ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS:

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTRIBUTES FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirement for the Degree

Doctorate of Education

By

Lonnie Clint Vick Jr.

May, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To earn a doctorate degree has been a lifelong goal of mine ever since I was a little kid. I have had hit many bumps in the road and have been told many times that I would not be able to reach this level in education, but I stayed with it and kept picking myself up to continue until one day I didn't have to pick myself up again. Now I know why so few are able to finish the degree. The time commitment, stress, and emotional strain that the program puts on all facets of ones life is difficult to overcome. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped me in completing this dissertation, doctoral program, and the journey that it has taken to reach this point. My goal would never have become a reality without the unselfish love, support, guidance, and encouragement that I have received along the way.

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Wayne Emerson for serving on my dissertation committee. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the University of Houston and want to thank the program itself for its beliefs and philosophy. The program they have established is top notch and has established itself as a Tier One research university. As a practitioner I was able to meet the needs of the program and learn real world knowledge and strategies from our fully immersed trip to China to lab practices in the classroom that are easily transferable and applicable back to the public education sector that I work in.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work that I have completed and subsequent degree that is conferred by the University of Houston to my family. Without your love and support, I could not have accomplished this amazing milestone. When I started this program my triplet girls were only two years old, and they will be just turning four when I finally finish. My little girls later in life will not remember their daddy being in this program or the nights I had class and was not even able to see them. I want them to know that with hard work and dedication that they can accomplish anything and everything that they set out to do.

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Abstract

Research by Fields (2002) concerning professional development and new administrators found that the role of assistant principal is one of the least researched and discussed topics in professional journals and books on educational leadership. Barth (1990) reported that there is a shortage of knowledge concerning the skills that are essential to be a successful school leader. The professional development and training of assistant principals is further commented on by Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995), who reported that the nature of the assistant principalship and the skills required to be successful as an assistant principal are oriented much more toward management than toward leadership.

The purpose of this study is to describe and examine the perceptions of assistant principals regarding the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to be an effective leader. The results of this study will add to the research base of the assistant principal and provide useful information that can used to improve the position of the assistant principal which serves as the primary training ground for principal succession. Recent research indicates that the assistant principal position does not provide the appropriate training or preparation for assistant principals to become principals (Fields, 2002; Goodson, 2000; Mertz, 2000). This study is significant because the role of Assistant Principals is changing due to recent legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2001) which has changed the face of public education. Lezotte (2010) stated that an essential component

to the effective school research is the presence of instructional leadership. The significance of the study will be to focus in and determine the knowledge, skills, and attributes not only to be an effective leader but also an instructional leader working to improve student academic performance.

The current study is a section of a larger multi-phase study called the Principal as a Successful Leader Project (Waxman, 2008) that examined the results from interviewed surveys completed by 371 practicing Assistant Principals from a large metropolitan area in the Gulf Coast region. The survey instrument included three main sections. Section 1 included 22 items for administrators' background information and school demographics, section 2 includes 62 Likert-scale items, and section 3 consists of 31 open-ended questions. The cognitive interview technique was used in section 3, and this study focuses on the responses of participants to one of the questions in section 3. The question is labeled section H and asks Assistant Principals' for their perceptions on the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective Assistant Principals'. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics will be reported for all variables. An analysis of variance (Manova) will be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences among the following categories and each other from the surveys: gender, age range, years in education, elementary vs. secondary, and Accountability rating. The findings from this study will be useful in making recommendations to existing and future Assistant Principals and improve professional development and preparation programs for Assistant Principals.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The administrative assistant is often ignored and sometimes maligned. In its

selection of "administrative roles", the Encyclopedia of School Administration and

Supervision (Gorton, Schneider, & Fisher, 1988) does not mention the assistant principal

at all (Marshall, 1992). For many, the assistant principal is the first administrative entry-

level position taken in the realm of education, yet there exists little specified course work

that effectively prepares college students does not take coursework for the job. Instead,

these students are simply relegated to taking classes in principalship or superintendent

programs that offer little individualized preparation for the job an assistant principal.

There is an abundance of research material about the Superintendent and the Principals,

but a dearth in regard to the assistant principal. This might be associated with the fact that

the assistant principalship represents the beginning of a career socialization process.

Hence, principals and superintendents are the outcome of this process (Marshall, 1992).

The preparation of future principals is a vital aspect for maintaining the momentum of

providing viable school leadership. The assistant principal is a necessary and critical

position in the educational organization, and this role is the primary training ground for

the principalship (Madden, 2008). It is also important that assistant principals understand

the requirements of the principalship and complete preparation programs that qualify

them for success in the role. Recent research indicates that the assistant principal position

does not provide the appropriate training or preparation for assistant principals to become

principals (Fields, 2002; Goodson, 2000; Mertz, 2000). The assistant principal wears

many hats and is view as both leader and a manager – namely, a leader of students *and* people, but also a manager of the never ending lists of school tasks awaiting completion. In a relationship in which there can only be one leader (i.e., the head principal), the assistant principal role forces one to be a concurrent manager *and* leader (Hartley, 2009). The managerial duties of the assistant principal have not dissolved; rather, they are perhaps increasing, especially in regard to the higher demand for instructional leadership. As mandated in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, higher accountability standards have changed the face of public education as well as the necessary role of the assistant principal. The challenge for beginning and aspiring assistant principals is not to manage schools effectively (which historically has been the case), but rather to meet the instructional needs of today's students while performing an abundance of managerial duties that have not changed, and will not change because they still have to be performed by somebody (Hartley, 2009). Bloom and Krovetz (2001) identified the shortage of principals as one of the factors that leads to assistant principals being moved into the role of principal before they are fully prepared. Due to this rapid transition, assistant principals generally serve for relatively short periods of time; they are typically assigned to a very narrow range of responsibilities, especially in the areas of discipline or student activities; and they are provided little or no experience in the other realm of leadership, such as curriculum development or budget management (Madden, 2008). This chapter will examine the dilemma of the assistant principal in regard to available the research in the field. Secondly, it will investigate whether assistant principals are prepared for the position, particularly within a growing market of available positions due to principals leaving the field. The chapter will also visit the purpose of the study and its significance,

which is to improve student performance by means of instructional leadership provided by the assistant principal, and to improve the preparation of assistant principals for the role of principal.

Statement of the Problem

In a relationship in which there can only be one leader (i.e., the head principal), the assistant principalship forces the individual to be both manager *and* leader (Hartley, 2009). It is reported that, within the next five years, nearly 60% of school administrators will retire. The assistant principal position is an assessment position through which formal and informal district and professional processes are used to decide who should move into higher levels of school administration (Marshall, 1992). Barth (1990) argues that there is a shortage of knowledge concerning the essential skills necessary to be a successful school leader, especially given the changes in the expectations and responsibilities associated with the current role. There is also, however, a scarcity of salient research that isolates the skills needed by school leaders at the elementary and middle level (Gibbs, Slate, 2003; Liethwood & Riehl, 2003). Simply stated, many assistant principals are not ready to effectively feel the need to be an administrator. This dissonance is due primarily to lack of training at the campus and/or district level, ineffective university training, and the general lack of knowledge in relation to the expectations, knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to effectively fill the position. Consequently, newly-certified school leaders are given credentials to become administrators solely on their performance on coursework, as opposed to an all-inclusive assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be a successful school leader (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). A report by the Institute for Educational

Leadership (2000) also highlights and addresses the issue of principal shortages. The report detailed a survey of superintendents who had filled at least one principal position in the year previous. The superintendents were asked whether there was a surplus, a shortage, or the adequate number of qualified candidates for the principal position that they filled. Fifty percent of the superintendents reported that there was a shortage in qualified candidates for the position that they were trying to fill. The Institute for Educational Leadership suggested that the rush to fill principal vacancies through the promotion of assistant principals is one reason why latter receive little or no experience, preparation, or training that will help them become better school leaders *as* assistant principals. Bloom and Krovetz (2001) address the problem of assistant principals' lack of preparation by asserting that "in these days of principal shortages, we have found that many assistant principals and resource teachers are moving into principalships after serving for relatively short periods of time in these preparatory roles." One problem associated with the position of assistant principal is that it is one of the least researched positions in educational leadership. The paucity in the literature makes it difficult to use sound research data to effectively improve the position of assistant principal much less espouse notions instructional leadership and improved student performance. Research by Fields (2002) concerning professional development and new administrators found that the role of assistant principal is one of the least researched and discussed topics in professional journals and books on educational leadership. The ambiguity of the role allows for the ineffective use of the position, and makes it a particularly difficult role to fulfill. Koru (1993) asserted that "during the time a future principal spends as an assistant principal, he or she is engaged in activities that offer little preparation for the kind of

leadership expected of principals." The professional development and training of assistant principals is further commented on by Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995), who reported that the nature of the assistant principalship, and the skills required to be successful in the role, are oriented much more toward management than leadership. Subsequently, this phenomenon does not promote the developments of visionary leadership in its occupants (Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson, 1995). The present research identifies the problem of a lack of research on the preparation of assistant principals in the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to be not only be effective in the position but learn what is needed for the next position.

Purpose of the Study

Assistant principals do many of the same tasks as principals. A majority of their time is spent dealing with issues of school management, student activities and services, community relations, personnel, and curriculum and instruction. However, assistant principals lack the position, power, and status of the principal, and remain dependent of the principal, who usually delineates their specific tasks and responsibilities (Marshall, 1992). The purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to be an effective assistant principal. The study will look at these three specific constructs as well as whether those at this level are receiving the adequate training needed to become principal. With sound research and data collected from nearly four hundred administrators the study will be able to make recommendations on how the role of assistant principal is changing to meet the needs of the 21st century learner. In addition, these analyses will offer recommendations for assistant principals' improved instructional leader suited for their rapid advancement to school leader.

