

THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' MEETINGS ON EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Misha Lesley

April, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those who helped me complete this process. To my committee chairperson, Dr. Angus MacNeil, thank you for challenging me to own this work. You have taught me to be patient and to pay attention to detail. These lessons have been invaluable. I earnestly thank Dr. Doris Prater, whose straightforward commentary helped me tremendously. Dr. Steve Busch, thank you for always sharing a word of encouragement, just when I needed it most. To Dr. Wayne Emerson, thank you for sharing the China experience with me, and for agreeing to serve on my committee.

Secondly, I thank my cohort members, particularly Sonerka (Sonny) Mouton and Cesar Alvarez. Sonny, the practical words of advice you gave were a constant reminder that this goal was actually possible. Cesar, I thank you for your humor, concern and contagiously positive attitude.

I thank my husband Kenneth, who in 1994 became the first college graduate in his family. Your tenacity, unconditional love, and support are a constant source of strength. Next, I thank my daughter Camryn for working so hard to achieve scholastic excellence (you are my academic role model). I also thank my son Kendal for showing me how to pursue with passion the things I love.

Finally, this work is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Carolyn Bratton, who is the smartest person I have ever known.

THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' MEETINGS ON EFFECTIVE PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP

An Abstract
of
A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Misha Lesley

April, 2011

Abstract

With increasing demands for schools to meet standardized test expectations, decrease drop-out rates, prepare a globally competitive workforce, and develop students who are college-ready, many schools are faced with the challenge of effective principal leadership to meet these expectations. A Texas study revealed that less than 30 percent of principals remain in high schools beyond five years, and moreover that principals in low-performing schools have the shortest tenure (Fuller & Young, 2009). These principals need support from their districts to develop the characteristics of effective school leadership (Brookover & Lezotte, L 1982); however, there is little correlation between the district-level meetings principals are required to attend and their development as instructional leaders (Anderson, et al., 2010).

This study examined the time principals spend away from their buildings to determine (1) the amount of time principals spend in off-campus meetings, (2) the perceptions principals have about the necessity of these meetings, and (3) principals' perceptions of what constitutes an effective meeting. Archival data from *The Principal Survey* was reviewed as the basis for this study. *The Principal Survey* captured principals' responses to questions administered via the cognitive interview protocol.

In addition, a review of current research on the subject of principal leadership, instructional leadership and adult education was used to determine the practices districts need to develop effective school leaders. This examination included an analysis of responses from a diverse group of principals from a wide range of school settings. *The Principal Survey* consists of responses from leaders of rural, urban, and suburban

elementary and secondary schools. The entire survey contains responses to 22 demographic questions, 31 open-ended questions and 62 Likert-scaled questions. This study focused on six questions from the survey. Five of the questions are open-ended and one question required a response to a Likert-scaled item.

The survey data were analyzed using a mixed-method approach in which (1) qualitative data from the interview questions were coded into themes, (2) descriptive statistics were used to describe the quantitative data, and (3) a t-test for independent means was conducted to determine the significance of the relationship between a school's accountability rating and the amount of time the school's principal spends off-campus.

The findings of this study have implications for district leaders who oversee the time principals spend attending off-campus meetings. The conclusions of this study underscore practices needed to increase the principal's capacity to effectively lead schools. These practices include district meetings that allow principals to network and share best-practices with one another, the use of technology in lieu of face-to-face meetings to disseminate updates on district and state policy issues, and professional development activities that promote the principal's sense of self-efficacy in instructional leadership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Need for the Study.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	7
Summary.....	7
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	9
The Importance of School Leadership.....	9
Characteristics of Effective School Leadership.....	10
Professional Development for School Principals.....	12
Professional Development and Principal Attrition.....	14
Professional Development and Effective School Leadership.....	15
Summary.....	21
III. METHODOLOGY.....	23
Sample.....	23
Instrumentation.....	26
Procedures.....	30
Reliability.....	31
Analysis	33
Generalizability	36
Limitations of the Study.....	36
Summary.....	38

IV. RESULTS	40
Research Question 1.....	40
Research Question 2.....	41
Research Question 3.....	42
Research Question 4.....	43
Research Question 5.....	44
Research Question 6.....	47
Research Question 7.....	48
Principal Responses (Academically Acceptable/Low Performing Schools).....	49
Meetings Always Necessary.....	50
Meetings Very Frequently Necessary.....	52
Meetings Occasionally Necessary.....	55
Meetings Very Rarely Necessary.....	61
Summary.....	62
 V. DISCUSSION.....	 64
Focus 1: Characteristics of Effective School Leaders.....	65
Focus 2: Professional Development of Effective School Leaders.....	66
Findings.....	68
Conclusions.....	73
Implications for Practice.....	77
Implications for Future Study.....	79
 REFERENES.....	 81
 APPENDICES.....	 88
Appendix A Human Subjects Approval Letter.....	88
Appendix B <i>The Principal Survey</i> Items	89

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There has been an increased focus on accountability through high-stakes testing; however, outcomes for students have remained largely unchanged (Ravitch, 2010). Similar to the production lines that marked the height of the Industrial Revolution, schools have primarily existed to mass-educate students, much in the way factories are designed to mass produce cars. The rows, bells, routines and “one size fits” all curriculum, with separate tracks for different ability students, was determined efficient and necessary to produce 20th century workers. At the close of the 20th century however, a new model for public school education emerged. This model, based largely on the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, found that America’s schools were not adequately preparing students for the future (1983). Although the U.S. 21st Century Workforce Commission asserted that critical thinking, the use of technology, and collaboration with others would be the skills students needed for the 21st century workforce (2000), high school graduates continue to be ill-prepared to enter the workplace (Casner-Lotto, et al., 2006). Furthermore, only about half of students who do attend college are ready (Kirst & Venezia, 2004). As the achievement gap widened, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This legislation requires states to qualify and quantify what students must learn and be able to do along a continuum to graduation. NCLB mandates that states test students annually, and requires that schools meet “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) toward student proficiency goals as measured by standardized test scores (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In 1983 the report *A Nation at Risk* written by members of the National Commission on Excellence in

Education stressed that “the essential raw materials needed to reform our educational system are waiting to be mobilized through effective leadership” (Baker, et al., 1983, p. 15). Yet, almost 30 years since that report was written, studies have concluded that high school principals are not receiving the training to become instructional leaders who are able to improve student learning (Bottoms, 2009).

Need for the Study

There is a growing educational achievement gap between the United States and other developed nations. According to the most recent administration of the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA), which tests 15 year-old students in reading, mathematics and science, the United States ranks 12th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in mathematics among the world’s developed nations (Fleischman, et al., 2010). Moreover, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that the average 4-year graduation rate in the United States is just 73.9 percent, while Texas ranked 36th in the nation at only 71.9 percent (Aud, et al., 2010).

Although these statistics are alarming, there is hope. This hope rests in the men and women who serve in our schools. They are the professionals who are on the front lines of the education system. One important group is the principals who lead schools. To be effective however, principals need extraordinary human management, safety management and curriculum management skills. They must be able to establish a clear mission and vision, articulate this mission and vision to a multitude of stakeholders, many with conflicting interests, and gain consensus for the direction of the school (Marzano, 2005). Therefore, professional development and support at the district level is

critical (Anderson, et al., 2010). This support is central to principals meeting the challenges of educating students who graduate on time and are globally competitive.

As the Obama administration and Congress set to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which prompted NCLB, market-based school reforms such as charter schools and vouchers put extra pressure on principals to get results in the form of improved scores on standardized state tests (Ravitch, 2010). The principal is at the center of school improvement—accountable for teacher effectiveness and student achievement, yet at the mercy of constantly shifting district “mandates” and initiatives. The high school football coach is no longer the ideal candidate for principal. The principal must now be an expert in curriculum and instruction, as well as demonstrate the ability to set clear goals for what students will learn. Additionally, the principal is challenged to ensure that the school is safe; that faculty and staff have high expectations of students; that the mission of the school is clear and focused; that students are given time to learn new knowledge and skills; that student progress is monitored; and that parents are engaged in their child’s learning (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982). Consequently, there is a struggle to meet these demands. A study on the tenure and retention of school leaders in Texas found that barely 50 percent of principals remain in the profession over three years, and less than 30 percent remain over 5 years (Fuller & Young, 2009).

The concept of the principal needing to be an expert in the aforementioned criteria is evident in training programs that focus on results-orientated principal leadership (Harvard, 2009). Additionally, the study *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principals* commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, defines principal

instructional leadership as assuring quality of instruction, modeling teaching practice, supervising curriculum, and assuring quality of teaching resources. It also ascribes instructional leadership as one of the key principal functions (DeArmond, et al., 2003). As a key function of effective school leadership, the ability of principals to support teaching and learning is necessary for student success.

Preparation in effective leadership emphasizes developing principals who must produce tangible gains in student achievement. (Deal & Peterson, 1999). This preparation mirrors the demands on business leaders to increase marketplace productivity. One example of today's focus on a results-driven principalship can be found in the goals of the Principals' Center at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. Specifically, the goals of the Center's professional education program are aligned with Brookover and Lezotte's (1982) research. These goals are to develop principals who focus on student achievement and who use researched best practices to inform school improvement. Additional goals of the Center are to cultivate principals who understand how adult learning and teacher professional development impact school improvement. The Center places priority on training principals who can establish and maintain a culture of high expectations, who are able to develop supervision and evaluation practices that support teacher growth, and who can effectively manage the change process (Harvard, 2009).

As evaluations for principals become increasingly linked to teacher and student performance, principals are under pressure to produce measureable improvements from year to year. Therefore it is imperative that district leaders align principal meetings with the attributes of effective school leadership as well as help them meet these demands.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the amount of time principals spend off-campus, and to ascertain their perceptions of this time in relationship to studies on effective principal leadership. The specific goals of this study were to (a) determine the amount of time principals spend attending off-campus meetings; (b) describe the types of meetings principals are required to attend; and (c) make recommendations about the time principals spend off-campus and the content of principal meetings with the goal of increasing a principal's capacity for effective school leadership.

Research Questions

To adequately understand the factors that impact the relationship between principal meetings and effective principal leadership, this study focused on the following questions:

1. On average, how many hours per week do principals work?
2. On average, what percentage of those hours is spent attending off-campus meetings?
3. Do principals think the time they spend attending off-campus meetings is necessary?
4. What do principals consider the effective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
5. What do principals consider the ineffective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
6. Who arranges principals' off-campus meetings? What are specific examples?

7. Does the amount of time a principal spends in meetings differ according to the school's accountability rating?

This study was conducted to inform those at the district-level who arrange principal meetings about the perceptions principals have of the meetings they are required to attend. The analysis concluded with recommendations for maximizing the time principals are required to spend attending off-campus meetings. This study included survey/interview responses from 167 principals. Of the principals who participated in the survey, 164 are from the Gulf Coast region of Texas. The other three are principals were from a school district outside the state of Texas. The sample was representative of the population of the area, with participation from a variety of school types in a densely populated region.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were used:

Andragogy – methods used to teach adults

Effective school leadership – characteristics that principals must display to improve student achievement

Instructional leader – a school principal who is able to positively impact teacher performance and student achievement by using the characteristics of effective school leadership

Pedagogy – methods used to teach children

Principalship – roles and responsibilities that an individual performs in leading and managing a school

Professional development – activities that develop a principal’s instructional leadership ability

TEA Accountability – ratings given to schools based on student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, school completion, and school drop-out rates

Significance of the Study

The research completed in this study described the activities principals engage in during off-campus meetings. The study illustrated (1) principals’ perceptions of the necessity of the time they spend off-campus; (2) the types of activities principals engage in while off-campus; (3) the relationship of the school’s performance rating to the amount of time principals spend off-campus; and (4) who arranges principals’ meetings. From the results of this study, recommendations were suggested for districts to modify the structure and content of meetings that principals are required to attend so that the meetings more closely aligned with the content and practices that enable principals to improve school leadership.

