disagree (2.00)	59	41.0%
Strongly Disagree (1.00)	6	4.1%
Total	144	100.0%

Table 18

Georgia Public School Superintendents Report on Their Perceptions of Their System

Actively Recruiting High School Principal Candidates

Rating	Frequency of Response	Percentage Reporting Their System Actively Recruiting High School Principal Candidates
Strongly Agree (4.00)	10	7.0%
Agree (3.00)	43	30.3%

Table 18 *(continued)*

Disagree (2.00)	51	35.9%
Strongly Disagree (1.00)	38	26.8%
Total	142	100.0%

Response to the Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was, "According to the perceptions of Georgia public school superintendents, what skills and qualities are perceived as the most desirable when seeking to select a high school principal?" The first sub question addressed in this study was, "What is the geographical profile of Georgia superintendents?" The data revealed that over half (53%) of the responding superintendents were from a rural school system, 20% hailed from a "small town" school system, 18.6% were from a "suburban" school system, and only 8.3% were associated with an "urban" school system. Geographically, 20.7% of the responding superintendents were from the northeast Georgia region, 18.6% from the southeast region, 17.2% from the southwest region, 15.9% from the northwest region, 11.7% from the central region, 8.3% from the west central region, and 7.6% from the east central region.

The second sub question addressed in this study was, "How do Georgia superintendents' perceptions differ between certification and qualification of high school principal candidates? Of the 139 Georgia public school superintendents that responded to the survey, 102 (73%) reported they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal candidates was adequate. However, only 59 (42.5%) of the 139 respondents reported either "somewhat agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" that there was an adequate number of qualified high school principal candidates.

Of the 145 Georgia superintendents who responded to the items with regard to the most important selection criteria in selecting high school principal candidates (sub

question 3), 126 (86.8%) identified "credibility as a leader" as the "most important" instructional criteria, 121 (83.4%) reported being "optimistic/high expectations" as the most important interpersonal criteria, and 115 (79.3%) responded that the "ability to see the whole picture" was the "most important" administrative and management criteria.

Lastly, sub question four asked, "What recruitment efforts do Georgia school superintendents use to identify and select high school principals?" Of the 144 responding superintendents, 79 (54.9%) either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their school system was doing an adequate job of "growing our own" high school principal candidates. Conversely, of the same 144 respondents, only 53 (37.3%) reported that their system was actively recruiting high school principal candidates.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher determined the perceptions of Georgia public school superintendents with regard to skills and qualities that were perceived as the most desirable when selecting high school principals. This researcher reported and analyzed the data collected from the participants during the course of the study. Research questions, findings, and a response to the research questions were addressed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In this study, the researcher determined the perceptions of Georgia school superintendents with regard to employment criteria used in selecting high school principals. The researcher used the research questions and the related literature review to provide the guidelines for adapting a survey that identified the most desirable employment criteria. The survey was sent for approval to the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). On May 27, 2005, the research proposal was formally approved.

For this study, a survey was sent to all 180 Georgia school superintendents during the months of June and July 2005. Of all the surveyed superintendents, 145 (81%) of them responded so that their perceptions could be studied. On June 1, 2005, the initial survey mailing was done to all of the Georgia School Superintendents. After two weeks, another coded survey as sent to the non-responding Superintendents for completion. As of July 8, 2005, the survey was closed with a response rate of 81%.

Following the return of the surveys, the information gathered was sorted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Base 12.0, 2002). The data that was gathered from the respondents gave an accurate statewide view of employment criteria for Georgia high school principals.

Information from the surveys was summarized and analyzed to determine which criteria Georgia school superintendents use to find qualified high school principal candidates. Georgia school superintendent perceptions provided information with regard

to areas of the state that are reporting a principal shortage. Findings were reported both in text and table formats in Chapter IV. The research questions were answered by each of the items on the instrument. The final question served as a qualitative measure and has been reported by the corresponding research question. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

<div align="center">Analysis of Research Findings</div>

The researcher found that over half (53%) of the responding superintendents were from a rural school system, 20% hailed from a "small town" school system, 18.6% were from a "suburban" school system, and only 8.3% were associated with an "urban" school system. Geographically, over half of the responding superintendents were from the northeast, southeast, and southwest regions of Georgia.