Research Questions

Previous research indicates that the assistant principalship may not be the most productive ground for shaping future principals (Bloom & Krovertz, 2001; Goodson, 2000). Research has also shown that there is a disconnect between the actual role of the assistant principal with regard to the responsibilities, knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for advancement out of the position. This inquiry is designed to add to the body of literature on the assistant principal; to provide further knowledge that may offer suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the assistant principal position; and to improve the training that leads to effectiveness in the position, but also for future advancement. This study employed a Likert-scale survey administered to approximately four hundred different administrators. For the purposes of this study, three of the survey questions focused on areas dealing with the knowledge, skills, and attributes of assistant principals. More specifically, the survey questions addressed important *knowledge* one should have to be a successful assistant principal, especially the components of knowledge about people, curriculum, law, and fiscal issues. The second construct (i.e., important *skills* you should have to be a successful assistant principal) looked at interpersonal communication, leadership, and management. Lastly, the important *attributes* studied are positive disposition, visionary, ethical values, good communicator, and organizer. The research questions compiled after analyzing the survey are as followed:

1. What is the perceived knowledge needed to be an effective assistant principal?

2. What is the skill set needed to be an effective assistant principal?

3. What are the attributes needed to be an effective assistant principal?

4. What are the underlying constructs in the AP perceptions toward the knowledge,

   Skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership?

5. Is there a statistical significance among the groups: AP years of experience, Gender, and school rating; regarding the needed knowledge, skills, and attributes.

Definition of Terms

Knowledge: Buckingham & Coffman (1999) stated that knowledge can be divided into two categories: factual and experiential. Factual knowledge is based on the ideas or concepts that any person can access. Experiential knowledge is ascertained from firsthand experiences that are learned subjectively. The survey used for this study asked administrators if knowledge of people, curriculum, law, and fiscal was needed for the position.

Skills: Buckingham & Coffman (1999, p.82) reported that skills are competencies that can be transferred from person to person. The survey used for this study looked at the skills needed for assistant principals, such as interpersonal, communication, leadership, and management skills.

Attributes: The survey used for this study looked at the attributes needed for assistant principals as having positive disposition, visionary, ethical values, good communicator, and organizer.

Leadership: According to Covey (2004), "Leadership" is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it themselves. Etzioni (1988) relates that effective leaders work on changing attitudes and behaviors, create high expectations

for others, and providing an atmosphere where others can succeed and excel. Holmes (2001) described leadership as being about persuasion, motivation, and finely judged delegation.

Transformational Leadership: Seyfarth (1999) explained that transformational leadership entails the leader providing the vision, mission, and goals for the organization and then soliciting support from the members of the organization. A transformational leader works to bring all stakeholders together to work for the greater good of the organization.

Instructional Leadership: Chapter 241 of the Texas Education Code (TAC) defines the standards required for principal certification stating the following about instructional leadership: A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a campus culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Curriculum: Sigford (2006) reported that curriculum is a mixture of what is taught, how the information is taught, how educators determine the information has been learned, and how the content is modified to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Law: Law is functions under federal and state constitutional stipulations and legislative standards; it works under the guise of local policies, practices, and dictates; and involves entails an understanding of the principles concerning civil and criminal liability for negligent and intended torts, and managing contracts and fiscal accounts (Skrla et al., 2001).

Fiscal: Providing a general definition for fiscal, Skrla et al. (2001) outlined it as acquiring, allocating, supervising, and reporting; assessing finances, individuals,

materials, and time resources to achieve results that are reflective of the needs of the school; and preparing and developing the budget with the proper staff.

Interpersonal: Skrla et al. (2001) identified "interpersonal" as recognizing the needs and apprehensions of others; interacting diplomatically with others; dealing with conflict; acquiring feedback; acknowledging cultural diversity; interacting with individuals from various backgrounds; and working under stressful situations, or ones characterized by disagreement. Newstrom & Davis (1997) found that a high level of personal drive, the desire to lead, personal integrity, self-confidence, flexibility, analytical ability, creativity, and personal warmth are attributes of leaders.

Communication: Communication is defined here simply as the effort on the part of an individual or group to transmit information to another person or group (Daresh, 2001).

Technical: Sperry (2002) defined technical skill as mastering skills related to a specific job position, the ability to problem solve, adequately manage time, monitor performance, and provide training and development.

Positive Disposition: O'Hanlon and Clifton (2004) refer to the term "positive principal," which is defined as a person who possesses kindness, consideration, and thoughtfulness while at the same time upholding high expectations for student and teacher achievement.

Visionary: McEwan (2003) uses the term "Envisioner," which is defined as a highly effective principal that is inspired by a sense of determination. In this case, their vision is clearly focused on the achievements of the school. Their mission focuses on students' best interests and is the driving force of the school.

Ethics and Values: Starrat (2005) reported on "ethics and values" with regard to treating each individual in the school as a human being and treating others with respect.

Accountability Rating: As reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2010), the state accountability system assigns yearly ratings to every campus and district in the Texas public education system. In most cases the system assigns one of four rating labels ranking from lowest to highest:

- Academically Unacceptable

  - Academically Acceptable

- Recognized

- Exemplary

To determine the rating label, the system evaluates indicators of performance, including assessment results on the state standardized assessment instrument (TAKS), as well as longitudinal completion rates and annual dropout rates.

Significance of the Study

Lezotte (1992) stated that an essential component to effective school research is the presence of instructional leadership. First, the assistant principal has to prove to the principal that he or she can stay afloat with primary management responsibilities while also moving into instructional waters. Second, the assistant principal has to prove to the principal his or her dedication to school improvement through systemic enhancements in instruction (Hartley, 2009). The significance of this study will be to focus on and determine the knowledge, skills, and attributes in relation to both assistant principal effectiveness *and* instructional leadership that leads to improvement in student academic performance. By understanding the needs and requirements of the 21st century school, the assistant principal will be better able to demonstrate their grasp of the skills to their

principal and upper management. Subsequently, accounting for this understanding effectively positions assistant principals for school improvement and their own professional promotion, if so desired. This study is also significant in that it will add to the research base in the fields of the assistant principal where, as compared to other educational leadership positions, little research has been completed. This study will hopefully reveal the essential knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to be an assistant principal, which may be used to replace some of the current practices being used by assistant principals. The significance of this study will be to improve professional development in the position of assistant principal by demonstrating and teaching what knowledge, skills, and attributes are necessary for the position. Hence, beneficial training will be developed and offered to assistant principals while in their current position, and for the expressed purpose of advancement into the principalship.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The assistant principal position is regarded as an important step in attaining the principalship. The assistant principal is a necessary and critical position in the educational organization, and the assistant principal position provides the primary training ground for the principalship (Madden, 2008). However, the majority of educational literature about the assistant principalship leans toward the premise that the position does not provide a smooth transition into the role of principal (Denmark & Davis, 2000; Hartzell, 1993). It is apparent that a cadre of knowledge and skills is essential to effectively perform the array of responsibilities associated with the assistant principalship, but the majority of assistant principals responding to the survey indicated that they lacked the necessary training to perform many of these responsibilities (Weller & Weller, 2002). Recent studies note the importance of the assistant principal in the school system, particularly with regard to curriculum, staff development, and instructional leadership (Glanz, 1994). Furthermore, several legislative levers have helped to change the role of the assistant principal. One of the biggest reasons why the assistant principal's role is changing is because the demands and accountability of the principal have changed. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) altered the national landscape of public education by making standardized test scores in reading and mathematics critical factors in judging student, teacher, principal, and school performance (Ravitch, 2010). Hence, the new accountability movement has transformed what the role of the Principals has to become. One possible solution for meeting these new demands was for Principals

to place more responsibility on the shoulders of the assistant principal in the area of

instructional leadership. NCLB is just one of recent reform movements to have impacted

the assistant principal. Namely, the *Nation at Risk* report, the standards movement, and

Goals 2000 (under President Bill Clinton) all played key roles in both reshaping

education and, subsequently, the roles assigned to assistant principals. This literature

review is organized in an effort to support the study's survey, which asked assistant

principals about the essential knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective school

leadership. Other key parts of this literature review, which relate closely to the

development of the assistant principal, are the state and national standards for education.

These standards are essential in that they help to establish the expectations for what an

administrator should look like in the position. Knowledge, skills, and attributes are all

important components for an assistant principal, but Gordon (2006) accurately states the

following:

> "As with teachers, there is a widely held assumption that the primary criterion for
>
> excellence in the principal role (Also applied to the assistant principal) is the right
>
> combination of knowledge and skills. To be sure, every principal must possess a
>
> great deal of knowledge and many skills these days, perhaps more of each than
>
> ever before. But the critical attributes that set truly outstanding principals apart
>
> from the rest stem from innate qualities like their beliefs, motivation, ways of
>
> relating, Adaptability and orientation towards continuous improvement. These
>
> talents, combined with knowledge and skills, create strengths that lead to
>
> outstanding performance."

State and National Standards

The best practices in school leadership are those which are based on researched and can be linked to a set of standards at both state and national levels. Aspiring administrators completing their Master's program,(as required to become an Assistant Principal) learn about these standards and the specific knowledge they need in preparation for certification exams. Since this study is conducted through a large university in the gulf coast region of Texas, it becomes necessary to review both sets of standards required for principal certification, and also the three domains that are tested on the principal certification exam. These standards and domains will provide a strong base in regard to the necessary knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for quality school administration. The national standards were established to assist states aligning their goals regarding expectations of school administrators. The national standards were also created to provide a framework for state-to-state alignment. Under the administration of President Obama there has been a strong push for state-adopt national standards, and for increased aligned in the area of new national testing guidelines. In an effort to accomplish these tasks, the administration provided billions of dollars to states agreeing to adopt these particular standards. States that did not agree to adopt these standards, however, did not receive any of this addition federal funding. At last count, the state of Texas was one of two states who chose not adopt these new national standards or receive any newly provided federal monies. This is important to mention given that Texas has long felt that they have been on the forefront of education in establishing standards, expectations, and best practices that the rest of the country would follow. Therefore, when considering both

state and national standards, this study will attempt to identify and discuss various themes in relation to principal certification in Texas.