Summary

With increasing demands for principals to raise student performance on standardized tests, increase graduation rates, and improve school accountability ratings, the principal must display the characteristics of effective school leadership. To demonstrate these characteristics and enact them in ways that benefit the school community, principals must consistently engage in the daily activities of the school. When principals are called away from the campus to attend meetings, those who arrange the meetings must be mindful of the time required to address the meeting’s purpose as

well as the relevance of content given and the method of delivery to ensure that both elements support the principal's ability to effectively lead.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Importance of School Leadership

In the six-year study, *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, (Anderson et al., 2010) identify and articulate how instructional leadership can improve teaching and learning. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study focused on the effect of school leadership in high and moderately performing schools. The qualitative analysis vis-à-vis the case studies was coupled with evidence from quantitative studies of effective school leadership. The findings suggest that variations in school leadership can attribute to a 5 to 7 percent difference in student learning from one school to another. This percentage appears to be small; however, school leadership is found to account for a quarter of the variables that affect learning among individual students. The other variables include a student's background as well as other factors that are external to the school. The researchers hypothesize, based on a review of the evidence garnered from studies by Waters, Marzano and McNulty, that school leadership is the second most important in-school factor that impacts student learning, with classroom instruction being the first. Their study was based on interviews and surveys of principals, teachers, legislators, state education agencies and district-level personnel. The study included survey data from 8,391 teachers and 471 school administrators. The study also included interviews with 581 teachers and principals. The researchers use students' test scores as measured by adequate yearly progress (AYP). Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that, to promote effective principal development, districts engage principals

in activities that promote a principal's sense of self-efficacy. A person, and in this case, a principal's, sense of self-efficacy stems from mastery experiences in which that person believes that he or she has the knowledge and abilities to be successful (Anderson, et al., 2010). To develop self-efficacy in others, skills and strategies for meeting workplace demands must be taught (Bandura, 1998). Given the demands on principals to be effective leaders, districts, when convening principals, have an obligation to provide activities focused on effective school leadership.

Characteristics of Effective School Leadership

Recent research suggests that the principal is a key factor in improving schools (Anderson, et al., 2010). The characteristics of effective school leadership, illustrate the attributes principals need to positively affect student achievement. These characteristics describe an effective principal as one who is able to develop a culture of cooperation among all school stakeholders. He or she must not only provide resources for teaching and learning, but also must understand and contribute to the curriculum and instruction development and improvement process. An effective principal is also able to maintain order within the school while attending to student discipline. In addition, successful principals set clear goals that are aligned to the school's mission, involve teachers in the decision-making process, assess teacher performance in alignment with these goals and celebrate accomplishments. The effective principal is able to engage the school community by maintaining visibility on campus and communicating clearly with teachers and students. The effective principal is also a flexible innovator who leads the school change and professional development process and monitors both to determine their impact on student learning. Finally, an effective principal recognizes the hidden issues

that would hinder any of the above activities from occurring (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003).

Marzano, McNulty and Waters' (2003) work also demonstrates how the attributes of effective school leadership can be used to improve schools. Their research findings were developed from a meta-analysis of over 5,000 studies over a 30-year period, beginning in the 1970's. From this analysis, sixty-nine studies were chosen as the basis of the leadership framework. These studies were selected based on the strength of the quantitative research data, students' scores on standardized tests, the designation of student achievement as the dependent variable, and teacher views on school leadership as the independent variable. The study combined quantitative data, learning theories, and the researchers' professional experience. The findings, which represented the analysis of 2,894 schools, 1.1 million students, and 14,000 teachers, showed a strong correlation between school leadership and student achievement. Specifically, the study found that if a principal improves one standard deviation in the leadership practices listed above, student achievement increases from the 50th to the 60th percentile. The study further found that when principals focus on things that are not related to the characteristics of effective school leadership, the impact on student achievement is either non-existent or negative (Marzano, 2005). Understanding these characteristics is important, because effective school leadership requires that principals engage as active participants in their schools. For this to occur, principals must be allowed to spend significant amounts of time on campus interacting with faculty, staff, students, parents and the larger community. If principals are required to spend time off-campus, the focus of this time should be on professional development aligned with the characteristics of successful

principal leadership (Fuller & Young, 2009), with the goal of increasing student achievement (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003).

Professional Development for School Principals

Challenges for principals have increased as accountability demands have broadened. Today, the principal is held accountable to students, parents and the community. District-level policies, brought on by more intervention by state legislatures in response to Federal guidelines under NCLB, find the principal being held increasingly accountable for evaluating instruction (Ravitch, 2010). Supporting and developing effective school leaders involves districts providing professional development experiences that involve (1) paying special attention to the changing role of the principal; (2) providing supportive workplace conditions; and (3) providing structured support, such as mentoring for principals (Fuller & Young, 2009; NAESP, 2003).

A study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation found that to become instructional leaders, principals must engage in field-based internships, problem-based learning, cohort groupings, and mentoring through collaboration with university or other third party organizations (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). Similarly, in the report “Schools Need Good Leaders Now: State Progress in Creating a Learning-Centered School Leadership System”, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) asserts that an effective principal is key to improving student performance. In its view, states should develop systems that help principals guide teaching and learning. These systems include selective recruiting for principal preparation programs; developing state standards for effective principal leadership; making fieldwork for graduate programs more meaningful; changing certification policies; and improving principal working conditions (2007).

Specifically, the SREB study found that by 2006, Texas had achieved only negligible progress in the development of principal preparation programs that emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning, and only some progress in providing training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools. Furthermore, SREB found that state standards for principal development did not adequately focus on student learning, but rather focused on the principal's ability to manage the school. The study found that in 13 of the 16 states analyzed, less than 40 percent of the principal standards focused on student learning, while only three states, Alabama, Maryland and Texas had some standards that reflected expectations for student learning. The study also found that none of the states had consistent criteria for measuring principal performance against the standards. For example, only Arkansas, Louisiana and Maryland specified the types of evidence to be used in evaluating principals, and only North Carolina provided recommended documents and work samples to show how a principal can meet a particular standard. SREB noted that while the states' development of standards and their descriptors are important, this development is insufficient if there is no professional development to support principals in achieving mastery of the standards.

Additionally, SREB recommended that states require universities and school districts to work together to set admissions requirements for principal preparation programs that measure a candidates' potential to raise student achievement. According to SREB, principals should be prepared to work with teachers, parents, students and the community to increase student achievement. Principals should also be equipped to help teachers analyze data, build school culture, use research-based practices, manage the change process, and focus time and resources to improve the school.

Professional Development and Principal Attrition

Professional development is a key factor in establishing a professional learning community in which the principal and teachers work together to improve learning outcomes for students (Dufour, 2005). The findings of a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) tracked the rates and reasons for principals leaving the job. The findings suggest that a lack of professional development influences principal attrition.. The study, based on the Principal Follow-up Survey (PFS), used a nationally representative sample survey of public, private, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded (BIE) K-12 schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2008-2009 representing 117,140 principals. The initial data were gathered through mailed surveys and there was a subsequent brief telephone interview. The survey measured the number of principals in the 2007-08 school year who still worked as a principal in the same school in the 2008-09 school year. It also tracked the number of principals who had moved to another school, and the number who had left the principalship. The sample included responses from 7,460 public schools (including charter schools), 130 BIE schools, and 1,890 private schools. The response rates were 97 percent for private schools and 99 percent for public and BIE schools.

The survey results indicated that of those who were principals during the 2007-08 school year, 80 percent remained at the same school during the following school year, 6 percent moved to a different school, 12 percent left the job, and 3 percent of principals left but their job status was unknown. Of those principals who reported having professional development in 2007-2008, 12 percent left the profession the following year.

Of those principals who reported having no professional development in 2007-2008, 20 percent left the profession the following year (Battle & Gruber, 2010).

Professional Development and Effective School Leadership

Professional development for teachers involves training in the use of sound pedagogy to improve student achievement. High-quality pedagogy includes teachers being able to conceptualize themselves teaching effectively, articulate what sound practice entails, develop the temperament to effectively interact in the school setting, enact the practices they have learned, and draw upon tools to support their practice (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Consequently, as an instructional leader, the principal's role is critical in ensuring teachers develop professionally (Marzano, 2005). Both teachers and principals are held accountable for increasing student achievement. Therefore the content of principal development must also be focused on the characteristics of effective leadership that support teacher development (DeArmond, et al., 2003). A study of elementary principals in Austin, TX, St. Paul, Minnesota and New York City found that principals who received greater professional development in instructional leadership had greater influence on the professional development of their teachers (Akey, 2007). Research by Malcolm Knowles (2005) suggests that the principles of adult learning provide the appropriate mechanism for principals to develop the knowledge and skills needed for effective instructional leadership.

The concept of adult learning is rooted in ancient methods of teaching. Chinese and Hebrew scholars developed the case method in which a group of learners explore a scenario and provide possible solutions. The Greeks developed the Socratic seminar which involves the teacher or group member posing a question or problem that the group

together attempts to answer or solve. The Romans developed the debate in which individuals adopt and defend a position. Today, there are primarily two ways of categorizing adult learning. The first is the scientific method postulated in 1928 by Edward L. Thorndike in his work *Adult Learning*. Thorndike's ideas centered on the learning *ability* of adults and not on the *process* of teaching them. His research illustrated that adult learning is influenced by adult interests and abilities that are different from those of children.

The second category of adult learning is the intuitive or reflective method developed by Eduard C. Lindeman in 1926 with his publication, *The Meaning of Adult Education*. In Lindeman's view, new knowledge is gained through intuition and the analysis of experience and focuses on *how* adults learn. Lindeman was influenced by John Dewey's ideas on experientialism (Hildebrand, 2008). Lindeman believed that adult learning should be guided by situations rather than subjects. In addition, Lindeman held that the curriculum should be tailored to the adult's needs and interests. He believed that too much emphasis in education was placed on the experiences and perspectives of the teacher, but preferred Dewey's idea that individuals learn by doing (Lindeman, 1926). Likewise, Edward Thorndike believed that adults should learn small groups where the learning objectives are derived by the learners themselves, not from objectives developed top-down (Thorndike, 1928). In Lindeman and Thorndike's models, the teacher should be the guide who participates in the learning with the adult students in which the life experiences of both the teacher and student are the focus. Their views are the basis for Malcolm Knowles' research on adult learning (Gessner, 1956). Knowles' concept of adult learning describes how adults learn and the motivators that influence them.

Malcolm Knowles, widely known as the father of modern adult learning, formalized its principles. During the second half of the twentieth century, Malcolm Knowles was the prominent voice in the field of adult education. He chronicled the development of adult education in the United States and was the head of the Adult Education Association of the United States of America. Knowles' work distinguishes *teaching* from *learning*. His principles of andragogy focus on the latter, which rely on adult self-direction and motivation.

Knowles developed the principles of *andragogy*, which are based on the following assumptions about adults and how they learn (Knowles et al, 2005). These principles, which can be aptly applied to effective leadership development are:

1. Adults need to know why they are learning something;
2. Adult learners are self-directed;
3. Adult learners bring their own experience;
4. Adult learning is oriented toward problem-solving; and
5. Adults are motivated to learn.

In a report on the practical application of Malcolm Knowles' theory of adult learning, Valerie McGrath (2009) wrote about her work with adults who were attending evening business classes. Some of the students attending these classes reported that they had not completed high school because the teaching style was autocratic. The students noted their preference for the evening business classes because they were able to question and contribute to what was being taught rather than the authoritative nature of their high school courses in which they were expected to simply "sit and get" information. McGrath noted that some of the students, encouraged by the facilitative learning

environment, continued their education. In addition, she argued that pedagogical principles are often applied to adults with the expectation that they gain knowledge solely from what they are told. She posits that pedagogical practices can actually have negative effects when used with adults.

To identify teaching practices that account for the way adults learn, researchers in the study “A Single Conversation with a Wise Man Is Better than Ten Years of Study: A Model for Testing Methodologies for Pedagogy or Andragogy” developed a Teaching Methodology Instrument (TMI) to determine whether a teaching method used the principles of pedagogy or the principles of andragogy. The researchers assumed that pedagogy is more teacher-centered whereas andragogy is learner-centered and therefore more suitable to adults. The TMI analysis involved a teaching method, e.g., Socratic Seminar, being measured against eight indicators. These indicators are: *Concept of the Learner* – the learner is self directed; *Role of the Teacher* – the teacher facilitates learning; *Role of the Learner’s Experience* – the learner brings valuable experience; *Primary Technique of Delivery* – the teacher uses experimentation, discussion, problem-solving and simulation; *Readiness to Learn* – the learner must have a need to learn something; *How Learning Should be Organized* – organization around a learners readiness and ability to apply to life; *Orientation of Learning* – education is a means of increasing ones competence and meeting ones full potential; and *Organization of Curriculum* – organized around categories that develop the learner’s competence. From this study, the researchers suggested that these practices, which are based on adult learning principles, might improve an adult learning (Kroth, et al., 2009).

School districts, through meetings that support the individual performance of their principals, can achieve overall district priorities if adult learning principles are incorporated. In practice, adult learning has been linked to human resource development. One goal of adult learning is the development of the individual to create better institutions (Brethower & Smalley, et al., 1998; Swanson & Arnold, 1997). However, the Strategic Management and Human Capital in Education Project (SMHCEP) found that most school districts, in pursuing educational reform, ignore human development (2009). Furthermore, there are certain performance goals that bridge the gap between organizational development and human development. These shared goals can be achieved if attention is paid to performance tasks and outcomes, which are the substance of adult education (Holton, 1998). Human resource development must therefore focus on helping adults improve individual performance as well as helping the organization improve performance to achieve its goals (Knowles, et al., 2005).