Almost three quarters of the responding Georgia public school superintendents reported they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the number of certified high school principal candidates was adequate. However, only about 43% of these respondents reported either "somewhat agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" that there was an adequate number of qualified high school principal candidates.

Of the 145 Georgia superintendents who responded to the items with regard to the most important selection criteria in selecting high school principal candidates (sub question 3), eighty seven percent identified "credibility as a leader" as the "most important" instructional criteria, eighty three percent reported "optimistic/high expectations" as the most important interpersonal criteria, and almost eighty percent responded that the "ability to see the whole picture" was the "most important" administrative and management criteria.

Of the responding superintendents, over half either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their school system was doing an adequate job of "growing our own" high school principal candidates. Conversely, of the same respondents, only a third reported that their system was actively recruiting high school principal candidates.

<div align="center">Discussion of Research Findings</div>

The researcher gathered data from public school superintendents in Georgia regarding the skills and qualities that are perceived as most desirable when seeking to select a high school principal. The following discussion of research findings is presented in response to the four research questions listed in Chapter III and the review of related literature that the researcher presented within the following themes: principal effects, principal preparation programs, professional standards for school principals, and the principal selection process.

The first research question involved the geographic profile of Georgia school superintendents. The researcher felt it was important to further define this population to get a better understanding of the respondents' location across the state. Over half of the respondents were from rural systems in Georgia. Regionally speaking, over 65% of the superintendents hailed from the central and southern regions of Georgia. By defining the geographic profile of Georgia superintendents, the researcher was able to pinpoint regions of the state that had perceived shortages of qualified high school principal candidates as addressed by the next research question.

The second research question dealt with the perception of Georgia school superintendents in regards to the supply of certified and qualified high school principal candidates. This researcher reported that urban superintendents perceived the lowest

number of both certified and qualified high school principal candidates. This supports

the study by Bowles, King, and Crow (2000) that indicated principal shortages are

particularly acute at the high school level and within urban districts. All districts reported

a sizeable difference between the number of certified high school principal candidates

and the number of qualified candidates. All geographic areas of Georgia have a much

greater number of certified high school principal applicants than they have qualified

applicants. For example, the southwest Georgia region noted a 32% point difference

between the number of certified candidates and qualified candidates. This mimics an

Educational Research Service (1998) study that revealed over half of the school districts

questioned reported a shortage of qualified candidates to fill open principal positions.

Sheldon and Munich (1999) reported that 86% of the responding superintendents said

filling principal positions with qualified applicants was either difficult or very difficult.

Similarly, Whitaker (2001) reported 50% of responding superintendents said that they

were experiencing either a somewhat extreme or extreme shortage of qualified principals.

The third research question revolved around the most important selection criteria

to Georgia superintendents in selecting Georgia high school principals. This researcher

used three general categories to define the most important instructional criteria,

interpersonal criteria, and administration and management criteria. Credibility as a leader

and being a team builder were what Georgia school superintendents reported as being the

most important instructional criteria. Being skilled in innovative practices rated the least

important instructional criteria. However, in Hallinger and Heck's (1996) mixed

methodology study, the most important criteria for a high school principal were to be an

instructional leader. Also, a study by the National Forum on Educational Leadership

(1999) reported that being an instructional leader is the most important criteria for a high school principal. Although the ability to establish school goals ranked third in this researcher's study, Halinger and Heck's study further noted that the principal behavior of setting school goals was the one main criterion that had a consistently positive effect on student achievement.

Important interpersonal criteria included having high expectations and interacting with the community while being persistent rated as the lowest criteria. However, the mean scores for each criterion in this category were very closely aligned indicating that it was difficult for Georgia school superintendents to rate the actual importance of interpersonal criteria while selecting high school principal candidates. Blasé & Blasé (1999) reported that interpersonal skills of encouraging teacher reflection and supporting professional development were the most important interpersonal skills.