The standards required for Principal certification can be found in the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 241. The standards for principal certification list seven major themes of administrator competence:

- Learner Centered Values and Ethics of Leadership

- Learner Centered Leadership and Campus Culture

- Learner Centered Human Resources Leadership and Management

- Learner Centered Communications and Community Relations

- Learner Centered Organizational Leadership and Management

- Learner Centered Curriculum Planning and Development

- Learner Centered Instructional Leadership and Management

The knowledge and skills identified in this section must be used by an educator preparation program in the development of curricula and coursework, and by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBOEC) as the basis for developing the examinations required to obtain the standard Principal Certificate (Chapter 241). For the purposes of this study, I will briefly talk about the standards that more closely reflect the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for school administration. However, this study also provides an in-depth examination at the standards for principal certification under chapter 241 in the Texas Administrative Code (see Appendix A). The "Learner-Centered Values and Ethics" section states that an educational leader should able to:

- Promote the success of all students

- Act with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner.

- The leader is also able to model and promote the highest standards of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions, and behaviors (Chapter 241).

The standard of "Learner-Centered Leadership and Campus Culture" deals more closely with knowledge of people. Under this particular domain, as outlined in Chapter 241, the educational leader should be able to do the following:

- Include parents and other members of the community into the culture of the school.

- Be able to use strategies to develop relationships and effective collaboration of staff.

- Use all existing data to develop a vision and a plan to implement a vision.

- Align all resources to implement the vision.

- Acknowledge, recognize, and celebrate the contributions of students, staff, parents, and community members toward the realization of the campus vision.

The standard for "Learner Centered Human Resource Leadership and Management" with regards to knowledge and skills necessary lists the following:

- Use formative and summative evaluation processes appropriate to the position held to further develop the knowledge and skills of campus staff.

- Engage in on-going, meaningful, and professional growth activities to further develop necessary knowledge and skills and to model lifelong learning.

The Learner Centered Communications and Community Relations section says that an educational leader responds to diverse community interests and needs, can mobilize resources from the community, and promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community. Knowledge and skills needed toward communication are as follows:

- Demonstrate effective communication through oral, written, auditory, and nonverbal expression.

- Use effective conflict management and group consensus building skills

- Develop and implement strategies for effective internal and external communications. This includes communication in response to pertinent political, social, and economic issues and involving multiple constituencies including the media.

The survey for this research study has three established categories for questioning. In regard to the attributes necessary for effective leadership, the standards address the organization's "Learner Centered Organizational Leadership and Management." The purpose of organizational leadership is to create a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. According these charges, a campus leader understands and applies the following principles:

- Implements appropriate management techniques to define roles, assign functions, delegate authority, and determine accountability to reach campus goals.

- Gather and organize information to use in decision making.

- Develop, implement, and evaluate change processes for organizational effectiveness.

- Apply local, state, and federal laws and policies to support sound decision making.

- Plan and manage the campus budget.

- Technology to enhance school management

- Use effective planning, time management, and organization of work to maximize attainment of district and campus goals.

The last two items listed under the standards for principal certification for the state of Texas are potentially the most difficult to attain and accomplish as an assistant principal. It is important not to diminish the clear importance of the other five domains listed for principal certification, but without taking the time to develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed under "Learner Centered Curriculum and Development" and "Learner Centered Instructional Leadership and Management" assistant principals will not develop into leaders who are sought for promotion to the position of principal.

Learner Centered Curriculum Planning and Development

An educational leader promotes the success of all students thorough the facilitation and implementation of curricula and strategic plans, which both lead to enhanced teaching and learning; alignment of curriculum, curriculum resources, and assessment; and the use of various assessments to measure student performance (see Appendix A). An effective leader understands and applies the following knowledge, skills, and attributes in relation to curriculum:

- Use emerging issues, trends, demographic data, student learning data, learning
  and motivation theory, legal, and other information as a norm in curriculum
  planning.

- Use sound research based practice in development of campus programs.

- Integration of technology and other information systems to enrich campus
  curriculum.

Learner Centered Instructional Leadership and Management

A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a campus culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (see Appendix A).

The standards required for principal certification, as stated under Title 19, Part 7, Chapter 241 of the Texas Administrative Code, are the basis for preparation programs throughout the state. Whether seeking principal certification via a Master's program or solely a certification program, students receive an education that is enriched in, and closely mirrors, these standards, in order to prepare students for the Principal exam. This Principal exam must be passed by all aspiring administrators in order receive their certification to even become an Assistant Principal.

The Texas Examinations of Educator Standard, also know as TExES, is an exam administered to educational leaders in the state of Texas for Principal Certification. The exam covers three overarching domains:

- Domain I – School Community Leadership (approximately 33%)

- Domain II – Instructional Leadership (approximately 44%)

- Domain III – Administrative Leadership (approximately 22%)

It is important to note that both this exam *and* the state board of education place a heavy emphasis on Domain II (i.e., Instructional Leadership), which is, ironically, the area of *least* emphasis for assistant principals. The reason for this logic can be inferred by the title of the exam itself (i.e., the *Principal* Certification). The Principal is expected to be competent in the area of instructional leadership, which is the area with greatest emphasis because of its direct impact on student achievement. An assistant principal must acquire essential knowledge and skills while also mastering assigned tasks before being able to take on the role of instructional leader. It is ironic that aspiring administrators take exams for principal certification when so few that pass the exam actually strive to become a Principal; more less actually attain the position. Each domain under the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards has a series of competencies. The competencies for the Principal Test Framework are as followed:

Domain I – School Community Leadership

- Competency 001

  The principal knows how to shape campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

- Competency 002

  The principal knows how to communicate and collaborate with all members of the school community, respond to diverse interests and needs, and mobilize resources to promote student success.

- Competency 003

  The principal knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.

Domain II – Instructional Leadership

- Competency 004

  The principal knows how to facilitate the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment; and promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance.

- Competency 005

  The principal knows how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and a campus culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

- Competency 006

  The principal knows how to implement a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, select and implement appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and apply the legal requirements for personnel management.

- Competency 007

  The principal knows how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to ensure an effective learning environment.

Domain III – Administrative Leadership

- Competency 008

  The principal knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and

  management in relation to campus budgeting, personnel, resource utilization,

  financial management, and technology use.

- Competency 009

  The principal knows how to apply principles of leadership and management to

  the campus physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective

  learning environment.

This exam serves as a guidepost for educators pursuing promotion into administration to

ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary for the position. It is

expected, and prospective interviewers know, that interested applicants that hold this

certification at least possess the minimum knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for

school leadership. Yet, the vital lessons learned through "baptism by fire" are what will

decide how effective the educator is at school leadership.

One of the main reasons why the nation and states such as Texas adopt standards

for school administration is to assist and direct school leadership preparation programs.

Principal preparation programs are essential in developing the next generation of leaders

for school administration. Shen et al. (2005) stated that principal preparation programs

have been charged with providing the critical knowledge needed to be an effective

principal. It is through these programs that principals will become equipped with the

essential knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary for school leadership.

In 1996, national standards began emerging under the direction of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The CCSSO began writing the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) in an effort to help strengthen educational leadership preparation programs across the country. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards have been developed to promote excellence on the professional preparation of future school administrators to achieve the mission of increased student achievement, and to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). These standards provide leadership preparation programs a solid framework for developing, sustaining, and assessing coursework as well as establishing training for visionary leaders who are able to implement a school improvement plan (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) was established in 1984 as a nationwide, nonprofit organization composed of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA), and five extra state jurisdictions. The CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major educational issues. In addition, it provides a platform for members to expresses their views in regard to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. Through its structure of standing and special committees, the council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major educational issues (www.scibd.com). The Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) is one of

the agencies listed under the CCSSO that has adopted ISLLC standards. The DODEA operates 194 schools in 14 districts located in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The department also serves 1.2 million military student-age children being educated in public, private, and home-based schools in the USA, and around the world. This point is important because we can no view education solely from the local level. In a globally connected and increasingly competitive world we must agree that educational leadership simply cannot be view from a local perspective. Educational leaders have had to make adjustments, and continue to strive to make changes, to help children become more competitive and prepared for the world they will face. The ISLLC standards adopted by the DODEA also makes a commitment that all American children will be taught under the same standards regardless of where they are being educated.

The CCSSO first began working on the [ISLLC] standards in 1996. The standards have gone through many revisions and adoptions, with the lasted updated adoption occurring on April 22, 2010. The professional standards for all school leaders are fundamental to creating and leading a culture of learning. The six leadership standards (ISLLC, 2010) define the knowledge, dispositions, and performances necessary for effective school leadership. The overviews of the national standards (ISLLC, 2010) are as followed:

- Standard 1 - A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

- Standard 2 – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the

  success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school

  culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff

  professional growth.

- Standard 3 – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the

  success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operation,

  and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- Standard 4 – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the

  success of all students by collaborating with families and community

  members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and

  mobilizing community resources.

- Standard 5 – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the

  success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical

  manner.

- Standard 6 – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the

  success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the

  larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

For a full listing of the knowledge, dispositions, and performances of each of the

ISLLC standards refer to Appendix C. The original framework used by the CCSSO (i.e.,

knowledge, dispositions, and performances) was borrowed from the Interstate New

Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The standards do consider the

complexity of the role of school administrator, as well as the differences of leaders and

the districts or areas they work in. The CCSSO firmly believes that new leadership will

begin to evolve in education through the use of these standards. Knuth and Banks (2006)

noted that the ISLLC standards clearly define the performance components of the

principals' role (see Appendix C).