The question of whether principal practice is adequately addressed by district-level meetings is a critical one. The study “Principal Quality Practice Guideline: Promoting Successful School Leadership in Alberta” (2009) explored the expectations of principals in Canada. Similar to the findings of Marzano, McNulty, Waters (2003) and others, the study described the principal’s duties as developing the school’s mission and goals, setting priorities, planning school improvement, budgeting, managing personnel, providing professional development, making data-based decisions, engaging the community, and reporting on high-stakes accountability assessments. The study categorized these duties into eight leadership dimensions. These dimensions are: Fostering Effective Relationships; Visionary Leadership; Leading a Learning

Community; Instructional Leadership; Developing and Facilitating Leadership; Managing School Operations and Resources; and Understanding and Responding to the Large Societal Context. In order for principals to acquire these dimensions, districts must provide the necessary organizational conditions and create professional learning experiences that foster the principal's sense self-efficacy or belief that these attributes can be achieved (Anderson, et al., 2010). Self-efficacy stems from activities that cause a person to believe that he or she can perform a task well (Bandura, 1998). The principals in the in the Anderson study articulated seven factors that support their sense of self-efficacy. These factors, which align with the dimensions described in the Alberta study, are:

- Districts provide human and financial resources;
- District support for family and community relationships;
- School flexibility in pursuing district goals;
- Focus on data-based decision making in schools;
- Assistance with analyzing data;
- District policies that support principals staffing schools they way they need to;
- and
- Clear achievement standards and district curriculum.

Anderson, et al. (2010) also concluded that districts were not effective if they only focused on one or two of the factors listed above. For example, professional development for principals had limited effects on a principal's efficacy without clear achievement standards and district curriculum. Likewise, district articulation of clear achievement standards was not effective unless the district also provided assistance with

analyzing data. Finally, the study noted that professional development had a negative effect when it was not based on the individual needs of schools.

The principals in the Anderson study stated that they wanted curricular and instructional guidance from their districts and also wanted to use the district's goals and direction to motivate staff and promote change within their schools. The quantitative and qualitative data of the study suggest that district priorities impact principal priorities. Additionally, teachers in the study rated as better instructional leaders those principals who stated that the district provided them more support and direction on curriculum and instruction goals. This was true for schools at all socio-economic levels. However, in struggling districts where principal leadership was attributed to personal characteristics rather than through professional development, external factors (i.e., state policies, home environments) rather than the principal's instructional leadership were blamed for students' lack of achievement. Conversely, in higher performing districts, principal effectiveness was linked to professional development, which was directly related to instructional leadership. In these districts there was an alignment between expectations, professional development, monitoring and ongoing support, not limited to formal evaluations but also through mentoring and coaching (Anderson, et al., 2010).

Summary

Research suggests that effective school leadership has a positive impact on student achievement. To become an effective leader, principals must receive support in developing the characteristics that Robert Marzano (2005) and others have found to be the most impactful in improving student performance. Additionally, the context of constructive professional development (Anderson, et al., 2010) should include the

principles of adult learning and human development described in Malcolm Knowles' (2005) theory of andragogy. With the principles of adult learning, coupled with professional development based the characteristics of effective school leadership, districts can provide meaningful support to help principals meet the demands of school leadership.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the methodology used in the following areas:

a) population/sample; b) instrumentation; c) data sources; d) procedures; e) data analysis; and e) limitations of the study.

Sample

This study included responses from a cognitive interview of 167 school principals within the most populated region of the state of Texas. This region represents 22 percent of the students in the entire state. Of the 1,031,462 students located in the area, 209,212 students are represented in this survey. Of the 54 districts in the region, 27 are represented in the survey. Ethnically, the principals surveyed represent the overall population of principals in the region (Region 4 Profile, 2008-2009). The schools represented in the survey have ethnic distributions of students which mirror those of the state as represented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
A Comparison of Ethnic Distribution of Sample and State

Ethnicity	% Sample	% State
White	25	27
African American	24	22
Hispanic	47	45
Asian	9	6
Non-Resident	0.3	0.2

Of the principals who completed *The Principal Survey* 63.4 percent ($n = 106$) were women and 36.5 percent ($n = 61$) were men. Additionally, over half of the

respondents were white. African Americans made up 25.7 percent ($n = 43$) of the respondents, while Hispanic principals comprised 19.8 percent ($n = 33$) of the respondents. The total ethnic distribution of the principals surveyed is illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Ethnic Distribution of Principals

Ethnicity	N	%
White	87	52.1
African American	43	25.7
Hispanic	33	19.8
Asian	3	1.8
Non-Resident	1	.01
Total	167	100.0

The average number of years in the field of education for principals in this study is 21 years, ranging from 5 years to 44 years. Table 3.3 details the experience-level of the principals surveyed.

Table 3.3
Principals' Years in Education

Years	N	%
5 – 10	14	8.4
11 – 15	35	21.0
16 – 20	44	26.3
21 – 25	29	17.4
26 – 30	28	16.8
Over 30	17	10.2
Total	167	100.0

Principals self-reported on the number of years they had served in the position. The survey did not ask principals how long they had served in the current school or district, so it is possible that the total number of years served as a principal may have been divided among one or more other schools. Table 3.4 shows the number of years the survey respondents had been in the position of school principal. At the time of the study, a plurality of respondents, (n = 89) had been a principal for less than 5 years. The mean (average) number of years was 6 years, with a range of 0 years to 34 years.

Table 3.4
Number of Years as Principal

Years	N	%
0 – 5	89	53.3
6 – 10	53	31.7
11 – 15	14	8.4
16 – 20	9	5.4
Over 20	2	1.2
Total	167	100.0

Principals self-reported the Texas accountability ratings of their schools. The accountability ratings for schools in Texas are determined by several factors, including student attendance and graduation rates, as well as student performance on standardized tests. Table 4.2 outlines the frequency and percentage of schools represented by each of the state's accountability ratings. Of these 167 schools, there are only seven Low Performing schools represented in the study. A plurality of the schools in the study is Academically Acceptable (n = 63) at 37.7 percent, while there are 31.7 percent (n=53) Recognized schools. Next, 26.3 (n=44) of the schools are Exemplary, and 4.2 percent (n=7) of the schools are Low Performing.

Table 3.5
Schools' Accountability Ratings

Rating	N	%
Exemplary	44	26.3
Recognized	53	31.7
Academically Acceptable	63	37.7
Low-Performing	7	4.2
Total	167	100.0

The principals' schools represented a variety of settings, from elementary to high school and from rural to urban. The smallest group consisted of principals of rural schools. Over one third (35.3 percent) of the principals in the study were from suburban schools, while over half (59.3 percent) of the principals were from urban schools. The frequency and percentage of participating of district settings is illustrated in Table 4.3 below.

Table 3.6
Number and Percentage of District Settings

District Setting	N	%
Rural	9	5.4
Suburban	59	35.3
Urban	99	59.3
Total	167	100.0

Instrumentation

This research study examined six responses from a larger 115-item survey based on the cognitive interview protocol. The comprehensive account of principals' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about their jobs is entitled *The Principal Survey*. The six questions taken from *The Principal Survey* that relate to this study asked about the time

principals spend off-campus and principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of this time. In taking a closer look at *The Principal Survey*, 22 of the 115 survey items are related to the principals' educational background, work experience and school demographics. The remaining items consisted of 62 Likert-scaled questions and 31 open-ended questions. The open-ended questions added depth to the Likert-scaled questions and items that only required a short response such as "number of years in education". The 31 open-ended questions gave principals the flexibility to share more information than could be given if the survey contained primarily Likert-scaled questions. One advantage of including open-ended questions is that they enable the respondent to provide explanations to accompany their answers (Mahoney, 1997).

The Principal Survey was administered by students to fulfill a portion of the degree requirements of a Masters of Education program at a large urban university in Texas. These students conducted cognitive interviews with principals who provided answers to the 115 survey items. The survey questions were constructed by a group of principals who developed items from topics they believed were most critical to the job of principal (MacNeil & Kajs, 1997). The survey comprised six sections covering six topics. The first section (A) asked principals to report on his/her years experience and education, as well as the demographics of the school. Section B, which is the focus of this study, asked principals to report on (1) the amount of time they spend working off-campus, (2) the activities they are engaged in while off-campus, and (3) their perceptions of the usefulness of these activities. Section C of the survey consisted of questions regarding the principal evaluation process. The questions in Section D asked about the development of principal succession plans. The final section (E) focused on the

principal's role in the professional development of teachers. This study is part of a larger, comprehensive study of factors that this researcher believes contribute to principal effectiveness. The subjects who participated in *The Principal Survey* worked in a large, primarily metropolitan area in the Gulf coast region of Texas, although some of the subjects in the study worked in smaller rural schools within the region, and three worked out of state.

As part of a much larger body of work in which individual researchers have documented their analyses of various sections of *The Principal Survey*, this particular study analyzed the section of the instrument (B) which examined the principals' use of time, both in terms of amount of time principals spend off-campus and how this time is perceived as either supporting or hampering principals' development as effective leaders. The data gleaned from *The Principal Survey* and resulting analysis is designed to inform those at the district level who arrange principal meetings as to the types of meetings most conducive to a principal's development as an instructional leader. As the foundation for the study, it is important to note that *The Principal Survey* has the following components:

- Component 1 consists of the survey instrument itself. This tool, which used traditional survey methods as well as the cognitive interview protocol, recorded principals' attitudes and perceptions on various topics related to their jobs;
- Component 2 is the longitudinal impact of this study, which was given over a period of 18 months. A longitudinal analysis can be used to determine how the principals' attitudes and perceptions change over time; and
- Component 3, which is the basis for this study, includes recommendations on the development of district-level principals' meetings based on the research findings.

The graduate students who administered *The Principal Survey* selected the participants. As a result, there were 178 surveys that were duplicates because some students chose the same principal to participate. In examining the duplicate surveys, the students were able to establish test-retest validity as well as examine similar answers to open-ended responses. There were no instances found in which a principal who had completed more than one survey changed his/her responses. Only the first survey was used for the dataset, and the duplicate surveys were excluded from the data analysis for this study.

The principals responded to survey questions by providing demographic information which included age; sex; years as a principal; years in education; degrees held; years since receiving management or principal certification; and the institution from which this certification was received. Other demographic information included ethnicity, major teaching field; extra-curricular activities directed while teaching; name of school currently a principal of; number of teachers in the school; number of students in the school; ethnic composition of students in the school; and the school's state accountability rating. The questions used for this study were taken from section B of the larger instrument. These questions are:

1. On average, how many hours per week do principals work?
2. On average, what percentage of those hours is spent attending off-campus meetings?
3. Do principals think the time they spend attending off-campus meetings is necessary? Explain.

4. What do principals consider the effective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
5. What do principals consider the ineffective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
6. Who arranges principals' off-campus meetings? What are specific examples?

The survey responses to five of these items are open-ended; however, questions 1 and 2 required fairly closed-ended responses. Only question 3 contained a six-point scaled item, which ranged from 1 equaling Never to 6 equaling Always.

Procedures

In addition to the questions described in the instrumentation section above, the researcher in this study formed the hypothesis, based on previous experience as a school principal and familiarity with the types of meetings principals are required to attend, that there would be a difference in the amount of time principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools and principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spent off-campus.

Therefore, this additional question was added to the study:

7. Does the amount of time a principal spends in meetings differ according to the school's accountability rating?

The open-ended nature of some of the survey questions allowed respondents to provide as much information they deemed necessary to fully answer the questions. However, because of the mixed-methods approaches used to analyze the data, the potential for a "crisis of integration" had to be considered by the researcher. The crisis of integration is the conflict that arises when the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods fails to adequately answer the researcher's questions (Onwuegbuzie & Collins,

2007). To guard against a disconnection between the quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher first completed the quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics to enumerate the findings for questions 1, 2 and 3 and then performed a *t*-test for independent means to answer question 7. Question 3 also contained Likert-scaled response criteria, and the principals had to choose one of the following answers: *Always*, *Very Frequently*, *Occasionally*, *Rarely*, *Very Rarely* and *Never*.

Once the quantitative analysis was completed, the researcher reviewed the qualitative responses to questions 4, 5 and 6 to determine principals' views about the time they spend off-campus. The second part of question 3 asked principals to explain their initial answers. After these responses were reviewed, they were categorized by school type (elementary school, middle school, high school). This categorization was used to account for potential differences in principal meetings by school-level.

Reliability

First, the researcher disaggregated the qualitative data to look for emerging themes among the principals' responses and to code those themes. The researcher then used the process of comparative analysis to categorize the themes based on similarities among responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Once the items were coded, the researcher used a random number generator to select 20 random responses, and performed an inter-coder reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) to ensure that the most accurate description of the principals' responses was reported. Because the researcher is a former high school principal in one of the districts represented in this study, there was a potential for researcher bias given that she was a colleague of several principals represented in the study and is familiar with the meetings they had described. To safeguard against

researcher bias, the names of principals as well as their schools were not used when coding the principals' responses. In addition, an independent coder who currently serves as a high school principal coded the responses without knowing who the respondents were. A second coder, who is a high school assistant principal, coded the responses with the same restrictions. The researcher examined the responses of all three coders. From the examination, the researcher determined the rate of inter-coder agreement (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000) between the researcher and the two coders.