For the administration and management criteria, the ability to see the whole picture and accountability were the most important skills. Being skilled in technology was the least important of the skills in this category. This differs somewhat from the study conducted by the Education Commission of the States (2000) that reported that effective communication and managing discipline were the most important hiring criteria for high school principal candidates.

The last research question for this study dealt with the perception of Georgia school superintendent's recruitment efforts. Over 60% of the responding Georgia superintendents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their systems were actively recruiting high school principal candidates. Quite often systems will develop their own pool of high school principal candidates by "growing their own". However, this

researcher reports that Georgia superintendents are split somewhat evenly on agreeing or disagreeing on how effectively their system is growing their own candidates. Basically, most districts aren't actively recruiting candidates and about half of the districts don't "grow their own" high school principal candidates. Whitaker (2001) advocates developing a "grow your own" recruitment system along with reexamining the role of the principal, providing administrative mentoring, and increasing the salary and benefits to attract and retain qualified high school principal candidates. Pound and Young (1996) maintain that districts must recruit principals due to the many challenges that are faced such as changing student characteristics and continuous new initiatives and programs.

Conclusions

The researcher has concluded from this study that:

1. There is a real and substantial gap between the number of certified high school principal candidates and the number of qualified candidates.

2. Urban systems and those located in southwest Georgia have the least amount of qualified high school principal candidates.

3. Georgia superintendents value credibility, having high expectations, and the ability to see the whole picture when considering the most important selection criteria for high school principal candidates.

4. Georgia superintendents least value criteria such as years of experience, being skilled in technology, and being knowledgeable about innovative practices.

5. Although there is a shortage of qualified high school principal candidates in Georgia, the majority of superintendents are not actively recruiting such

candidates. Only half of the systems even report trying to "grow their own"

candidates.

Implications

This study has offered insight and should be of interest to colleges and

universities that offer graduate degree programs in educational administration. With such

hiring criteria defined by Georgia superintendents, college educators should be able to

better prepare prospective high school principals as they move through graduate

programs of study. In addition, the researcher provides insight to individuals who aspire

to the position of high school principal in Georgia. With such knowledge, aspiring

principals will be better prepared in the application and interview phase of securing a

high school principalship.

The researcher provides to the Georgia Department of Education a comprehensive

investigation into the specific criteria that local school Superintendents use in selecting

high school principals. With the impending retirement of large numbers of

administrators, such criteria would offer the Department of Education ideas for planning

professional learning and leadership training courses. This, in turn, would have statewide

budgetary implications due to the development and implementation of such training

focused on the criteria established by local superintendents when hiring high school

principals.

This researcher's study is beneficial to local school board members who must

approve principalship appointments after an essential matching of skills, values, and

educational environment is done. Using the findings of this study, local school boards

should be better able to successfully place the appropriate candidate into a high school principalship.

Superintendents should find the researcher's study significant since it provides a statewide insight into the process of selecting high school principals. By reflecting upon the survey responses, Georgia superintendents can compare personal selection practices to those of fellow superintendents that they are competing against for high school principal applicants. Also, there may be superintendents in Georgia who have not served long enough to select a high school principal. For such a situation, this study's findings serve as a guideline for selection criteria that may need to be considered by the superintendent.

This researcher's study is significant to the researcher because it explains not only what selection criteria is important for a high school principalship, but also possibly reveals demographic patterns of Georgia superintendents as they relate to the desired selection criteria. Should this researcher seek other high school principal positions in Georgia, it is most beneficial to know how the respective superintendents use the various criteria that must be considered for the job. Also, as a prospective superintendent, this researcher has gained valuable knowledge from currently practicing superintendents in the very important area of high school principal selection processes.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, the researcher offers the following considerations for future research:

1. This study should be replicated with a smaller participant size. A smaller
   population of superintendents who represent the various geographical regions

of Georgia that are not experiencing a shortage of qualified high school principal candidates should be surveyed. Using qualitative methods, a researcher could interview these superintendents with regard to what interventions have been put into place to address the high school principal shortage.