The original standards are rooted in research and reflect the wisdom of

practitioners. In addition, the standards were composed in partnership with a variety of

state education agencies that represent a number of professional organizations (CCSSO,

1996). Several associations were quick to endorse the new ISLLC (1996) standards

established by the CCSSO. These associations include the following

- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

- Association for Supervision and Curriculum and Development (ASCD)

- Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)

- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

The ISLLC standards were originally created to match up with the guidelines of

the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The curriculum

guidelines of the NCATE standards matched with the standards from the (ISLLC) were

developed to increase the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to connect leadership

with student achievement and respected outcomes. It became evident to the ISLLC that

there was a need to strengthen the standards by providing overachieving principles to

guide their development. The principles would serve dual purposes: (a) They would serve

as a litmus test to be reviewed regularly to examine scope and focus of developing

products, and (b) they would provide meaning for the standards that have already been developed (Williams, 2010).

In conjunction with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) sought to revise the standards to include a solid research foundation for the standards (Wallace Foundation, 2010). The NPBEA Steering Committee sought to improve the standards and include the following:

- Reflect the centrality of student learning

- Acknowledge the changing role of the principal

- Recognize the collaborative nature of school leadership

- Be high, upgrading the quality of the profession

- Inform performance based systems of assessment and evaluation for school leaders

- Be integrated and coherent

- Be predicted on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community

The goal of the NPBEA was to provide for direction through the use of standards for school leaders. As the team reviewed previously endorsed standards, they arrived at the conclusion that there had been a modest amount written for the direction and performance of the educational administrator (Wallace Foundation, 2010). The ISLLC (2010) standards were written not only for principals, but also for leaders in school administration as a whole.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) is a national consortium of major stakeholders in educational leadership and policy. The purpose of this board is to establish a voice for collaboration among organizations interested in the advancement of school leadership. The strategic initiatives of the NPBEA include the following:

- National Standards for School Leaders

- Accreditations standards and reviews of educational leadership preparation programs

- Advanced Board Certification for Educational Leaders.

Important Knowledge on the Role of Assistant Principal

With latest reform movements to increase accountability standards and put more pressure on schools and their administrators, such as NCLB, demonstrating the knowledge needed to be an effective school leader can be overwhelming. School leadership now requires that individuals be more knowledgeable than ever before, and to be able to cover many different components of education. For instance, knowledge of the curriculum is one such characteristic that is well documented in the literature (Fullan 2000; Marzano 2003; Kajs, Decman, Cox, Williams, & Alaniz, 2002). Another important piece of knowledge for school leaders must possess is an understanding of educational law. The potential for legal matters is a daily occurrence in our schools (Sughrue & Alexander, 2003).

The head principal almost exclusively determines the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal (Golanda, 1991). This means that the role of the assistant

principal and the duties they are assigned are greatly affected by the competence and experience of the Principal. Therefore, the principal plays a major role in the development of the assistant principal him or herself. Hausman et al. (2002) reported that the literature shows a trend in the importance of the role of the assistant principal. In 1923, the National Association of Elementary School Principals conducted the first national study of assistant principals by surveying 1,270 assistant principals, and describing the characteristics of this group. This study illustrated that the assistant principals' duties included disciplinary and attendance matters (Madden, 2008). Recent studies cite the importance of the assistant principal in the school system with regard to curriculum, staff development, and instructional leadership (Glanz, 1994). Denmark and Davis (2000) concluded that if the principal places more emphasis on managing, the likelihood of the assistant principal's learning to be a leader is diminished.

Early studies relating to the assistant principal were conducted in 1923 by the Department of Elementary School Principal's Committee on Educational Progress. Although the duties and responsibilities were not clearly defined, this study indicated that classroom teaching, administration, and supervision were major responsibilities and duties of the assistant principal (Madden, 2008). In addition, student discipline, student activities, and student attendance are still viewed as the three major duties of assistant principals (Simpson, 2000). Further, Celikten (2001) listed five major responsibilities typically reported as important to the role of the assistant principal: Disciplining students, distributing textbooks, supervising the cafeteria, assigning lockers, and attending student activities.

Hausman et al. (2002) further reported that the literature shows a trend in the importance of the role of the assistant principal. In a review of data from 125 assistant principals in Maine, results showed gender differences with regard to assistant principals' time spent on certain tasks. Females spent more time on instructional leadership, professional development, personnel management, and public relations as compared to males. Thus, female assistant principals were more visible and involved in tasks associated with programs than male assistant principals (Madden, 2008).

Mertz (2000) reported the various daily, applied responsibilities of assistant principals as follows: Discipline, parking, athletics, lockers, dances, plays and other school events, open houses, new teacher support, intern supervision, graduation, liaison to other organizations or agencies, cafeteria duty, hallway monitoring, state reporting records, special projects and going to meetings outside of the school. In this study, Mertz explains that of all the duties assigned to assistant principals, discipline consumed a major portion of their responsibility, and it was addressed almost daily with students. Their discipline duties included dealing with students' being sent to the assistant principals by teachers (or other school staff), meetings with parents, holding disciplinary hearings, monitoring disciplinary decisions, especially D-hall, Saturday D-hall, or In-school Suspensions.

As mentioned, in the first nationwide study of assistant principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals surveyed 1,270 assistant principals to identify duties they must perform. The reported duties of the assistant principal recorded the most were disciplinary and attendance matters. Another early study on the assistant principal conducted by the Department of Elementary School Principal's Committee on

Educational Progress (National Association of Elementary Principals, 2001) in 1923

reported that none of the duties of the assistant principal were clearly defined, but the

indicators most apparent as responsibilities of the job were classroom teaching,

administration, and supervision of students.

In 1965-1966, Austin and Brown (1970) conducted a normative study of

secondary assistant principals consisting of information gathered from 1,127 assistant

principals and 1,207 principals from all fifty states. The researchers divided the roles and

responsibilities of an assistant principal into six general categories: (a) School

Management; (b) Staffing – Personnel; (c) Community Relations; (d) Student Activities;

(e) Curriculum and Instruction; and (f) Student Issues. The survey asked assistant

principals to report the most important administrative tasks that they perform. The most

common answers that assistant principals reported in the survey are as follows: Discipline

(83%), student attendance issues (76%), master schedule (72%), concerns related to

school policies (69%), curriculum development (67%), teacher evaluations (64%), being

involved in new teacher orientation and guidance (62%), and dealing with school opening

and closing (55%).

This study reveals what other studies have also validated. Namely, that the

assistant principal is more heavily involved in management tasks, such as attendance and

discipline or master schedule, as compared to leadership development in areas of

curriculum or working with teachers. In fact, slight more than half of the assistant

principals surveyed reported actually receiving such experiences. A 1992 study of 164

New York City assistant principals showed that actual duties ranked in order included:

student discipline, lunch duty, school scheduling, ordering text-books, parental

conferences, assemblies, administrative duties, articulation, evaluation of teachers, student attendance, emergency arrangements, instructional media services, counseling pupils, school clubs, assisting PTA, formulating goals, staff development, faculty meetings, teacher training, instructional leadership, public relations, curriculum development, innovation and research, school budgeting, and teacher selection (Glanz; 2001, Madden; 2008). Notably, student discipline, student activities, and student attendance are still viewed as the three major duties of assistant principals (Simpson, 2000).

Koru (1993) reported that the assistant principal has a three-fold job: crisis manager, custodian, and visionary. In his study, Koru concluded that assistant principals have limited access to opportunities in the area of instructional leadership, and that this position is not an adequate training ground for the principalship.

In a survey of 100 practicing assistant principals from rural, suburban, and urban schools, Weller & Weller (2002) reported on a prioritized order of the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective assistant principal. The results of this survey on assistant principals were as followed:

- People skills
- Good communication skills
- Knowledge of leadership theory
- Techniques for improving curriculum and instruction
- Ability to work with teams
- Ability to work with community, civic, and business leaders
- Knowing the politics and networks within the schools

- Ability to conduct effective meetings

- Ability to manage one's time

- Flexibility

- Knowing how to be diplomatic

- Patience and empathy

- Common sense

- Ability to maintain a good rapport and working relationships with colleagues

This survey provided a more current list of some of the knowledge and skills needed to be an assistant principal, and it specifically hones in on the knowledge and skills that an assistant principal must possess in order to be promoted. The effectiveness of those in the assistant principal position depends on their ability to master and apply salient leadership knowledge and skills (Weller & Weller, 2002).

Knowledge of the Curriculum

Marzano et al. (2005) reported that a significant issue plaguing public education is the lack of student achievement. This section will look at changes in curriculum and instruction over the past few years through key reform movements, and how this process has impacted the assistant principal's role in the schoolhouse. The literature on effective schools has emphasized the importance of the principal functioning as an instructional leader (Marshall, 1992). Much research has been conducted in recent years on the principal and instructional leadership. Yet, few studies have focused on the assistant principal's role in relation to instructional leadership. The array of tasks assigned to

assistant principals actually distances them from curriculum and instruction (Marshall, 1992).

The effective school research is clear in stating that an effective principal is an instructional leader who provides a vision of excellence that radiates throughout the organization (Weise, 1992). Assistant principals possess one of the hardest positions in all of education, yet one of the most important as well. Given the current barrage budget cuts, and the re-organization of schools now permeating school districts throughout the nation, it becomes increasing evident that the role of the assistant principal must change. More specifically, this change must focus more on increased leadership opportunities in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Typically known for its burdensome managerial responsibilities, the assistant principal position has now crossed over into the realm of instructional leadership (Hartley, 2009). Thus, their newest dilemma is how to complete the large number of managerial duties and while being viewed as an instructional leader on the campus.