The inter-coder reliability tests produced the reliability coefficients listed below. Each reliability coefficient indicates sufficient levels of reliability:

- Question 4: What do you consider the effective use of off-campus time? What are examples?

The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for question 4 was .93 for the researcher and the first coder (principal), and .89 for the researcher and the second coder (assistant principal).

- Question 5: What do you consider the ineffective use of off-campus time? What are examples?

The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for question 5 was .97 for the researcher and the first coder (principal), and .98 for the researcher and the second coder (assistant principal).

- Question 6: Who arranges principals' off-campus meetings? What are specific examples?

The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for question 6 was 1.0 for the researcher and the first coder (principal), and .77 for the researcher and the second coder (assistant principal).

Additionally, the researcher separated the principals' responses by the TEA Accountability ratings each school received. Because of the relatively small sample of Low Performing schools in the sample, the four TEA Accountability rating scales were condensed into two categories: Exemplary/Recognized and Academically Acceptable/Low Performing. The issue of data accuracy was also addressed. For instances in which school data were missing, the researcher located the most current demographic data found in the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator Survey (AEIS).

Analysis

The following methods were used to analyze data for the study: (1) descriptive statistics to calculate frequencies, percentages, and means; (2) a t-test for independent means (Wielkiewicz, 2000) to compare the time principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools spend off-campus to the time principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend off-campus; (3) a second t-test for independent means to compare the total hours worked per week between principals of Exemplary/Recognized and Acceptable/Low Performing schools; and (4) qualitative analysis to describe the themes that emerged from the open-ended response items (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Using archival data from *The Principal Survey*, the researcher reviewed the individual responses principals gave regarding their perceptions on the necessity and effectiveness of the meetings they are required to attend and determined the "properties and dimensions" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 46) of these data points. The researcher

coded these data based on discrete themes that emerged from the principals' responses. Once the items were coded, they were placed into categories, and conclusions were drawn based on the categorization of the responses.

Specifically, the researcher used a combination of descriptive statistics to answer questions 1 and 2. A combination of descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis was used to answer questions 3-6. Finally, the researcher used two t-tests for independent means to answer question 7.

For question 1, which asked, "On average how many hours per week do you work as a principal", the researcher assigned codes for the number of hours the principals stated they worked. Question 1 was open-ended, therefore the researcher decided to group the number of hours reported into following categories: 40-50 hours; 51-60 hours; 61-70 hours; 71-80 hours; and over 80 hours.

For question 2, which asked, "On average what percent of those hours is spent off-campus", the researcher reported the open-ended responses according to the categories of hours principals reported working per week. These categories are: 40-50 hours; 51-60 hours; 61-70 hours; 71-80 hours; and over 80 hours. In reporting the responses for question 2, the researcher calculated the mean percentage of time principals reported spending off-campus (average) for each category of hours worked.

Question 3 asked, "Do you think the time spent off-campus is necessary." Principals answered this question using a six-item Likert-scale. The response categories to whether a principal thinks the time spent off-campus is necessary were *Always*, *Very Frequently*, *Occasionally*, *Rarely*, *Very Rarely*, and *Never*.

For question 4, which asked, “What do you consider the effective use of off-campus time? Give examples”, the researcher coded the open-ended responses into themes that emerged from the principals stated. .

For question 5, which asked, “What do you consider the ineffective use of off-campus time? Give examples”, the researcher coded the open-ended responses into themes that emerged from what the principals said.

For question 6, which asked, “Who arranges off-campus meetings you must attend? Give specific examples”, the researcher coded the open-ended responses into themes that emerged from the principals’ responses.

For question 7, which asked “Does the amount of time a principal spends in meetings differ according to the school’s accountability rating”, the researcher assigned a value of 1 or 2 to the corresponding principals’ schools. The value 1 designated *Recognized/Exemplary* schools and the value 2 designated *Academically Acceptable/Low Performing* schools. To complete the analysis of question 7, the researcher converted the percentage of time principals stated that they spent of the total number of hours worked per week off-campus to a whole number. Once all of these values were assigned, the researcher performed two t-tests for independent means to determine the significance level. The first t-test for independent means was conducted to determine if there was a difference in the number of total hours principals worked per week based on the school’s accountability rating. The second t-test for independent means was performed to determine if there was a difference between the number of hours principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend off-campus compared to principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools.

Generalizability

Student demographics, the number of principals, and their heterogeneous characteristics in terms of gender, ethnicity, and years of service established generalizability in *The Principal Survey*. The use of 99 different interviewers who surveyed the principals resulted in a diverse sample. Private, charter, and rural schools were underrepresented; therefore the findings of this study may not apply to other private, charter, and rural schools. However, the results of this study can be reasonably generalized to urban and suburban public schools at all levels within the state of Texas.

Limitations of the Study

Colleen Mahoney, contributor to the *User-Friendly Handbook of Mixed-Method Evaluations* (1997) published by the National Science Foundation, described the limitations of open-ended interview questions to include a lack of interviewers who are formally trained in qualitative interview techniques. Other limitations include the propensity of respondents to distort information due to poor recollection. The questions in *The Principal Survey* asked principals to recall information such as the frequency of meetings attended and the content of these meetings over the course of 18 months. This information was based strictly on principals' recall and did not include an observation of meeting attendance logs or agendas from meetings attended. The principals' responded to interviewers who conducted the survey as part of a graduation requirement. The principals therefore may have felt compelled to respond in ways they perceived would help the interviewers complete the requirement. Mahoney also asserts that transcribing data can result in errors. The answers to the open-ended responses were transcribed by the interviewers and may not have captured accurate information.

The data collection procedures in *The Principal Survey* are based on the cognitive interview protocol. Graduate students administered the survey during face-to-face interviews. The interviewers used a cognitive interview protocol, which allowed the interviewers to survey the principals over time. Because of the principals' busy schedules, the cognitive interview allowed for more questions to be asked because principals would be less inclined to complete an online survey containing many questions. The cognitive interview protocol was developed in the 1980's by survey methodologists and psychologists. Characteristics of the cognitive interview include:

- a focus on the thought process respondents use to answer survey questions;
- volunteer subjects are asked to participate and are interviewed in private; and
- subjects are not random and usually fit into a specific category.

The cognitive interview process is based on the following components. The first is the respondent's understanding or interpretation of the question being asked; next is the respondent's ability to recall from memory information needed to answer the question and the methods the subject uses (i.e., process of elimination, estimation); third is the extent to which the respondent attempts to answer the question with accuracy and thoughtfulness; and fourth is the extent to which the respondent's answers match the survey questions (Willis, 1999). The cognitive interview process allows interviewers to get clarity with regards to the respondents' answers to questions. However, disadvantages of the cognitive interview arise when the respondent's answers are based on a misinterpretation of the interviewer's question; the respondent recalls information that is inaccurate; and/or the respondent does not fully answer the question. Other

disadvantages include the potential for a small sample size; the time consuming process to collect and analyze the data; and the potential for inaccuracy in transcribing the data.

When coding responses into themes is the researcher used archival data and therefore was unable to personally interview the principals to clarify responses. However, in coding the responses that were available in the data set, the researcher reflected on what the data communicated about the topic and determined themes accordingly (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Additionally, the survey contained one six-point scaled item. This item asked principals to report, in their view, the frequency of “necessary” off-campus meetings they are required to attend. A limitation of this question was that the qualifying term, necessary, was not defined. Also, responses to the open-ended questions revealed potential missing information. For example, in answering the question as to what are examples of effective use of time is spent off-campus, one response was entered into the data-set as “planning”. For this particular response it seems unlikely that when asked to give *examples* of effective use of time spent off-campus, the respondent would have responded so simply. Because this is archival data, there was no way to ascertain whether the response was accurately recorded. Therefore, while the results of this study provide useful information on principals’ perceptions on the effectiveness of the meetings they attend, the use of qualitative archival data limited the researcher’s insight into the entirety of responses principals gave during the actual interview.

Summary

This section described the sample, instrument design, and procedures used to complete *The Principal Survey*. In addition, this section described the methods the

researcher used to determine reliability in coding the themes as well as an analysis of the data contained within the six survey questions that were analyzed to complete this study. Specifically, the data analysis included (1) descriptive statistics were used to calculate frequencies, percentages, means for each item; (2) two t-tests for independent means and (3) qualitative analysis to describe the themes that emerged from the open-ended response items.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The results of this study are organized to describe the responses to the following questions:

1. On average, how many hours per week do principals work?
2. On average, what percentage of those hours is spent attending off-campus meetings?
3. Do principals think the time they spend attending off-campus meetings is necessary?
4. What do principals consider the effective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
5. What do principals consider the ineffective use of off-campus time? What are examples?
6. Who arranges principals' off-campus meetings? What are specific examples?
7. Does the amount of time a principal spends in meetings differ according to the school's accountability rating?

Research Question 1

Question 1, which asked how many hours principals work per week, produced the following categories 40-50 hours, 51-60 hours, 61-70 hours, 71-80 hours, and over 80 hours. One principal did not respond to the question. The resulting data are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Average Number of Hours Principals Work Per Week

Hours	N	%
40 – 50	33	19.8
51 – 60	87	52.1
61 – 70	33	19.8
71 – 80	9	5.4
Over 80	4	2.4
No Response	1	0.1
Total	167	100.0

Research Question 2

Question 2 asked of the total number of hours worked per week, what percentage of those hours is spent in off-campus meetings. As described in Table 4.2, the percentage of time principals reported spending off-campus ranged from 11.2 percent to 18.8 percent. The results are reported by principals who work on average 40-50 hours per week, principals who work on average 51-60 hours per week, principals who work on average 61-70 hours per week and. principals who work 71-80 hours per week.

Table 4.2
Percent of Time Principals Spend Off-Campus

Category	N	% Principals	% Time
40 – 50 Hours	33	19.8	11.2
51 – 60 Hours	87	52.1	12.2
61 – 70 Hours	33	19.8	18.4
71 – 80 Hours	9	5.3	18.6
Over 80 Hours	4	2.4	18.8
No Response	1	0.1	
Total	167	100.0	

Research Question 3

Question 3, which asked principals if they believe the time they spend off-campus is necessary, contains following categories, *Always*, *Very Frequently*, *Occasionally*, *Rarely*, and *Very Rarely*. Table 4.3 shows the frequencies and percentages of principals' responses.

Table 4.3
Principals' Belief That Time Spent Off-Campus Is Necessary

Response	N	%
Always	30	18.0
Very Frequently	59	35.3
Occasionally	69	41.3
Rarely	3	1.8
Very Rarely	5	3.0
Never	0	0.0
No Response	1	.06
Total	167	100.0

Research Question 4

Question 4 is the first question that required an open-ended response. This question asked principals to describe the effective use of their time spent off-campus. The categories for this question were coded as follows: *Professional Development*-helps principals do their jobs better; *Extra-Curricular Activities*-attending and/or supervising events that students participate in outside of the school day; *Policy Updates*-information on new or changed district, state or federal policies; *Networking/Information Sharing*-sharing ideas with and learning from other principals; *Community Relations*-meetings with parents and other community members, and *Working from Home*-performing routine tasks such as answering emails; and *No Answer Given*-the principal did not answer the question. In addition to these coded categories, one principal responded “peace and quiet” and another responded “classroom visit and observation”, while another principal described missing opportunities to interact with students and staff. These three responses were coded as a separate outlier category. Because of the archival data used, it was impossible to ascertain whether these principals misunderstood the questions or whether the responses were inaccurately transcribed.

In response to question 4, a plurality, 51.0 percent (n=85) of principals described *professional development activities* as the most effective use of their time spent off-campus. Three of the responses were outliers that did not match the question; and 4 percent (n=6) did not answer the question. Table 4.4 illustrates these data.