2. This study should be replicated at the elementary and middle school level. It would be interesting to know if Georgia superintendents perceive differences in desirable hiring qualities between elementary, middle, and high school principal candidates.

3. This study should be replicated to further study the principals of high achieving Georgia public high schools. A comparison between the superintendent's perception of such high achieving principals and self-perceptions of the principals might identify definite qualities that would be deemed desirable when selecting high school principal candidates.

4. This study should be conducted in other states in order to define possible similarities and differences between superintendent perceptions.

<div align="center">Closing Thoughts</div>

Four years ago, this researcher transitioned from being a middle school principal to being a high school principal in Georgia. On many occasions since that time, this researcher has questioned what skills or criteria a high school principal should have to be effective. Were there specific instructional, interpersonal, or administrative skills that could be defined as being more important than others? What, in particular, would a superintendent value in a high school principal candidate? Were there certain geographic

regions of the state that had a bigger need than other regions for qualified high school principal candidates? These types of questions provided the motivation for this researcher to conduct this study.

At the outset, this researcher hoped to define specific skills that could be learned quickly and, to a certain extent, quantified. However, after concluding this study the researcher learned that the most desirable skills for a high school principal candidate are ones that don't necessarily come out of a textbook or case study in graduate level coursework. Learning skills like budgeting, federal and state laws, etc. seem to be very worthwhile and manageable. However, becoming adept at "seeing the big picture" and "establishing credibility as a leader" are skills that take time to develop. Also, the importance of being able to develop and manage teamwork using interpersonal skills is not something that you can do overnight after reading a leadership text. It's those intangible skills that are the hardest to develop, but most valuable to possess-especially for a high school principal in Georgia.

Finally, this researcher has concluded that the political nature of the superintendent's job had to impact which skills were deemed desirable. One could easily conclude from the data that Georgia School Superintendents preferred someone that could maintain status quo over a candidate that really tried to push forward possibly causing a few "waves" in the schools system. Since superintendents are directly accountable to a school board, this researcher concluded that superintendents want principals that make as few "waves" as possible.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

3770 West Lake Drive

Martinez, Georgia 30907

June 22, 2005

Dear Georgia School Superintendent:

My name is Jeff Carney and I am currently the Principal of Lakeside High School in Evans, Georgia. In my "spare" time, I am completing the requirements for a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Georgia Southern University. My research study, titled *Employment Criteria Used By Georgia Public School Superintendents In High School Principal Selection,* is being completed under the direction of Dr. Michael Richardson. As one of the 180 Georgia public school superintendents, you are invited and strongly encouraged to participate in this study.

I would greatly appreciate your help in completing the enclosed questionnaire that should **take only five minutes or less to complete**. If you do not wish to participate, please return the questionnaire with a notation at the top. Completion and return of the questionnaire will indicate permission to use the information you provide. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The results of this research may be published, but the names of the participating superintendents and their respective school systems will not be used. To account for the return of each survey, I have written a code number on the top of your questionnaire that will be accessible only to me. Once each of the surveys is returned, I will permanently remove the number from the survey so that none of the participants can be identified. All of my questionnaires will be mailed on June 1, 2005, to each of the Georgia public school superintendents. I will send a final reminder in hopes of getting a response from all 180 superintendents. Obviously, the greater the response rate, the more valuable the findings will be for this research study. If you would like a copy of the results at the conclusion of the study, you may contact me by phone or email.

If you have any questions about this research project, please call me at (706) 868-3669 ext. 202 (work) or (706) 855-6349 (home). My email address is jcarney@ccboe.net. Any questions or concerns that you may have about your rights as a research participant in this study should be directed to the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

I thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration in completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Respectfully yours,

Jeffrey L. Carney

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

Georgia Southern University		
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Jeffrey Carney
           3770 West Lake Drive
           Martinez, GA 30907

cc: Michael Richardson, 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: May 27, 2005

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

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After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H05161**, and titled **"Employment Criteria Used By Georgia Public School Superintendents in High School Principal Selection"**, 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 C

GEORGIA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

Georgia School Superintendent Survey

EMPLOYMENT CRITERIA USED BY GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS
IN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SELECTION

Jeffrey L. Carney, Doctoral Candidate, Georgia Southern University **3770 West Lake Drive** Martinez, GA 30907 Home Phone (706) 855-6349	**Survey Code#:** _____ Work Phone (706) 868-3669 ext. 202

The purpose of this survey is to help determine the employment criteria that Georgia School Superintendents use in the selection of high school principals. This study is being conducted as part of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership through Georgia Southern University. All information gathered in this study is confidential. The names of participating systems/superintendents will not appear in any research or publication related to this study.