Most teachers do not generally perceive them as instructional leaders; and, when asked, preferred that assistant principals be relegated to the hallway, or focus on dealing with discipline issues. The challenge for beginning and aspiring assistant principals is not to manage schools effectively (which historically has been the case), but rather to meet the instructional needs of today's students while performing all of the managerial duties that have not changed, and will not, change because they still have to be performed by somebody (Hartley, 2009). Therefore, a thorough understanding in curriculum development is needed in order to fully understand how this shift in theoretical thinking has evolved for assistant principals. It should be noted that at no other time in the history

of education have so many key players joined forces to allocate resources; to produce

legislative mandates, federal initiatives, and business industry interventions; and

determine the direction of the nation's public school system (Tirozzi, 2003).

Two main themes have changed both the roles of the Principal and Assistant

Principal over the past ten years. First, principals' task emphasis has been transformed

over the past decade, especially in relation to the implementation of NCLB (2001)

accountability mandates. Consequently, the shift to student achievement thereby compels

the principal to be an instructional leader rather than a building manager (Hartley, 2009).

NCLB also changed the nature of public schooling across the nation by making

standardized test scores the primary measure of school quality. Thus, the rise or fall of

test scores in reading and mathematics became the critical variable in judging students,

teachers, principals, and schools (Ravitch, 2010). In lieu of the transition from building

manager to instructional leader, the principal has delegated many of the tasks related to

building managerial tasks to the assistant principal. The second significant theme relates

the societal changes affecting today's schools. In particular, our schools are experiencing

significant changes in regard to student demographics.

The biggest reform movement impacting curriculum over the last twenty-five

years was initiated by an important 1983 report titled *A Nation at Risk*. In fact, this report

immediately rocked the education world, and it continues to play a role in the field today.

The report opened with the claim that "the educational foundations of our society are

currently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a

nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur –

others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments." The report argued that

our educational institutions "seem to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them" (Ravitch, 2010). *A Nation at Risk* created a crisis in education and would help to initiate the whole standards movement. The primary cause of schools' inadequate academic performance, the commission said, was due to the steady erosion of the content in the curriculum (Ravitch, 2010). This report also made several major recommendations that are still in place today or have been added on to since its inception:

- High school graduation requirements should be strengthened and should include the five new basics.

- Schools should include courses in the arts and vocational education.

- Defined goals for each subject.

- Four year colleges and universities should raise their requirements for admissions.

- More learning for students especially in high school and school districts and states should lengthen the school day and year.

- Teacher salaries should be increased and also proposed performance pay based on quality of teaching.

In a comparison between *A Nation at Risk* and No Child Left Behind, Ravitch (2010) states that the former was primarily concerned with the quality and breadth of the curriculum that every youngster should study. Conversely, she held that NCLB is primarily concerned with a curriculum centered on students' basic skills (Ravitch, 2010). *A Nation at Risk* was invigorated by vision advocating good education as the foundation of a better life for individuals and for our democratic society. In direct comparison,

NCLB entertained no visionary elements; rather, it placed exclusive emphasis on improving test scores in reading and math. Furthermore, it ignored the importance of knowledge in the school curriculum (Ravitch, 2010).

The *A Nation at Risk* report prompted the standards movement and the creation of national standards. The standards movement initiated in the 1990's dissolved after the collapse of the national history standards. Thus, with the absence of national standards, a new reform movement was created that centered on a test-based accountability system. The passage of NCLB made testing and accountability became *the* dominant national education strategy (Ravitch, 2010). *A Nation at Risk* drew widespread attention, launched a national dialogue about education reform, and led to the statewide standards and accountability testing programs that are prevalent today. Almost a quarter-century later, more and more compelling evidence illustrates that our educational system is outdated. Furthermore, this report warned that "our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world is at least as relevant now as it was then" (Gordon, 2006).

The second reform movement relating to curriculum occurred under President George W. Bush in 1989. The president called for a national convention on education in order to discuss issues in education. This convention ultimately resulted in six broad goals that were to be reached by the year 2000. Then, in 1994, under President Bill Clinton these (unfulfilled) goals became known as Goals 2000; thus, becoming the newest educational platform for President Clinton.

Goals 2000 was also responsible for setting national expectations for the nation's public schools. Hence, these expectations have provided the focus for school leaders over the

past 10 years (Tirozzi, 2003). Another important result of this reform movement as well

as the 1989 convention was the creation of two groups: the National Education Goals

Panel (NEGP) and the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST). It

should be noted that these two groups were assigned the tasks of determining the

knowledge and skills important for each subject area. These recommendations

subsequently sparked the standards movement of the 1990s. By 1995, experts in more

than a dozen subject areas had developed documents outlining what students needed to

learn and do concerning specific content areas, in essence, the standards students should

be able to meet (Marzano, 2003). The standards movement has been cited as one of the

most, if not *the* most, influential movements relating to curriculum in the 20th century

(Marzano, 2003).

The standards movement and NCLB each worked to help create the need for

administrative instructional leadership. The Effective School Research is clear in stating

that an effective principal is an instructional leader who provides a vision of excellence

which radiates throughout the organization (Weise, 1992). In addition, McEwan (2003)

sent out a list to 175 principals, superintendents, central office administrators, staff

developers, university professors, teachers, parents, school board members, and education

advocates. The survey asked respondents to select 10 traits from a list of 37 they believed

essential to the success of a highly-effective administrator. Subsequently, 71 out 108 of

respondents listed instructional leadership as the second most critical trait of highly

effective principals. In addition, "knowledge about teaching and learning" was rated the

third-highest trait needed. McEwan (2003) stated that the highly-effective principal is a

self-sufficient instructional leader possessing a great deal of intelligence. How does this

apply to the assistant principal? While instructional accountability is vital and welcomed by assistant principals, it does present a conundrum as to how to simultaneously complete the large number of managerial duties successfully and be a credible instructional leader (Hartley, 2009). The latter of which has become increasingly difficult since the inception of NCLB as well as a new accountability standard, which places more emphasis on instructional leadership for the principal.

As a practitioner and current assistant principal in a middle school, I confirm that becoming an instructional leader has become very difficult. The demands of the position and responsibilities are functionally designed to take time away from the assistant principal becoming an instructional leader. In addition, with the new accountability standards, the principal is now more focused on improving instruction and keeping a direct hand on the pulse of student learning. The principal still cares about the orderly processes of the school but there are several tasks that assistant principals perform which the principal never concerns him or herself with as long as they are completed. In most schools, the assistant principal performs the same basic functions in regard to assigned tasks. Where they differ, however, is in the amount of genuine discipline they must handle. In my particular educational context (i.e., a Title I school with a high economically disadvantaged population), educators typically deal with large numbers of discipline infractions on a daily basis. These issues and tasks take precedent over an assistant principal's potential contributions to instruction or making classroom visits. In fact, as stated earlier, the majority of teachers view assistant principals as something other than instructional leaders. The teachers actually prefer the AP be in the hallway handling student issues, especially in regard to discipline. One of the struggles associated

with the position is the overall lack of professional development (PD). Assistant

principals are seldom pulled from the campus for PD opportunities because of the feeling

that they are too critical in maintaining order and discipline of the students to be removed

off campus. Instead, assistant principals are often only pulled from campuses to attend

district-level meeting covering topics that help with the functional nature of the position,

which seldom includes curriculum and instruction. Firstly, when initially entering into the

AP position, I definitely felt a strong compulsion to demonstrate my competence in

executing the role. Secondly, I sensed an obligation to demonstrate that I could be trusted

to help make improvements to the instruction on campus. Hartley (2009) states, firstly,

that the assistant principal has to prove to the principal that he or she can effectively

maintain primary management responsibilities while moving into instructional realms.

Secondly, he assures that the assistant principal must prove to the principal that he or she

is dedicated to school improvement through systemic enhancements in instruction. In lieu

of my personal own experiences as an assistant principal, I agree in both of these

assertions. For instance, I had to first prove competence the managerial aspects of the

position, but, probably more importantly, I had to show an interest and desire to become

involved in the areas of curriculum and instruction. I accomplished this by asking a

plethora of questions, especially to the director of instruction. I also spent additional time

visiting classrooms, including those not on my appraisal list. Nonetheless, it is still

difficult to be viewed as an instructional leader, especially since there are other

administrator-type positions dealing specifically with curriculum and instruction. In

addition, such positions are granted more time in these areas as well.

A recent event on my campus – namely, the differentiated instruction showcase – served to expose assistant principals to the challenges associated with being involved in the instructional process. Further, this event also involved many principals from other campuses and various district leaders. Over the last few years, our campus has implemented a culture with an emphasis on providing students with additional options and choice in assignments and projects. The purpose of implementing such a culture is to contribute to students' motivation and personal responsibility in learning. Those involved in our administrative team (or A-Team) meetings were aware of this event well ahead of time so they could fully comprehend the challenge associated with hosting. While at this on-campus event, attendees would listen to a few hours of professional development in the area of differentiated instruction and how it specifically helps children in at-risk situations.

Afterward, given that these were influential people in the district, the attendees would then be divided into small groups and would conduct observations in classrooms modeling differentiated instruction. To the principal's credit we (the assistant principals) were formally invited to join the observations for our own professional development in the area of differentiated instruction. I very much wanted to attend; yet, unlike teachers, substitutes are not provided for assistant principals to attend these functions. In fact, whenever there is an important on-campus event (e.g., visitors in the building, a parent involvement day, etc.), the assistant principal's chief task is to maintain discipline, monitor the hallways, and keep the students in-line. Thus, since this instance involves a district professional development function inside our building, I (as an assistant principal) am not included in the planning and implementation, and cannot take an active role in the

meeting. Hence, the clear message here is that we have the information, so you can be vigilant in keeping order in the hallway through maintaining a presence in key locations. Without a substitute to replace an administrator in the office, attending these functions becomes even more difficult because an assistant principal is responsible for addressing behavior concerns as they arise. Furthermore, it would be inconsiderate to interrupt professional development sessions with key administrators frequently being called out of the room to address issues.