Table 4.4
Effective Use of Time Spent Off-Campus

Responses	N	%
Professional Development	85	51.0
Networking/Information Sharing	32	19.1
Policy Updates	24	14.3
Community Relations	12	7.2
No Response	7	4.2
Extra-Curricular Activities	2	1.2
Working From Home	2	1.2
Other	3	1.8
Total	167	100.0

Research Question 5

Similar to question 4, question 5 asked principals to describe the ineffective use of time spent off-campus and required an open-ended response. The results of this question are found in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5
Ineffective Use of Time Spent Off-Campus

Responses	N	%
Housekeeping	54	32.3
Non-Differentiated	27	16.2
Non-Instructional	24	14.4
Repetitive	17	10.2
Disorganized/Poorly Presented	12	7.2
Lecture	4	2.4
No Examples	21	12.6
No Response	8	4.8
Total	167	100.0

Nearly a third of the principals (n=54) described *Housekeeping*-information that could be relayed via email as the most ineffective use of their time spent off-campus. One principal of an acceptable high school noted that the most ineffective time spent off-campus is spent in meetings is when information is relayed that could be given simply by email or teleconference. Second, 16.2 percent (n=27) of the principals surveyed described ineffective meetings as *Non-Differentiated meetings* in which the same information is given to principals regardless of different school levels, needs, levels of knowledge or experience. One principal of an Academically Acceptable elementary school who, at the time of the survey had 1 year experience as a principal noted that meetings in which the information is not differentiated for principals of varying experience levels is a problem. This principal shared that, “I wish some of the principal meetings or the accountability meetings would be broken up...between the novices and the more experienced people.” A principal of an Academically Acceptable high school stated that the ineffective use of time occurs when the presenters have no idea who the principals are, nor the specific challenges, needs and even strengths of the schools that they are supposed to provide professional development to improve.

Thirdly, 14.4 percent (n=24) of the principals surveyed described *Non-Instructional Related*- luncheons, celebrations, and vendor presentations as being the most ineffective use of time spent off-campus. One principal of an Academically Acceptable middle school responded that “ineffectiveness comes when there are vendors trying to sell us something or politicians want us at a ceremony.” This principal seemed to confirm a desire to participate in meetings that related directly to effective school leadership and went on to note that...”these...events have no impact on how we will

improve the quality of teaching and learning of our students”. Another principal of a Low-Performing high school noted that being off-campus to attend activities that are not directly related to academic areas such as “breakfasts and banquets” is the most ineffective use of time spent off-campus.

Next, 10.2 percent (n=17) of principals surveyed reported that *Repetitive meetings* in which information was given in previous meetings as the most ineffective use of their time spent off-campus. One principal of an Academically Acceptable elementary school noted that the most ineffective time spent off-campus is when, “the trainings and meetings seem to be about subjects covered over and over.” For this principal, repetition was not a confirming experience, but one that was unnecessarily repetitive.

Next, 7.2 percent (n=12) of principals described *Disorganized/Poorly Presented* meetings as an example of an ineffective meeting. An elementary principal of an Academically Acceptable elementary school stated that, “I hate meetings called by someone in central [office] whose sole purpose for living is to get me to a meeting [and] half of the information we need they have to ‘get back to us’”. This principal was less-than-appreciative of being someone else’s work project. The final description of ineffective meetings was *Lecture-meetings*, which allow for no interaction. Lecture meetings were described by 2.4 percent (n=4) of the principals as being the most ineffective use of time spent off-campus. Two of the principals surveyed, one who is a principal of an Academically Acceptable high school and the other who is a principal of an Academically Acceptable elementary school described the ineffective use of their time off-campus as attending “sit and get” meetings. These principals did not appreciate being

a captive audience, receiving knowledge from someone else while unable to use, make, and contribute their own knowledge.

It is important to note that 13 percent (n=21) of principals responded that there were no instances in which the time they spent off-campus was ineffective and 4.8 percent (n=8) of the principals gave no response.

Research Question 6

Question 6, which asked principals who arranges the off-campus meetings they are required to attend, produced the following categories: *Central Office*-central office administration schedules meetings; *Joint*-principal arranges some meetings and central office schedules other meetings; *Principal*-principal schedules own meetings. *Secretary/Assistant*-secretary or assistant schedules meetings; *Principal/Secretary*-principal and secretary schedule meetings; and *No Answer*-no response. The majority, 88.6 percent (n=149) of principals reported that the district-level central office arranges off-campus meetings; 6 percent (n=11) of principals stated that they arrange meetings in conjunction with the district-level central office. One percent (n=2) of the principals stated that the secretary or assistant arranges off-campus meetings, while less than 1 percent (n=1) state the principal and secretary arrange off-campus meetings. Less than one percent (n=1) of the principals reported that they alone arrange off-campus meetings for themselves. These data are outlined in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6
Who Arranges Off-Campus Meetings

Responses	N	%
District Office	148	88.6
Principal/District Office	11	6.0
Principal	1	0.6
Secretary/Assistant	2	1.2
Principals/Secretary	1	0.6
No Response	4	2.4
Total	167	100.0

Research Question 7

Question 7 asks if there are differences between school accountability ratings and the amount of time per week the school's principal spends in off-campus meetings. An independent-samples t test comparing the mean hours spent in off-campus meetings per week between Exemplary/Recognized and Academically Acceptable/Low-Performing schools found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(164) = 2.308, p < .05$). The mean of the Exemplary/Recognized group was significantly lower ($m = 7.0825, sd = 5.71$) than the mean of the Academically Acceptable/Low-Performing group ($m = 10.03, sd = 10.60$). The results of the independent samples t test are displayed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7
Average Number of Off-Campus Hours Per Week

Rating	N	m	s	t
Exemplary/Recognized	97	7.08	5.71	2.31*
Acceptable/Low Performing	70	10.02	10.60	

* $p < .05$

A second independent samples t test comparing the mean total hours worked was also calculated. In this instance, an independent-samples t test was calculated comparing the mean total hours worked per week for principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools to the mean of the total hours worked per week for principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools. No significant difference was found ($t(164) = .927, p > .05$). The mean of the Exemplary/Recognized group ($m = 59.47, sd = 10.57$) was not significantly different from the mean of the Academically Acceptable/Low Performing group ($m = 60.98, sd = 7.89$). The results of this independent-samples t test are displayed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8
Average Number of Total Hours Worked Per Week

Rating	N	m	s	t
Exemplary/Recognized	97	59.47	10.57	93*
Acceptable/Low Performing	70	60.87	7.89	

* $p < .05$

Principals' Responses (Academically Acceptable/Low Performing Schools)

What follows is a reporting of the open-ended responses to question 3 regarding principals' perceptions of the necessity of their time spent off-campus. Specifically, the responses of principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools are reported because of the statistical difference in the amount of time principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend off-campus compared to principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools. The responses were recorded in an attempt to illuminate these principals' perceptions regarding both the quantity and quality of the time they spend off-campus. The responses are described in the following order: *Always*

Necessary, Necessary, Somewhat Necessary, Rarely Necessary, and Very Rarely Necessary.

Meetings Always Necessary.

A total of 18 percent (n=30) of all principals surveyed responded that time spent off-campus is always necessary. What follows are open ended responses in which principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools described their perceptions of this time.

Two of the survey respondents are principals of intermediate schools and one respondent is the principal of a middle school. The two intermediate principals reported that the meetings are always necessary. One of the intermediate school principals responded that networking with colleagues has been beneficial to her as a new principal. This principal stated:

- “Because I am a beginning principal it is important that I am constantly getting new information from other principals. Something that has really helped me is the Principals Academy, which is for principals with 0 to 3 years of teaching experience. This helps with networking as well.”

The second principal who reported that the off-campus meetings are always necessary explained that the meetings at the beginning of the year are especially needed because,

- “it is important to pull everyone together for training and give all the information out”. This same principal also commented that the vertical and horizontal team meetings are important because they “help keep the lines of communication open”.

- A principal of a high school noted that off-campus meetings are always necessary because district expectations are given.
- A middle school principal described meetings that are called by the district as always necessary, but does not give an explanation as to why.
- Another principal of an elementary school stated that the meetings are always important and attributed their importance to, the district giving information at these meetings the “impacts the school”.
- A high school principal reported that the meetings are always necessary and attributed their effectiveness to information given that is direct benefit to the faculty and staff. This principal stated that, “Most of the time we receive information that we have to share with faculty...we also spent time training or receiving staff development.”
- Another elementary principals in this group also said that off-campus meetings are always necessary, and offered the following explanation:
- The first of these two principals noted that if an off-campus meeting is called it is usually “mandatory” and therefore necessary.
- Another elementary school principal stated that off-campus meetings are always necessary, but does not explain why.
- A middle school principal also noted that off-campus meetings are always necessary, but also offered no further explanation.

- Finally, a high school principal reported that the time spent off-campus is always necessary, but did not attribute this importance to time spent in off-campus meetings, but rather in activities that the principal stated promotes “community building”.

This response implies that the principal valued the importance of being out of the school building, but the activities are in the principal’s view directly related to improving the school by connecting the school with the larger community and not with attending meetings.

Meetings Very Frequently Necessary.

A total of 35.3 (n=59) percent of all principals surveyed responded that time spent off-campus is very frequently necessary. What follows are open ended responses in which principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools described their perceptions of this time.

Within the category of survey respondents who believed that the off-campus meetings are very frequently necessary one elementary school principal gave a fairly detailed response and stated that,

- “much of the time is needed – not always is the case. The Teaching and Learning meetings I find very valuable as expectations and trends in the district are explained and there is time for questions – it is crucial for us to understand – we do not have to agree – but when we return to our campus – we must present a unified front to the teachers and be able to explain the what’s and why’s.”

In this instance, the principal viewed his/her position as one of being a conduit bringing messages from the high ground of central office to the lower ground of district campuses.

- The second elementary principal who believed that the off-campus meetings were very frequently necessary stated that as a new principal receiving “first hand” information from district meetings was critical.
- Another elementary school principal responded that the off-campus meetings were very frequently necessary, but offers no explanation.
- Another elementary principal noted that that the off-campus meetings are very frequently necessary and attributed their importance to “district level staff meetings and principal meetings.”

This principal offered no elaboration on what information is shared at these meetings, however the response suggests a value placed on meetings in which the district is the convener and where principals are especially invited to attend.

- While the next elementary school principal in this group stated that the off-campus meetings are very frequently necessary, this principal offered a different view, noting that while face-to-face meetings are necessary much of the information given at district meetings could be “shared via memo” rather than in-person.
- Of the middle school principals, one stated that the meetings are very frequently necessary because “getting information from central office” helps principals do their jobs better.

- Another middle school principal stated that the off-site meetings are very frequently necessary because, “meetings for communication and information are a must.”
- A third middle school principal also noted that the off-campus meetings are very frequently necessary because of the volume of information principals receive and therefore he finds value in the meetings because they allow for principals to network and that “communication is best done in person.”

The principals’ responses below reflect the views of 19.2 percent of principals in the study who believe that networking and information sharing among colleagues is the most effective use of their time spent off-campus.

- A middle school principal in this group had a similar response regarding the necessity of meeting in person for to get information from the district and to collaborate with other principals. This principal noted that, “there are many things that need to be communicated in person such as policies, professional development, and building principals need to network with each other.”
- Another principal shared the same view on the importance of networking in his assessment of meetings that offer value. This is a high school principal who attributed the value of the meetings to the career-building opportunities that networking with colleagues off-campus gives and notes that when he attends these meetings, they provide “opportunities to interact with colleagues, [and] sound ideas off each other. Although what we talk about could be shared through

other means of communication like email, I am often too busy to read and respond.”

- Another principal stated that “when we meet as a feeder, we visit other campuses and get to see how other schools classroom teachers are impacting students. When we meet with the superintendent we usually have a learning piece that is planned out to get us to think about current issues facing our students or schools. We also get to share with other principals to see out they are overcoming challenges.”

This principal attributed an effective meeting as one in which information is differentiated:

- She describes her preference for meeting with principals within the same grade levels and explains that meetings topics specifically geared to high school principals are more “immediately relevant.”
- Six additional high school principals state that the meetings are very frequently necessary but offer no explanation.

Meetings Occasionally Necessary.

A total of 41.3 percent (n=69) of all principals surveyed responded that time spent off-campus is occasionally necessary. What follows are open ended responses in which principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools described their perceptions of this time.

One elementary principal who held the opinion that off-campus meetings are only occasionally necessary states:

- “because of our large population, I feel like I am met to death, but my job is to be present and on-site, so I send my AP or conference call as much as possible”.
- Another principal, while offering a less negative description, nonetheless finds the meetings only occasionally necessary because, in this principal’s view the meetings, “are sometimes more political/top-down. This principal also noted that these meetings “could be done through informative e-mails instead.”

Once again, the message is clear: technology is not being used as effectively as it might be in principal communications. Additionally, the political, hierarchal nature of principal meetings is also thought to be problematic.

- An elementary school principal said that the meetings are only occasionally necessary because, “some of the meetings are for the sake of meeting”.
- The principal of another elementary school also stated that the off-campus meetings are only occasionally necessary and that she only responds to those meetings that are in her professional view necessary. Confirming the notion that principal meetings are largely top-down in nature, this principal stated that “I rarely accept meetings that I don’t feel are necessary unless they are mandated by my superiors.”

A third elementary school principal shared the view of other principals who said that they value the opportunity to network with peers during off-campus meetings.

- This principal noted that while the meetings are only occasionally necessary, the ones that are beneficial are meetings in which principals can “meet with

other principals and establish relationships with others that can help you become better.”