Part A. Demographics

Please circle the appropriate response for each item.

1.   Please classify this school district:

   A. Rural   B. Urban   C. Suburban   D. Small Town

2.   Circle the Georgia geographic region in which your school system is located.

   A. Northeast   B. Northwest   C. West Central   D. Central Georgia

   E. East Central   F. Southeast   G. Southwest

Part B. High School Principal Shortage
Circle the appropriate response to questions 1-3.
The scale is as follows: 4= Strongly Agree; 3=Somewhat Agree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree

3.   The number of high school principal candidates applying to this district is adequate.
                          4   3   2   1

4.   The number of qualified high school principal candidates applying for a position in this
      district is adequate.
                          4   3   2   1

5. The number of certified high school principal candidates applying for a position in this district is adequate.

               4   3   2   1

Part C. High School Principal Instructional Criteria

Listed below are ten instructional criteria that have been considered important by superintendents when hiring a new principal. Please circle the appropriate response that best reflects your rating for each item.
The scale is as follows: 4=Most Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Least Important.

6. Skilled in innovative practices	4	3	2	1
7. Insight and experience in curriculum	4	3	2	1
8. Ability to establish goals	4	3	2	1
9. Visionary	4	3	2	1
10. Team builder	4	3	2	1
11. Skilled in the school improvement process	4	3	2	1
12. Skilled in data collection analysis and ability to implement standards	4	3	2	1
13. Experience as assistant principal or principal	4	3	2	1
14. Credibility as a leader	4	3	2	1
15. Intelligence	4	3	2	1

Part D. High School Principal Interpersonal Criteria

Listed below are nine interpersonal criteria that have been considered important by superintendents when hiring a new high school principal. Please circle the appropriate response that best reflects your rating for each item.
The scale is as follows: 4=Most Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Least Important.

16. Approachable/Visible	4	3	2	1
17. Strong communication skills (speaking and writing)	4	3	2	1
18. Listening skills	4	3	2	1
19. People-oriented	4	3	2	1
20. Ability to interact with community, parents and staff	4	3	2	1

21. Enthusiastic/energetic/passion for work	4	3	2	1
22. Flexibility/adaptability	4	3	2	1
23. Optimistic/high expectations	4	3	2	1
24. Tenacity/perseverance	4	3	2	1

Part E. High School Principal Administration and Management Criteria
Listed below are seven administration and management criteria that have been considered important by superintendents when hiring a new high school principal. Please circle the appropriate response that best reflects your rating for each item.
The scale is as follows: 4=Most Important; 3=Important; 2=Somewhat Important; 1=Least Important.

25. Ability to delegate	4	3	2	1
26. Awareness of accountability	4	3	2	1
27. Skilled in the budget process	4	3	2	1
28. Skilled in State and federal laws	4	3	2	1
29. Skilled in technology	4	3	2	1
30. Awareness of the Whole Picture	4	3	2	1
31. Skilled in Organizational Theory	4	3	2	1

Part F. High School Principal Recruitment
Listed below are three statements regarding the recruitment of high school principals. Please circle the appropriate response that best reflects your rating for each item. The scale is as follows: 4=Strongly Agree; 3=Agree; 2=Disagree; 1=Strongly Disagree.

32. My system does an adequate job of "growing our own" high school

                                                    4   3   2   1

    principal candidates from within our current employee pool.

33. My system is actively recruiting potential high school principal candidates.

                                                    4   3   2   1

34. Where do you find the best candidates for a high school principalship?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

(END OF SURVEY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!)