After the training, building principals and district leaders were to be organized into small groups and escorted around the building – sitting in on various classrooms modeling differentiated lessons. Again, assistant principals were not participants in showing district leaders around the building and visiting different classrooms. Instead, this particular task was made available to personnel in the building not in a classroom who play a greater role in curriculum and instruction (i.e., curriculum coordinators, director of instruction, and helping teachers). The issue here is not simply that assistant principals were not included; rather, that they lost a key opportunity to network with other influential leaders. In my particular case, I lost an opportunity to host classroom visits that would demonstrate my knowledge, skills, and dedication to district leadership. Finally, involvement in such an honorable activity could have contributed to my own future advancement in pursuit of the Principalship.

The scenario above illustrates that the assistant principal continue to fight the stigma of not viewed as instructional leaders, and that they struggle to find greater opportunities for becoming involved in areas of curriculum and instruction. If school leaders are expected to better serve the schools they are charged with leading, it is

imperative that they be knowledgeable about the best practices in curriculum and instruction (Kajs, Decman, Cox, Williams, & Alaniz, 2002). The effective school research is clear in stating that an effective principal is an instructional leader who provides a vision of excellence that radiates throughout the organization (Weise, 1992). This is why it is critical that assistant principals become involved with curriculum and instruction. It is also important since an assistant principal is promoted into the Principalship because they eventually became known as leaders in the area of curriculum and instruction – not "leaders" in effective managerial duties or handling high numbers of student discipline infractions.

Research studies investigating the effect of principals on student learning go back almost 30 years. In the late 1970s and 1980s, these efforts concentrated on "effective schools," and this research data suggested that the quality of the principal as an "instructional leader" was related to the effectiveness of the school. Lezotte (1992) stated that an essential component to the effective schools research is the presence of instructional leadership. Research by Levine and Lezotte (1989) identified characteristics of effective schools that are tangential to the actual teaching and learning processes:

- Schools with site-based management that practice teacher empowerment and allow teachers the latitude to solve site-based problems.

- Central office support for making decisions and solving school problems that impact instruction.

- Strong leadership at the school site

- A planned and well-coordinated curriculum that is scoped and sequenced and focused on the holistic needs of students.

- Staff stability which provides a strong, cohesive work unit

- Comprehensive staff development programs that are teacher led and address the specific needs of teachers.

- Parent programs designed to help parents help their children with home work, attendance, and discipline.

- School wide recognition of student academic success and teaching excellence

- Collaborative teacher planning to promote the sharing of knowledge and ideas and provide continuity in the curriculum and in student learning experiences.

- Shared vision, mission, and goals to promote collegiality and to foster a sense of community.

Lezotte (1992) stated that effective leaders establish commitment from individuals to meet the needs of the school. Further, it is through this commitment that education for all students is improved. There is no single set of instructional leadership practices deemed to be universally effective, but elsewhere we provide some starting points for school administrators who target instructional improvement as their major goal (Weller & Weller, 2000). These starting points have a direct application for assistant principals who seek to gain experience and preparation for the principalship. Taking a leadership role in the realm of instruction is an essential first step for assistant principals who aspire to attain the role of the principal.

Weller & Weller (2002) state that there are four key components for assistant principals in developing a knowledge and skills base for instructional leadership:

- First, assistant principals should ask to be given an active role in the
  evaluation of teachers. Evaluating teacher performance allows assistant
  principals to acquire leadership experience in coordinating, planning and goal
  setting, problem solving, interpersonal communications, mentoring, and
  rewarding and praising.

- Second, assistant principals should become trouble shooters proactive in
  seeking out potential problems and addressing then before they can negatively
  impact teaching and learning.

- Third, assistant principals must become experts at providing essential and
  timely classroom resources to teachers.

- Finally, instructional leadership is demonstrated by creating and maintaining a
  climate, or ethos, promoting instructional leadership.

Ogden & Germinario (1994) found that effective schools are led by principals and
assistant principals who believe that all students can and will learn; who are continuously
dissatisfied with the school's outcome; and who seek new and better ways to improve
schooling, and who instill in their teachers the motivation to provide the best instruction
possible so that all students can reach their full potential. Weller & Weller (2002) state
that assistant principals with little principal-granted authority can practice instructional
leadership by applying the following characteristics of instructional leadership:

- Develop a mind-set that instructional leadership is the most salient role an
  administrator can perform and make improving instruction a primary goal.

- Model the belief that academics are the reason for schooling and that academic achievement, teamwork, and teaching are top priorities.

- Have high expectations for teacher and student success and inspire and motivate students and teachers to excel.

- Consult teachers for preferences when developing class schedules and for needed resources when developing the budget

- Plan and conduct staff development programs based on teacher needs and interests

- Foster good parent-teacher relationships by meeting with parents and stressing the importance of their support in promoting student learning

- Recognize and reward academic achievement for both students and teachers

- Consume and apply the latest research findings and help teachers conduct action research to improve instruction and curriculum

- Free teachers from unnecessary responsibilities to allow them time to focus on being an effective classroom teacher.

Knowledge of the Law

Since power over education is not specifically delegated to the federal government by the U.S. Constitution, it is a state function. The Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution declares that all powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved to the states. This amendment gives state government their traditional power over schools (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000). The State of Texas established a public school system in the Texas Constitution of 1876, which established the legal basis used today.

Kemerer & Walsh (2000) state that Section I of Article VII reads: "A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of free public schools." By 1918, all states had established compulsory school laws for their citizens. It is absolutely essential that assistant principals possess acumen in educational law – not only to ensure competency, but also to be able to rely on precedent and, thus, gain peace of mind. Most school districts require a person to have a master's degree, a set number of years' experience, and an administrative certificate before moving into the position of an assistant principal. In addition, students seeking a master's degree in educational administration must complete a course on educational law. More than likely, however, this course will be their only "real" contact with education law before moving into an assistant principal position. Much of what an assistant principal learns about educational law is done with on-the-job training. For a new assistant principal, possessing knowledge in the area of law will help him or her gain increased confidence in the position. Having knowledge of the law will inherently help an assistant principal in all other areas of their job performance as well.

On a yearly basis, professional development for school districts emphasis the newly changed laws and precedents, and how such shifts affect educational practices and procedures. It is paramount that school boards, superintendents, and principals stay abreast of the changes in educational law *and* in the laws that impact school districts (Sughrue & Alexander, 2003). In relation to educational law, it is important to remember that the school administrator often works in a vacuum. An assistant principal must keep

his or her principal in the loop at the hint of any legal trouble, and they must work as a united team. Sughrue & Alexander (2003) advise principals to develop a school environment which takes into account the needs of all students and staff while ensuring that the rights of each individual are respected. This is a very difficult task to perform, and staying current on issues and the law will help school administrators modify school rules and follow district policies to the best of their ability.

Constitutional, statutory, and case law are critical areas of interest for the principal because these laws govern all facets of public education (Sughrue & Alexander, 2003). A statute is a law enacted by a legislative body. Most of the statutes passed by the Texas Legislature that directly affect education are grouped together in the Texas Education Code (TEC). The code is an important source of the law because it applies to the daily operation of schools, detailing the responsibilities and duties of the State Board of Education (SBOE), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), school boards, charter schools, and school personnel (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000). In 1995, the TEC experienced a complete overhaul by the Texas legislature, and it has now become a great resource for assistant principals who need to reference a particular subject/issue they are dealing with. Even though education is under the direct control of the state, it is important to note that, due to its control and authority over the disbursement of money, the federal government (under law) still plays a significant role. The No Child Left Behind (2002) only has influence and power because the federal government can control how it will decide to spend money. In addition, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) held that "the Federal Government has power to fix the terms on which its money allotments shall be disbursed'' (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000). A good example of this influence in practice is found in Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prevents discrimination of disabilities in any program receiving federal money.

Another form of educational law is found within administrative law. Administrative Law consists of the rules, regulations, and decisions issued by administrative bodies to implement state and federal statutory laws. Administrative law also includes the rules and regulations that state agencies establish to carry out their responsibilities. The policy manuals and handbooks developed by local school districts are useful school-based examples of administrative law. TEC provides that school trustees "may adopt rules and bylaws necessary to carry out their powers and duties." Board policies and administrative directives represent the law of the district, and it is a condition of employment that all personnel observe them (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000).

It behooves assistant principals to be knowledgeable in the law, because anyone can be sued at any time, and the assistant principal is on the front lines of so many things that could potentially go wrong. As an assistant principal, I had virtually no training in the area of law before taking the position; instead, I had to learn through "baptism by fire." I completed a law class while receiving a master's degree, but this would be my only exposure to the law before stepping into the role. My greatest fear as an assistant principal concerns the specific area of special education.

Special education is an area of legislative concern that is under constant change and could be hard to keep up with because when you ask people questions concerning special education no two answers are the same. As an assistant principal it is important to be knowledgeable with respect to the student code of conduct issued by the district. This resource closely aligns with many of the administrative laws set forth by the district;

which, in turn, are dictated by statutes from the state. The more knowledgeable an assistant principal is in their position the more comfortable they will be in the decisions they make. When an angry parent is in the office, and begins making comments such as "I am going to the Superintendent's office," or "I'll go to the TV station," or even threatens to get a lawyer, there is always that short flash of concern about whether one scrupulously followed appropriate procedures. It is complete natural for administrators to ask the following: Did I handle this in the most appropriate manner, or did I follow the law?