- Another elementary school principal stated the belief that the off-campus meetings are occasionally necessary, because on the one hand “it seems like many of my meetings are frivolous and not well planned” this principal, however, said that the principals meetings are important and the he enjoyed working with other principals, and that when they are allowed to work together to address similar issues and common goals, there is more benefit than when external parties plan meetings that give little attention to what schools actually need.
- A middle school principal noted that the meetings are occasionally necessary and said that while the meetings are “very informative,” he shared the view of 32.3 percent of principals in the study that the housekeeping information shared in meetings could be communicated via email.
- A high school principal noted that the meetings are occasionally necessary, but did not elaborate.
- Likewise an elementary principal states that the off-campus meetings are occasionally necessary, but did not explain why.

On the other hand, three other principals of a high school, junior high, and elementary school respectively, stated that the off-campus meetings are occasionally necessary and give fairly detailed responses as to why although the responses vary:

- The high school principal stated that central office meetings at times are effective in conveying necessary information that principals need, and acknowledges the necessity of some “face to face” interaction with central office.
- The junior high school principal does not place much value on the importance of off-campus meetings and stated that, “I would much rather be on my campus with my teachers and students.”
- Finally, the elementary school principal noted that on occasion the meetings are effective when crucial district updates are given and also when the meetings have “people trying to help the school” and involve “professional development.”

Within this category of principals who viewed off-campus meetings to be occasionally necessary, three middle school principals gave reasons that underscore the general feeling among principals that to be effective, meetings must be tailored to the needs of the campus.

- The first principal in this group concedes that while the information given at meetings may be important, the timing of the meetings is sometimes an issue, and that “sometimes, the information, materials, resources are not in line or are not relevant to the current needs of the school campus.” This individual, like others earlier, appears to suggest that one-size-fits-all meetings are less than effective.
- The next principal also noted that some meetings do require the principal’s presence because “sometimes there is important info needed to be delivered face-to-face, whether it’s regarding a new best practice or promotion requirements. Other stuff is ridiculous.”

In this instance, the principal did not elaborate on what was meant by “ridiculous”, although it could be inferred that the principal was describing information that could have been relayed via other means than in person (e.g., email). This principal also seemed to suggest that district should use more discretion in determining what information is shared at meetings so that time is not wasted requiring principals to physically attend meetings in which the information does not necessarily need to be relayed in person.

- The final principal in this group states that the meetings are occasionally necessary, but did not offer an explanation for this response.

The following are responses of eight high school principals who gave a variety of reasons why they believe that the meetings they are required to attend are occasionally important:

- One of the principals acknowledged the importance of a shared vision and common direction for district leaders and stated that, “It is important to meet with district leadership to ensure everyone is on the same page.”
- Another high school principal said that meetings which allow for “discussing important issues [and] sharing ideas” were the most beneficial.
- The next high school principal said that while some of the meetings are necessary, he is away from the school more than he would like to be.
- The final principal in this group responded that while the meetings are occasionally necessary, meetings that “interfere [sic] with getting paperwork done to meet deadlines” are particularly troublesome.

While this principal gave a pejorative connection to the meetings, the next principal also stated that off-campus meetings are only occasionally necessary, but those that are useful are specifically related to his campus.

- This principal reported that of the occasionally necessary meetings, the ones that help principals “stay updated on what is going on in the district” are the most beneficial.
- The next principal described some meetings as “sit and gets...that would be more effective as webinars.” Clearly, presentations that are nothing more the passing of information could be communicated in other more effective ways, in this principal’s opinion.
- Another principal answered, “I would rather spend time on campus taking care of the needs of my students and my teachers.”

For this respondent, being in his/her own school building with the people who are her/his primary responsibility is more important than any time spent away from the campus. This principal, while understanding his/her first priority is being on campus, still conceded that “important information is given at many of the meetings that I attend. It is very important to know the information that is given, especially at the district principal's meetings.”

Meetings Rarely Necessary.

Only 1.8 percent (n=3) of all principals surveyed responded that time spent off-campus is rarely necessary. What follows are open ended responses in which principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools described their perceptions of this time.

- One high school principal noted that the meetings are rarely necessary because they focus primarily on issues related to AYP and TAKS.
- The next principal of a middle school noted that most of the meetings are “sit and get” sessions.

Meetings Very Rarely Necessary.

Only 3 percent (n=5) of all principals surveyed responded that time spent off-campus is very rarely necessary. What follows are open ended responses in which principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools described their perceptions of this time.

The following principals’ responses suggest a palpable frustration with meetings they perceive offer no value to their development as effective school leaders.

- One middle school principal in this group described meetings that are rarely necessary as “sit and get” sessions, implying frustration that principals are unable to share or interact during these sessions.
- The next middle school principal stated that the meetings are very rarely necessary because the meetings involve disseminating “information that could have been distributed by other means” or is “a repeat of information from the past.”
- A third middle school principal reported that the off-campus meetings are very rarely necessary, but offers no elaboration.

- One high school principal shared the view that being called out of the building to attend a meeting in which the information “can be sent via email.” is a waste of time.

Principal responses to the effectiveness of off-campus meetings varied greatly. Because the data also reveals that principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend more time off-campus, one might conclude that the principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools needed less intervention and support from the district and are were therefore not required to attend as many meetings. Supposing this might be the case, this researcher examined the open-ended responses of principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools to determine whether (1) they believed that the time spent in off-campus meetings is productive, and (2) if their examples of productive meetings were consistent with research on effective school leadership. The the principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools attributed varying degrees of importance of time spent off-campus, with some believing that leaving campus to attend district meetings is always necessary, and others believing that district level meetings include information that could be given via email. While their views on the value of the necessity of these meetings ranges from very frequently necessary to very rarely necessary, the principals of both Acceptable/Low Performing and Exemplary/Recognized schools generally agree that the meetings that are the most valuable are ones in which principals are able to network and share ideas with one another.

Summary

This mixed-method study was conducted with the purpose of understanding, from principals’ perspectives, whether the amount of time they spend off-campus is effective.

The study also attempted to reveal whether the activities principals engage in while off-campus are reflected in literature and study on the characteristics of effective principal leadership. One of the most interesting findings of this study was the discovery of a significant difference in the amount of time on average principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend off-campus. Further examination found that principals described professional development and networking/information sharing with other principals as two of the most effective uses of their time spent off-campus. Furthermore, the principals' descriptions of the effective use of their time is reflected in the literature on what principals need to be effective school leaders (Anderson et al., 2010; Bottoms, 2009; Brookover & Lezotte, 1982; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). Moreover, meetings in which routine housekeeping items and meetings that are non-differentiated were the top reasons principals gave as examples of the most ineffective use of their time spent off-campus. An analysis of open-ended responses to these questions showed specific examples principals give of attending meetings that either aligned or did not align with research on developing school leaders. Responses to question 6 of *The Principal Survey* revealed that most of the off-campus meetings principals attended were arranged at the district level.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Not surprisingly, principals of the Acceptable/Low Performing schools in this study spent on average, more time off-campus than principals of schools with higher accountability ratings. Although the time spent off-campus differed between principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools and principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools, there was no statistical difference in the total amount of hours per week principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools worked compared to principals of Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools. Likewise, according to the open-ended responses, there were principals of schools within both categories of accountability ratings who responded that the off-campus meetings they attend were very necessary. Likewise, there were principals in both categories found off-campus meetings to be very *rarely* necessary. Within both groups there were principals who believed that the meetings they were required to attend added value to their growth as school leaders, while other principals within both groups expressed the desire to spend more time on campus noting that the time spent away from their buildings was hardly ever a necessity.

What did emerge from an examination of responses from all principals in the study were common themes that described the types of meetings principals found to be effective and the types of meetings principals found to be ineffective. In fact principals of both Academically Acceptable/Low Performing and Exemplary/Recognized schools similarly described their perceptions of effective versus ineffective meetings. Notably, the themes that emerged from their responses align with literature on the effective characteristics of principal leadership and professional development for adult learners.

Three key areas related to effective principal leadership resulted from this study. The first area is a description of the importance of the characteristics principals need to be effective leaders as found in a review of related literature. The second area describes the types of district-level professional development principals need to acquire these characteristics, also discovered in recent literature.

Focus 1: The importance and characteristics of effective school leaders

The literature review in this study as well as the sentiments expressed by those principals surveyed, indicated the importance of professional experiences that increase a principal's capacity to effectively lead schools. In the six-year study, *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, the researchers identified and articulated how instructional leadership can improve teaching and learning. This qualitative study looked at the effect of school leadership in high and moderately performing schools through qualitative and quantitative analyses. The qualitative analysis vis-à-vis case studies was coupled with evidence from quantitative studies of effective school leadership. The findings suggest that variations in school leadership can attribute to a 5 to 7 percent difference in student learning from one school to another (Anderson et al., 2010).

Given the effect that principals have on student learning, an examination of the characteristics of effective principal leadership is critical. One of the most comprehensive studies on principal leadership is a 30-year meta-analysis of those principal leadership characteristics that have the greatest affect-size. These characteristics depict an effective principal as one who is able to develop a culture of cooperation among all school stakeholders, provide resources for teaching and learning,

understand and contribute to the development of current curriculum and instruction processes, maintain order within the school while attending to student discipline, set clear goals that are aligned to the school's mission, involve teachers in the decision-making process, and assess teacher performance in alignment with these goals and celebrate accomplishments toward shared goals, engage the school community by maintaining visibility on campus and communicating clearly with teachers and students, lead the school change and professional development processes and monitor both to determine their impact on student learning, while recognizing the hidden issues that would hinder any of the above activities from occurring (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003).

Principals who are required to leave their campuses only to attend meetings that offer little impact on their growth as school leaders cannot attain this wide-ranging list of characteristics. Furthermore, to effectively practice, refine and improve the characteristics of effective school leadership, principals must be allowed to spend adequate time on campus as these characteristics are directly related to engaging with the school community.

Focus 2: Professional development for effective school leadership

A comprehensive study by the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) found that of those principals who reported having no professional development in 2007-2008, 20 percent left the profession the following year. Supporting and developing effective school leaders involves districts providing professional development experiences that require paying special attention to the changing role of the principal, providing supportive workplace conditions, and providing structured support, such as mentoring for principals. The content of district level meetings should include

professional development in financial and human resource management, community engagement, and action planning aligning curriculum and instructional goals and activities based on accurate data-analysis. However, this development must be based on the individual needs of schools (Fuller & Young, 2009). Therefore a one-size-fits-all” approach as described by as effective by 16.2 percent of the principals in this study, must be restructured to provide differentiated meetings based on principals’ needs.

The principals’ responses, as well as recent literature also suggest that to develop the characteristics of effective school leadership, principals need opportunities to build their sense of self-efficacy by capitalizing on the knowledge and experiences they bring to the meetings (Anderson et al., 2010). The sense of self-efficacy stems from mastery experiences in which a person believes that he or she has the knowledge and abilities to be successful (Bandura, 1998). This includes giving principals opportunities to work on problems relevant to their jobs through mentorship and collaboration with their peers (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009).

Finally, the conventions of adult learning theory and their practical applications provide the framework for how effective principal development can be structured (Knowles, et al., 2005). This framework begins with understanding the theory of andragogy which asserts that adults need to know why they are learning something; adult learners are self-directed; adult learners bring their own experience; adult learning is oriented toward problem-solving; and adults are motivated to learn. As the next section details, results of the study suggest that principals desire to engage in meeting activities that enhance their professional development, promote their sense of self-efficacy and engage them in ways that are central to the principles of adult learning theory.

Findings

One of most significant findings of this study revealed that of those surveyed, principals of Acceptable/Low-Performing schools spend more time attending off-campus meetings compared to principals of Exemplary/Acceptable schools. In addition, two of the most prevalent themes discovered from the open-ended responses to *The Principal Survey* are that principals believe that the most effective off-campus meetings focus on their professional development as school leaders while the most ineffective meetings are those that focus on non-instructional related information that could be sent via email.

Specifically, 51 percent of principals surveyed reported that professional development is the most effective use of their time spent off-campus. This response is consistent with literature which states that to adequately support principals, districts must provide professional development experiences that are specifically aligned to the current responsibilities of the principal and give principals the opportunity to learn from each other (Fuller & Young, 2009) and develop shared goals with colleagues in an attempt to solve real-world problems (Richardson, 2000; Sparks, 2002; Sparks & Hirsch, 2000). This research is also consistent with the views of the second highest description of effective meetings in this study, which is Networking/Information Sharing at 19.1 percent of principals surveyed.

In taking a closer look at the responses of principals who value the importance of off-campus meetings, 18 percent believed off-campus meetings were always necessary and 35.3 percent believed that they are very frequently necessary. One middle school principal noted that, “when we meet as a feeder, we visit other campuses and get to see how other school classroom teachers are impacting students. When we meet with the

superintendent, we usually have a learning piece that is planned out to get us to think about current issues facing our student or schools. We also get to share with other principals to see how they are overcoming challenges”.

Another principal of an intermediate school in the Academically Acceptable/Low Performing category stated, “because I am a beginning principal it is important that I am constantly getting new information from other principals”. This principal also noted that the district’s academy for principals with 0 to 3 years experience was helpful.

Specialized professional development tailored to new principals is critical because 50 percent of principals leave within the first three years (Fuller & Young, 2009). A middle school principal of an Academically Acceptable/Low Performing middle school who also found the meetings very frequently necessary stated, “the teaching and learning meetings I find very valuable as expectations and trends in the district are explained and there is time for questions”. A principal of a high school who noted that the meetings were very frequently necessary described them as a time to get information at the district meetings because it is important to “communicate directives and philosophy directly with staff.”

Of those principals who stated that the meetings are only occasionally, rarely or very rarely necessary, one middle school principal described ineffective meetings as those that are “frivolous and not well planned”. However, the principal also stated that, “I enjoy having the opportunity to work with other colleagues”, as an effective use of his time. Another principal of a middle school who noted that the meetings were only occasionally necessary stated, “the timing of giving out information is important. Sometimes the information, materials, resources are not in line or not relevant to the current needs of the school campus”. This same principal described an effective use of

off-campus time as, “time spent with mentor, seeing him in action and telling him about my concerns and listening to his suggestions to move the campus forward”. This example is consistent with the literature, which describes mentoring as effective in developing the characteristics of effective principal leadership (Fuller & Young, 2009; NAESP, 2003). Another high school principal noted that the meetings are occasionally necessary for “compliance because of AYP and TAKS rating status”. This same principal describes the importance of differentiated meetings where “the agenda is focused directly towards needs and concerns of the campus”.

A small percentage of principals participating in *The Principal Survey* stated that time spent off-campus is rarely or very rarely necessary. Only 1.8 percent of the principals surveyed noted that time spent off-campus is very rarely necessary and only 3 percent of the principals surveyed responded that the time spent off-campus is rarely necessary. What the data suggest however is that principals have very clear expectations for the use of their time and want the time spent off-campus focused on activities that promote their professional development as described by 51 percent (n=85) of the principals. In looking at the responses of principals from Acceptable/Low Performing schools, one high school principal noted that an effective use of time spent off-campus is when the principal is able to, “mesh theoretical with practical”. Another principal of an elementary school noted that the most effective time spent off-campus includes, “attending professional development on data driven decision making”.

Again, principals communicated clear views about the importance of being able to network with other principals, share information, as well as learn from one another as 19.2 percent (n=32) of principals surveyed stated this sharing ideas and learning from

their colleagues was the most effective use of their time spent off-campus. One high school principal noted that effective time spent off-campus involved, “attending meetings to discuss what works with other principals within the region”. Another principal of a middle school detailed a specific account when, “principals were in a meeting off-campus. We read an article on drop outs and we had several activities to discuss some ways we can prevent students from dropping out. Although it is a high school problem, there were things we learned that middle schools and elementary schools can do better”.

While engaging in professional development and networking with colleagues are the top reasons principals want spend time off-campus, the data show that some principals believed that receiving policy updates has a place in principal meetings as 14.4 percent (n=24) of the principals surveyed noted that this was the most effective use of their time spent off-campus; however, it seems likely that the 32.3 percent (n=34) of principals who believe having principals meet to discuss certain items that could be given via email might believe that policy updates might be shared more effectively if the district sent an email containing the new information. Interestingly, 7.2 percent (n=12) of principals noted that the most effective use of their time is not spent in district meetings, but rather in activities that build relationships with the community. This particular response is supported by research that suggests effective principals must be able to effectively engage the community to achieve the goals of the school (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003).

In addition to noting the ineffectiveness of meetings in which the information could be relayed via email, 16.2 percent (n=27) of the principals in the study described

meetings where the same information is given irrespective of different school levels, needs, levels of knowledge or experience as particularly problematic.

The effective application of adult learning involves principals understanding the importance of what they are being asked to learn (Knowles, et al., 2005). The results of *The Principal Survey* suggest that respondents were not involved in the process of determining what they should learn. Principals surveyed noted that the overwhelming majority of off-campus meetings they were required to attend were arranged by district-level administrators. In fact, 89 percent (n=149) of principals reported that the central office arranges the meetings that they were required to attend. These mandatory meetings were rarely planned in collaboration with the principal in that only 7 percent (n=11) of principals surveyed stated that they arrange meetings in conjunction with the district-level central office. One percent (n=2) of the principals stated that the secretary or assistant arranged off-campus meetings, while less than 1 percent state the principal and secretary arrange off-campus meetings. Moreover, less than one percent (n=1) of the principals reported that they arranged off-campus meetings themselves.

The final question in this study asked if there is a difference between a school's accountability rating and the amount of time per week the school's principal spends in off-campus meetings. An independent-samples *t* test comparing the mean hours spent in off-campus meetings per week between Exemplary/Recognized and Academically Acceptable/Low-Performing schools found that principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spend on average 2.30 more hours off-campus per week than principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools.

Conclusion

The principal is a key factor in improving schools (Anderson, et al., 2010). To lead effectively, principals need extraordinary human management, safety management and curriculum management skills. They must be able to establish a clear mission and vision, articulate this mission and vision with a multitude of stakeholders, many with conflicting interests, and gain consensus for the direction of the school (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2005). Today, district-level pressures and expectations for principal performance are high. The results of this study show that principals spend a significant portion of this time responding to district demands. These demands are most notably applied when principals are called away from their schools to attend meetings arranged at the district level. District-level personnel overwhelmingly coordinate these meetings with little to no input from the principals themselves. When the district calls principals away from their buildings to attend meetings, it is imperative that these meetings are necessary and focus on areas that help them to effectively lead their schools and increase student achievement. The findings of this study suggest however that principals do not consistently perceive these meetings as being effective. In fact, principals were clear about the types of meetings that they believed promoted and impeded their professional growth. The most ineffective meetings were those in which activities described as “housekeeping” not only wasted principals’ time in their view, but also could have been more effectively shared via email. The meetings that were reported by most principals as effective were those in which principals engaged in professional development activities and when principals were able to network and share ideas with their colleagues.

Likewise, the review of the literature paints a picture of the various skills and abilities principals must have to effectively lead schools. The principal has to maintain productive relationships with all school stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents and community members while being an instructional leader. To attend to these responsibilities, the principal must have the time to develop these characteristics and then given the time to actually be on campus to put them to use to benefit the school community. However, the findings of this study reveal that principals of Acceptable/Low Performing schools spent, on average, more time in off-campus meetings than principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools. A closer examination of whether principals believed that this time spent off-campus was effective found that those who found the time off-campus to be necessary attributed it to receiving district-level information that was differentiated and directly related to their schools and their specific roles as principals (e.g., high school principalship). Principals also noted the importance of having the opportunity to network with other principals and share ideas.

There is a constant flow of information coming to districts. This information is based on the very real task of increasing student achievement. As states mandate yearly accountability tests to measure student learning and Adequate Yearly Progress per NCLB, there is a tendency for districts to call principals to mandatory meetings to keep up with the flow of information. In this high stakes environment, every issue seems critical and therefore districts want to call principals to off-campus meetings to ensure that they receive timely updates. However the responses to The Principal Survey, the data, both quantitative and qualitative, suggest that not all principals perceive the meetings they are required to attend as important or timely. In addition, principals of

Academically Acceptable/Low Performing schools share beliefs about the types of meetings that are necessary for leadership development that are consistent with research.

The results of this study highlight the need for practical changes that districts can implement to meet the needs of their principals. First, a small percent of principals participating in *The Principal Survey* believe that time spent off-campus is rarely or very rarely necessary. Only 1.8 percent of the principals surveyed believe that time spent off-campus is very rarely necessary and only 3 percent of the principals surveyed believe that the time spent off-campus is rarely necessary. What the data suggest however is that principals have very clear expectations for the use of their time and want the time spent off-campus focused on activities that promote their professional development as described by 51 percent (n=85) of the principals. Second, the data suggest that principals also want opportunities to network with other principals, share information as well as learn from them as 19.2 percent (n=32) of principals surveyed stated this was the most effective use of their time spent off-campus. The data suggest that principals also believe that receiving policy updates is important, but not as important as receiving professional development or networking with colleagues as 14.4 percent (n=24) of the principals surveyed noted that networking with other principals was the most effective use of their time spent off-campus. Interestingly, 7.2 percent (n=12) of principals note that the most effective use of their time is not spent in district meetings, but rather in activities that build relationships with the community. Again, this particular response is supported by research that suggests effective principals have to be able to effectively engage the community in achieving the goals of the school (Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003).

The results of this study show a relationship between the accountability ratings of schools and the amount of time principals spend off-campus. In reviewing the responses of some of the principals whose schools are in the Academically Acceptable/Low Performing category, there is a general sense that they are “under the thumb” of district administrators who call meetings just for the sake of calling them. There is also a feeling that districts are not taking advantage of the technology that is available to relay information via email and even engage principals in meetings that use teleconferencing and webinars. The principals’ responses suggest that although they are required to spend more time in “face to face” meetings, this time does not guarantee that they are able to network and share ideas with one another. Moreover, meetings that require a principal’s presence do not guarantee that principals are engaged in the proceedings. Some principals in the survey noted that and are at times merely passive participants for whom information is relayed from someone who is not familiar with the individual school’s circumstances or needs. Furthermore, these ineffective meetings are not differentiated and do not consider principals’ years of experience or school level. Unfortunately, these meetings leave principals feeling that their time has been wasted. Valuable time interacting with teachers, students, parents and the community is lost and cannot be regained. These ineffective meetings are the antithesis of effective adult learning, which underscore the adult learner as being self-motivated and self-directed. Adult learners, and in this case principals, are mature individuals who bring knowledge and experiences that should be capitalized upon (Sparks, 2002). Principals want to improve their schools. They are already motivated to learn. When principals are forced to attend meetings in which they have little to no input in the content, presentation or outcomes, there is little

chance that these experiences will develop principals who display the characteristics of effective school leadership.

Implications for Practice

Principals spend a lot of time working. Over half the principals in this study reported (52.1 percent) working between 51-60 hours per week. Another 19.8 percent reported working between 61-70 hours per week. In addition, when principals are required to be off-campus, they spend most of this time attending meetings arranged by district-level staff. While some principals noted that the time spent off-campus was always necessary and attribute this to the ability to receive important district updates and network with colleagues. Other principals responded that the time spent off-campus was very rarely necessary and felt that much of the information given at the district meetings could be relayed remotely (e.g., email), so that they do not have to be called away from their buildings.

To address the concerns expressed by principals in this study, the recommends the following district level changes in how principal meetings are planned and facilitated. First, districts must examine the amount of time principals are being asked to leave their buildings. While only small percentages of the principals surveyed in this study believed that off-campus meetings were rarely necessary (1.8 percent) or very rarely necessary (3.0 percent), 41.3 percent found them to be occasionally necessary. The necessity of disseminating information cannot outweigh the priority of principals being visible, engaged and informed leaders on their campuses (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982), especially when a plurality of principals in the study expressed the view that the meetings they are required to attend meetings are only occasionally necessary. Therefore, districts should

conduct an independent assessment of the amount of time principals; especially those of moderate to low performing schools spend attending off-campus meetings. Off-campus meetings in which information is not directly related to professional development in school leadership should be restructured. Email, conference calls, video-conferencing and other technology can be used to disseminate information not directly related to principals' professional development. There is an array of technology including Web-X and Skype that districts can use to share policy updates and general "housekeeping" items without requiring principals to convene at the district office.

Secondly, the content of principal meetings should be examined to ensure that it promotes the characteristics of effective school leadership (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009; Fuller & Young, 2009; Marzano, McNulty & Waters, 2003; NAESP, 2003). Principals in this study overwhelmingly indicate (51 percent) that professional development is an effective use of their time. Therefore, districts have an opportunity to capitalize on principals' intrinsic desire for professional growth (Knowles, et al., 2005). This requires an assessment of meeting agendas, goals and their related activities to determine to what degree they help the principal in "diagnosing his or her own school's particular needs, and given the resources and talents available, deciding how to meet them" (DeArmond et al., 2003, p. 1).