Public school educators in Texas have no immunity from violations of criminal law. However, insofar as civil damage suits are concerned, educators are shielded by state law from tort suits are concerned, and they are shielded by state law from tort suits as long as they are acting in the scope of their duties and are exercising discretion (Kemerer & Walsh, 2000). Finally, assistant principals need to side on good moral judgment and character when making decisions, and to model respect of others while building relationships that respect individual differences.

Important Skills of Effective Assistant Principals

This section of the literature review applies to the important skills needed to be an effective leader. This research is compiled to help support the second research question under section H of this study, which asks the following: On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being the least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important skills you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

- Interpersonal   1 2 3 4 5

- Communication   1 2 3 4 5

- Leadership   1 2 3 4 5

- Management   1 2 3 4 5

- Technical   1 2 3 4 5

For the purpose of this study, this section will also examine information in the following areas that are considered skills: Leadership vs. Management, Communication, and Interpersonal.

What is critical here is that the principal must provide clear, concise, laser-like leadership abilities to ensure that successful positive outcomes are achieved (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). By incorporating interpersonal and management skills, the leader is able to establish personal connections with the faculty and staff, as well as manage the day-to-day affairs of the school in an effective and efficient manner (Sergiovanni, 1995; Kouses & Posner. 2002).

Weller & Weller (2002) reported the following in regard to necessary skills and leadership. Traits of leaders have been studied to identify the work and personal characteristics of leaders and the skill traits associated with leader effectiveness. Work traits include the following:

- Persistence

- Willingness to assume responsibility

- Decisiveness

- Dependability

- Tolerance of stress

Weller & Weller (2002) also reported personality traits for leaders as:

- Dominance

- Decisiveness

- Cooperation

- Self-Confidence

- Energy

Weller & Weller (2002) reported skill traits needed for leadership as the following:

- Intelligence

  - Creativity

  - Diplomacy

  - Persuasiveness

  - Organizational Ability

In a survey about the needed skills and knowledge needed for effective principals, Weller & Weller (2002) reported that approximately 70 of the 100 assistant principals surveyed indicated that people skills, good communication skills, knowledge of leadership theory, techniques for improving curriculum and instruction, and working with teams were the most essential skills and knowledge areas for effective assistant principals. In the same survey, skills that were listed by less than 40% of the respondents included the following:

- Work with community, civic, and business leaders

- Curriculum development

- Conducting effective meetings and managing one's time

Leadership versus Management

Holmes (2001) described leadership as being about persuasion, motivation, and finely judged delegation; and management as more about orders, mandates, and instructions. Holmes also believed that leaders need excellent communication skills. The genuine leader will focus more on change and innovation, while a manager engages little in change agents and more on the present, and keeping things stable when he or she departs. According to Holmes (2001), the central theme of such comparison is that those who find themselves supervising people in an organization should be both good managers and good leaders. Given that the majority of the duties and responsibilities are assigned by the head principal, the role of the assistant principal is often relegated more to duties of management than duties of leadership. Managers concern themselves with the procurement, coordination, and distribution of human capital and the material resources needed by an organization; facilitating the work of an organization by ensuring what is done is in accord with the organization's rules and regulations (The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

Managers have been described as functionaries who focus on the micro-concepts of an organization, and concern themselves with enforcing policy and structuring the work environment for better productivity. They are concerned with the daily problems of subordinates and making sure rules and regulations are followed. Managers pay attention to detail, they are concerned with how things get done; they are organized; and they reward, praise, and marshal resources for others to do their work. Managers work closely with others, and their effectiveness largely depends on their specialized knowledge and their interpersonal skills (Weller, 2002). Managers, according to Schermerhorn, Hunt,

and Osborn (1998), use positional authority, fear, manipulation, and the bureaucracy of the organization force others to perform their assigned tasks. Managers are liaisons who are responsible to their superiors and are held accountable for completing assignments. They must possess the necessary expertise to assist others in performing their work and to maintain the credibility and respect of subordinates. Effective managerial performance, therefore, requires good human-relations skills. Well-developed human-relations skills keep managers from resorting to authoritarian behaviors that have a negative impact on morale, job satisfaction, and respect among subordinates. The manager who develops such skills is also developing as a leader. Subsequently, organizations generally reward such development through promotions to roles requiring more leadership skills and fewer managerial ones. In the case of the assistant principal, the development of such skills may be the pathway to a principalship or central office position (Weller, 2002).

Research has found that there are certain behaviors associated with effective managers who also may be developing their own leadership skills. Drucker (1995) relates that effective managers help, support, and facilitate others to excel while placing less emphasis on controlling and directing the work of others. In addition, as noted in the research, effective managers rely less on their authority and power to enforce rules and regulations, and more on providing satisfying experiences that motivate subordinates to perform at higher levels. Golanda (1991) reported that because most assistant principals are assigned duties categorized as management rather than leadership, and role they attempt to assume that is more leadership in nature would, in most instances, become of secondary importance. Therefore, because of its limited scope, Golanda did not hold the assistant principal position in high regard.

Another charactheristic of the manager's work is that it is highly fragmented in nature. It involves a variety of tasks that consume an average of 10 minutes (or less) per task; there are constant interruptions during conversations, which are usually short, rapid, and disjointed; and most disruptions stem from confusion, frustration, or conflict (Yukl, 1998). The fragmented nature of manager's role mirrors and describes the daily role of assistant principals who are in charge of the discipline and supervision of students. The main role of assistant principals, however, is the supervision of students. Assistant principals are constantly bombarded with daily incident reports, discipline referrals, parent conferences, and teachers giving or needing information about students. Assistant principals are constantly moving according to the next bell that takes them to the hallway corridor, gym, cafeteria, or even buses. Due to the dynamic nature of these scenarios, assistant principals have to live in the moment because they must focus on constantly diffusing conflicts before they escalate into full-blown conflagrations. Effectiveness in these situations requires conflict management skills, good listening and communication skills, and the ability to empathize with and respect the opinions of others (Weller, 2002).

Bass (1990) notes that over 80% of managers' time are spent dealing with specific issues and problems affecting their immediate sphere of influence. In comparison, the majority of leaders' time is spent on general issues or problems affecting the future of the organization. The manager's role, therefore, makes it necessary to become highly-organized and knowledgeable in time-management techniques to be effective. Ironically, the assistant principal destined to remain an assistant principal may be doing an excellent job or organizing his or her time so these incidents flow smoothly and no time is wasted. He or she may, in fact, be complimented on this orderly flow and on the way students and

parents are dealt with. On the other hand, the assistant principals destined to be promoted to other leadership positions will analyze the types of discipline incidents, the possible causes for the incidents, and factors such as the time of day the incidents occurred, and searching for patterns that may reveal clues on how these incidents could be avoided in the future (Weller, 2002).

A great deal of research has served to define and contextualize the concept of "leadership." Survey responses of 100 practicing assistant principals indicate that most accepted this position with only a general knowledge of leadership theory and a rudimentary understanding of the traits of effective leaders (Weller, 2002). The term "leadership" has many different definitions, traits of effective leaders, styles, and theories; yet, in the 3,000+ empirical articles on the topic and the 350 definitions provided by a variety of experts (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996), no conclusive findings exist as to what constitutes effective leadership. "Leadership" is characterized as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers. In order to become the next generation of leaders, individuals must have a clear understanding as to what leadership is. Covey (2004), describes leadership as follows: "Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it themselves". Covey goes on to explain that this type of leadership is the one that influences and endures. A new type of leadership, which involves less management and more motivation and more coaching is known as level five "executive leadership" according to Collins (2001). Collins also explains the five levels of leadership in the following way:

- Level 1 – Highly Capable Individual. Leader makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills, and a good work habit.

- Level 2 – Contributing Team Member. The leader contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively with others in a group setting.

- Level 3 – Competent Manager. The leader organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of pre-determined objectives.

- Level 4 – Effective Leader. Catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards.

- Level 5 – Executive. Leadership builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.

Collins (2001) explains that Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious; however, their ambition and priorities center on the institution, not themselves. Level 5 leaders desire to see their companies as even more successful in the next generation. They are especially comfortable with the idea that most people won't even know that the roots of its success traces directly back to their efforts.

Thus, an intriguing and salient question must be asked: Can an individual learn to become a level 5 leader or is it innate and born in the individual? Collins (2001) explains and believes that any person has the potential to evolve into a level 5 leader. The factors needed for an individual leader to evolve to level 5 are self-reflection, conscious personal

development, a mentor, a great teacher, loving parents, a significant life experience, a

level 5 boss, or any number of other factors.

Generally, however, leaders plan strategically, delegate authority, motivate others,

coordinate programs and activities, and use influence and persuasion to achieve their

ends. Leaders focus on developing human potential, forming bonds and relationships

with subordinates, and gaining voluntary commitment among followers (Weller, 2002).

People view leaders as fair, honest, and trustworthy, and they work in the best interests of

the organization. Leaders also inspire, challenge, shape ideas and originate. Leaders have

been described as "movers and shakers"; others define leaders as "guardians" or

"caretakers" who are caring, empathetic, people oriented, and concerned with the

economic and psychological well-being of their followers (Weller, 2002). Leaders make

decisions that affect the organization on a large scale because they are responsible for the

overall effectiveness and efficacy of the organization as well as the global issues of the

organization. Etzioni (1988) relates that effective leaders work to change the attitudes and

behaviors of others, create high expectations for others, and provide an atmosphere where

others can succeed and excel.

Transformational leadership is characterized as a change agent and is relevant to

the current climate of schools, especially with increased demand to do more with less.