Thirdly, districts should ensure that the structure of principal meetings reflects the philosophy of meaningful adult learning. The principals in this study were not averse to attending meetings. They did however; express clear views on what they deemed to be meetings that were beneficial to them. Principals' learning experiences must include the autonomy to determine what professional development experiences they attend, as well

as the opportunity to share the wealth of experiences they bring in order to collaborate and problem-solve with one another (Knowles, et al., 2005). When principals are active participants in the development of their own learning and are given opportunities to share the knowledge and expertise they bring with their peers, more principals will see the value of these meetings and how the content and related activities apply to their responsibilities as school leaders in an authentic way. Just as students should not have to endure poor pedagogy, school leaders should not be expected to attend meetings in which there is no differentiation and they are passive participants. Instead, principals should have opportunities to choose the types of professional development they receive based upon research, school and district goals. Their professional development should include meetings that give them options to work in different groupings based on campus need, school level, feeder pattern, knowledge level and experience. For example, principals wanting to explore new strategies to support English Language Learners (ELL) could come together to share common challenges, and best practices as well as receive specialized training from the district's ELL specialist.

These aforementioned areas are interconnected. If applied, the researcher believes they will not only improve principals' perceptions about the meetings they are required to attend, but will also equip them with the knowledge, skills and support system to effectively lead their schools.

Implications for Future Study

During this study, areas were discovered where future research might assist districts in developing meetings that all principals view as effective. First, additional study can be used to determine why a larger percentage of principals of Academically

Acceptable/Low Performing schools perceived the meetings they attended as less necessary than principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools. Specifically, of the principals of the Acceptable/Low Performing schools, 47.8 percent described the time they spend off-campus as either Always/Very Frequently/Frequently necessary. The remaining 52.2 percent of principals of the Acceptable/Low Performing schools described the time they spend off-campus as Occasionally/Rarely/Very Rarely necessary. Of the principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools, 57.7 percent of the principals described the time they spend off-campus as either Always/Very Frequently/Frequently necessary. The remaining 42.3 percent of principals of Exemplary/Recognized schools described the time spent off-campus as either Occasionally/Rarely/Very Rarely necessary.

Finally, the current study was limited to an examination of principal perceptions of the meetings they attend by accountability rating. The instrument used to gather data for the survey contained additional items that would be beneficial for further examination. Additional data included in *The Principal Survey* are the individual school districts for each respondent as well as the years the number of years the principal has been in the position. Because of the high turnover of principals (Fuller & Young, 2010), an examination of principal perceptions on the necessity and effectiveness of principals with 0-3 years experience would help districts determine whether new principals view the meetings they attend as supporting their development as effective school leaders. In addition, if future study disaggregates *The Principal Survey* data by school district, district leaders can use the information to implement specific improvements.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, S., Liethwood, K., Louis, K., & Wahlstrom, K (2010). "Learning from leadership: investigating the links to improved student learning". St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Akey, T.M., Quint, J.C., Rappaport, S., Willner, C.J. (2007). "Instructional leadership, teaching quality, and student achievement: suggestive evidence from three urban school districts." Retrieved April 9, 2011 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED499788.pdf>
- Aud, S., Hussar, W., Planty, M., Snyder, T., Bianco, K., Fox, M., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., Drake, L. (2010). The condition of education 2010 (NCES 2010-028). Retrieved April 24, 2011 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/pdf/38_2010.pdf
- Baker, W.O, Campbell, A., Crosby, E.A., Foster, C.A., Francis, N.C., Gardner, D.P., Giamatti, A.B., Gordon, S., Haderlein, R.V., Holton, G., Kirk, A.Y., Larsen, Y.W., Marston, M.S., Quie, A.H., Sanchez, F.D., Seaborg, G.T., Sommer, J., Wallace, R. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Retrieved April 24, 2011 from <http://teachertenure.procon.org/sourcefiles/a-nation-at-risk-tenure-april-1983.pdf>
- Bandura, A. (1998). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998).

- Battle, D., Gruber, K. (2010). Principal attrition and mobility: results from the 2008-09 principal follow-up survey. Retrieved August 30, 2010 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010337.pdf>.
- Bottoms, G. (2009). The district leadership challenge: empowering principals to improve teaching and learning. Retrieved November 9, 2010 from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/EducationLeadership/Documents/District-Leadership-Challenge-Empowering-Principals.pdf>
- Brethower, D. & Smalley, K. (1998). *Performance-based instruction: linking training to business results*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookover, W.B., & Lezotte, L. (1982). *Creating effective schools*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publication.
- Casner-Lotto, J. & Barrington, L. (2006). Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce. Retrieved from September 14, 2010 from http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (1999). *Shaping school culture*. San Francisco: Josey Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Davis, S., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2009). *School leadership study: Developing successful principals*. New York: The Wallace Foundation.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (Eds.) (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world*. San Francisco: Josey Bass.

DeArmond, M., Gundlach, L., Portin, B. & Schneider, P. (2003). Making sense of leading schools: a study of the school principalship. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/WF/Knowledge%20Center/Attachments/PDF/MakingSense_Portin.pdf

Dufour, R. (Ed.). (2005). *On common ground: the power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Fleischman, H.L., Hopstock, P.J., Pelczar, M.P & Shelley, B.E. (2010). Highlights from PISA 2009: performance of U.S. 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science literacy in an international context. Retrieved April 8, 2011 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011004.pdf>

Fuller, E. & Young, M.D. (2009). *Tenure and retention of newly hired principals in Texas*. Retrieved November 9, 2010 from http://www.ucea.org/storage/principal/IB%201_Principal%20Tenure%20and%20Retention%20in%20Texas%20of%20Newly%20Hired%20Principals_10_8_09.pdf

Gessner, R. (ed.) (1956). *The democratic man: selected writings of Eduard C. Lindeman*. Boston: Beacon.

- Harvard Graduate School of Education (4 Mar. 2009). The principals' center. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/programs/principals-center/index.html
- Hildebrand, D.L. (2008). *John Dewey: a beginner's guide*. Chino Valley, AZ; One World Press.
- Kirst, M.W. & Venezia, A. (2004). *From high school to college: improving opportunities for success in postsecondary education*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.
- Knowles, M.S., Elwood, H.F, Swanson, R.A (2005). *The adult learner: the definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier.
- Kroth, M. & Taylor, B. (2009). A single conversation with a wise man is better than ten years of study: a model for testing methodologies for pedagogy or andragogy. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ854895.pdf>
- Lindeman, E. C. (1926). *The meaning of adult education*. New York: New Republic.
- MacNeil, .A.J. & Kajs, L.T. (1997, August). Obstacles and frustrations restricting principal leadership. Paper presented at the Fifty-first Annual Conference of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration. Vail, CO.
- Mahoney, C. (1997). Common qualitative methods. In J. Frechtling, L. Sharp & Westat, Eds., *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations*. Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation.
- Marzano, R.J. (2005). *School leadership that works: from research to results*. Alexandria , VA : Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R.J, McNulty, B., & Waters, T. (2003). *Balanced leadership: what 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. City,: McREL.

McGrath, Valerie (2009). Reviewing the evidence on how adult students learn: an examination of Knowles' model of andragogy. *Adult Learner: The Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 99-110.

National Association for Elementary School Principals (2003). Making the case for principal mentoring. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/pln/prncpalmntrg.pdf>

Onwuegbuzie, A.J., Collins, K. (2009). A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. Huntsville, TX: Sam Houston State University.

Principal quality practice guideline: promoting successful school leadership in Alberta (2009). Retrieved April 24, 2011 from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/949129/principal-quality-practice-guideline-english-12feb09.pdf>

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great american school system: how testing and choice are undermining education*. New York: Basic Books

Richardson, J. (2000). Focus principal development on student learning. Retrieved April 4, 2011 from www.nsd.org/library/publications/results/res9-00rich.cfm

Southern Regional Education Board (2007). *Schools need good leaders now: state progress in creating a learning-centered school leadership system*. Retrieved May 10, 2010 from

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/EducationLeadership/Pages/schools-need-good-leaders-now.aspx>.

Sparks, D. (2002). *Designing powerful professional development for teachers and principals*. National Staff Development Council. Oxford, OH 2002. p.8-2, 8-3.

Retrieved April 4, 2011 from www.nsdc.org/library/leaders/sparksbook.cfm

Sparks, D. & Hirsh, S. (2000). *Learning to lead, leading to learn*. National Staff Development Council. 2000. Oxford, OH. 5. Retrieved April 4, 2011 from www.nsdc.org/library/leaders/leader_report.cfm

Swanson, R. A. (1991). Ready-aim-frame. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 2 (3), 203–205.

Swanson, R. A., and Arnold, D. E. (1996). The purpose of human resource development is to improve organizational performance. *Debating the future of educating adults in the workplace*. R. W. Rowden (ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 13–19.

Thorndike, E. L. (1928). *Adult Learning*. New York: Macmillan.

Tinsley, H. E. A. & Weiss, D. J. (2000). Interrater reliability and agreement. In H. E. A. Tinsley & S. D. Brown, Eds., *Handbook of Applied Multivariate Statistics and Mathematical Modeling*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

US Department of Education (2001). No child left behind act. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf

US 21st Century Workforce Commission (2000). *A nation of opportunity: building America's 21st century workforce* Retrieved September 14, 2010 from

http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=key_workplace

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*.

Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Wielkiewicz, R.M. (2000). SPSS online guide. Retrieved March 4, 2011 from

<http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/psychology/runyon/spss/ttest.html>

Willis, G.B. (1999). Cognitive interviewing a “how to” guide. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

APPENDIX A



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

March 1, 2011

Ms. Misha Lesley
c/o Dr. Angus MacNeil
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Ms. Lesley:

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "The Impact of Principal Meetings on Principal Professional Development and Instructional Practice" was conducted on November 15, 2010.

At that time, your request for exemption under **category 4** was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review.* Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Enrique Valdez, Jr.".

Enrique Valdez, Jr.
Director, Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **November 1, 2015**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 11130-EX

APPENDIX B

1. Default Section**Graduate Student's Name****Code**

2. Section A: Demographic Information

The Principal's Name

Age

Age (in Years)

Sex

☐

Male

☐

Female

Years as a Principal

Years in Education

Degrees Held

☐

Bachelors

☐

Masters

☐

Doctorate

Management or Principal Certification Year

Institution

Ethnicity

Ethnicity

Major Teaching Field

Extra-curricular activities directed while a teacher

The School's Name

Location

☐

Rural

☐

Suburban

☐

Urban

Number of Teachers**Number of Students****Percentage of Students**

White/Non-Hispanic	<input type="text"/>
Black/Non-Hispanic	<input type="text"/>
Hispanic	<input type="text"/>
Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="text"/>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<input type="text"/>
Non-Resident/International	<input type="text"/>
Other Certified Personnel	<input type="text"/>
Non-certified Personnel	<input type="text"/>

TAKS Rating

- ☐ Exemplary
- ☐ Recognized
- ☐ Acceptable
- ☐ Low Performing

Percentage of Students on free and reduced lunch**Name of School District**

3. Section B

In this section, we are trying to understand how principals use their time and if they think that they are making good use of their time . Specifically, we want to know the following:

On average, how many hours per week do you work as a principal?

On average, what % of those hours are spent off campus?

Do you think the time that you spend off campus is necessary?

☐

Always

☐

Occasionally

☐

Very Rarely

☐

Very Frequently

☐

Rarely

☐

Never

Explain.

Describe the effective use of your time off campus. Give examples.

Describe the ineffective use of your time off campus. Give examples.

Who arranges the off campus meetings that you must attend? Give specific examples.

4. Section C

In this section, we are interested in how principals are evaluated in their job performance.

Does your district utilize the state's recommended appraisal form for principal evaluation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Does your district use a district generated evaluation form?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you feel that the evaluations are fair ?

- ☐ Always ☐ Occasionally ☐ Very Rarely
☐ Very Frequently ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Explain.

Do you feel that evaluations are useful?

- ☐ Always ☐ Occasionally ☐ Very Rarely
☐ Very Frequently ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Explain.

Do the evaluations impact or change your behaviors or practices in your school?

- ☐ Always ☐ Occasionally ☐ Very Rarely
☐ Very Frequently ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Explain.

Do you feel that you have improved as a result of the evaluation appraisal process?

- ☐ Always ☐ Occasionally ☐ Very Rarely
☐ Very Frequently ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Explain.

5. Section D

In this section, we are trying to determine if your district uses a "succession plan" to replace Principals. Specifically:

How many years ahead does your school district office planning, project Principal arrangements or Vacancies?

☐ 1 year

☐ 3 years

☐ 5 years

☐ 2 years

☐ 4 years

When you were hired as a principal, did anyone in central office assist you in setting goals or priorities in order to successfully lead this school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, explain.

In the succession planning, do you think the best time to place a principal in a school is at the beginning of the school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Explain.

6. Section E

In this section, we are trying to determine the role of the Principal in Teacher's Professional Development. Specifically:

How important would you rate teacher professional development as a task for Principals?

☐ Very Important

☐ Moderately Important

☐ Unimportant

☐ Important

☐ Of Little Importance

Explain.

How important is the PDAS in determining your assessment of the developmental needs of your teachers?

☐ Very Important

☐ Moderately Important

☐ Unimportant

☐ Important

☐ Of Little Importance

Explain.