Seyfarth (1999) explained that transformational leadership involves the leader providing

the vision, mission, and goals for the organization, and then soliciting support from the

members of the organization. A transformational leader works to bring all stakeholders

together to work for the greater good of the organization. Gurr (2000) described five

dimensions of transformational leadership related to schools:

1. Technical leadership that involves sound management.

2. Human leadership that involves bringing out the very in social and interpersonal potential.

3. Educational leadership, whereas the principal demonstrates expert knowledge about best practices in education and schooling.

4. Symbolic leadership that involves an emphasis on modeling of important goals and behaviors in the school.

5. Cultural leadership in which the principal helps define, strengthen, and articulate enduring values, beliefs, and cultural strands that give the school its identity over time.

Liontes (1993) reported that the goals of transformational leadership as being those which help staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture, fosters teacher development, and which help teachers solve problems more effectively. According to Denmark and Davis (2000), intellectual stimulation is a key element of transformational leadership. Using life-long learning and the stimulation of human thought, school leaders are able to challenge outdated systems of thought and replace them with new ways of thinking and improved models and methods using research-based thinking patterns. Lashway (2002) discussed three major leadership models, which are as follows:

- Hierarchical – Using rules, policies, and directives to govern from the top down.

- Transformational – Using moral authority to create commitment to shared ideas.

- Facilitative – Using teamwork to create participation in collective decision making.

Lashway discussed that each model of leadership has its own advantages and disadvantages; thus, using multiple models in conjunction with each other is most effective for school leadership.

Communication Skills for Effective School Leaders

Regardless of the influence of leadership, patterns of communication occur daily in our schools. The key for assistant principals and other administrators is to communicate in such a way that when people are communicating in absence of leadership they are talking about what leadership is visioning. Covey (1990) described communication as "the most important skill in life." Successful school leaders have many tasks to complete on a daily basis. and there must be effective communication among all stakeholders for a school to run smoothly. Marzano et al. (2005) formed a list of 21 responsibilities of the school principal that surfaced through a meta-analysis of all available studies from 1970 to present. One of the cited responsibilities here dealt with communication. Marzano et al. (2005) stated that an administrator should keep the lines of communication open by being accessible to teachers. Even though Marzano was referring to principals, his recommendations for assistant principals are remain the same. Assistant principals need to be accessible and have an open-door policy in regard to communication because they are on the forefront of so many issues. The assistant

principal can make or break so situation that could otherwise escalate to the principal's office; one of the key goals of an assistant principal is to avoid placing extra work on the principal's administrative plate. Effective assistant principals need good communication skills to achieve their goals, bring people together, minimize conflict, facilitate problem solving, and foster morale and commitment. Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, can attract or repel other, which makes a difference between successful and unsuccessful school programs (Weller & Weller, 2002). Given the importance of communication is so closely related to effective school leadership, it is alarming a Weller & Weller (2002) survey reported that only 10% of assistant principals listed any formal training in listening skills, and only 65% listed having textbook knowledge of communication skills.

Communication is defined here as simply the effort on the part of an individual or group to transmit information to another person or group (Daresh, 2001). Communication clarifies an organization's goals, procedures, and rules for people who are both inside and outside of the organization. Hence, as communication itself implies, these characteristics shed light on the unique identity of the organization (Daresh, 2001). Daresh (2001) goes on to explain that maintaining that identity over time is carried out through ongoing intra-organizational communication patterns. Open channels of communication allow for feedback. Feedback is information that can be used by an organization to alleviate any confusion regarding its identity or to implement corrective measures. Feedback helps the organization adapt to changing needs. Communication is commonly referred to as the "glue" that holds an organization together. Yet, when an organization functions like a well-oiled machine, communication is rarely noticed. By contrast, when struggling, its

members often cite a "breakdown in communication" as a key excuse and/or reason for the organization's difficulties.

Ramsey (2006) stated that leadership and communication are synonymous in nature. More explicitly, "If you can't communicate adequately, you can't lead." It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that communication flows smoothly throughout the school and reaches the intended audiences. Unfortunately, the principal is constantly communicating as a result; consequently, any one of these actions can be misinterpreted, misconstrued, or misunderstood by others (Ramsey, 2006). Administrators need to be aware of their surroundings at all times to minimize informational dissonance and misinterpretation. The key to effective communication is to transfer ideas as they were intended, leaving no room for misinterpretation of the content (Ramsey, 2006). Ramsey (2006) shared several communication lessons which he received from various leaders:

- Plan to use multiple methods of delivery for information to be disseminated.

- Do not provide too much information.

- The use of technical terms should be avoided.

- Cultural sensitivity should be practiced when communicating.

- Acknowledge other viewpoints when appropriate.

- The use of argumentative language so as not to heighten concern.

- Remove sarcasm.

Ramsey (2006) concluded by stating that the leader should never harbor secrets when communicating (i.e., always be open and honest). Further, that communication is the

responsibility of the school leader. The key to the development of effective

communication is consistent and regular practice in social, dynamic contexts.

In a review of the characteristics of communication patterns and their implications

for school administrators, Spillman (1975) noted that there are essentially three types of

communication processes that take place in any organization - One-Way Communication,

One-Way Communication with Feedback, and Two-Way Communication

One-way communication occurs in all organizations from time to time.

Individuals within organizational settings must occasionally exact others *some* didactic

and/or directive-based information regardless of what recipient's might wish or think

(Daresh, 2001). The sender must be clear as to what they are communicating because

once the information is received there is no way to change any misconceptions that may

occur. The following are some examples of one-way communication in schools:

messages on the marquee, morning announcements, and memos to teachers. Although it

not the most edifying method, one-way communication is inexpensive and provides

administrators with a form of communication when information needs to be disseminated

quickly. From a leadership perspective, one-way communication is perceived as being

regulatory in nature, and it can result in selective compliance and fragmented

implementation of policy on the part of subordinates (Clampitt, 1991). One-way

communication with feedback is when a sender distributes a given message but then

receives a non-verbal message back from the receiver. This type of communication is

common in the classroom with the teacher presenting the lesson and students providing

feedback to the teacher through non-verbal facial expressions and subtle body language.

Two-way communication is characterized by the presence of two or more communicators

or speakers – each of whom both send and receive messages(Daresh, 2001). True open dialogue, where all participants genuinely talk and share ideas with one another, is the essence of two-way communication (Daresh, 2001). Two-way communication in schools is critically used in shared decision making. This form of communication is excellent for open dialogue among parties, and for when administrators want to identify different viewpoints and perspectives. Two-way communication is not utilized as effective when non-negotiable information must be passed along where dialogue would not be appropriate.

Daresh (2001) lists three modes of communication present in all organizations, which state that school leaders cannot hide behind one form at the expense of the others – namely, verbal communication, written communication, or nonverbal communication.

Verbal communication is the most common form of communication in any organization. One of the advantages of verbal communication is that information can be sent instantly, and a person's needs or desires can be expressed immediately. This form of communication uses no extra resources and takes no additional time other than what the speaker uses to convey their point. Verbal communication leaves no permanent record and words shared negatively leave no permanent or visible scars. This characteristic can also become a disadvantage for verbal communication. Thus, important information can be forgotten over time without a concrete record. In addition, information shared through this form can be misinterpreted and misunderstood. Finally, one key disadvantage for this form of communication is that it is hard to achieve closure or drive home once message in a concise manner.

Written communication has recently been more powerful than before, especially with its various uses in the many new realms of technology. For instance, administrators can now send messages back and forth without even being in the same office. Principals can send messages back to schools from their outside meetings, and vice versa. Thus, if something is happening on campus that the principal needs to be made aware of a simply and quick message can be typed and sent. One of written communication's most powerful advantages is that it provides a permanent record (Daresh, 2001). Policies, procedures, and other guidelines that need to be followed to ensure efficient operation are logically kept in a written format so that all members of an organization have a constant reference point to clarify activities (Daresh, 2001). One of the big drawbacks to written communication is that it is impersonal, and the sender can never be entirely sure if the message is being received as intended. Hughes and Hooper (2000) note that language used in written communication should be understandable and non-inflammatory. A standard practice for written communication to teachers is the 5 X 3 method. That is, if a message takes longer than 5 minutes to write or 3 minutes to read, it will probably be circular filed. Messages directed towards teachers should be short and concise; they should contain standard vocabulary; they should explain how the message directly relates to the teacher; and they should be presented in a line-item format, when possible (Weller & Weller, 2002). The following is recommended when writing to teachers, parents, or community members:

- Be Concise.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short, state your purpose clearly, and use correct grammar.

- Get straight to the point and avoid abstractions.

- Write to be understood, not to impress.

- Use the active voice and put action in your verbs.

- Use nouns and verbs that are meaningful to the senses.

- Check all facts and avoid ambiguity.

- Keep the message short so it can be read quickly and easily.

(Hughes & Hooper, 2000)

Nonverbal communication is the subtle expression of attitudes, emotions, and even the physical states of the sender or speaker (Spillman, 1975) through voluntary or involuntary gestures. It is communication without words: it is anything someone does to which someone else assigns meaning. It may be structured, but it is more likely unstructured (Furnham, 1999). The most important and critical form of communication for school administrators is also the form most commonly overlooked. How many times does an assistant principal walk the hallways every day passing many teachers in the hallway on a mission to talk to or pick up a student? The body language and facial expressions these assistant principals project communicates one type of message to the teachers in the hallway, while, in reality, the assistant principals' intentions were much different. I have had many teachers inquire as to whether I was upset or angry when seeing me in the hallway. In such cases, however, I was simply focused on what needed to be completed, rather than considering that people are always watching what I am doing and trying to get a read on what is taking place in the school.

In fact, there is a general consensus today that up to 80% of all meaningful messages among humans are transmitted not through planned words, but rather by subtle signs, signals, and nonverbal clues (Argyle, 1994; Benthal and Polkemus, 1975). Nonverbal messages can often contradict what we communicate in verbal or written forms. As a result, receivers tend to use nonverbal cues to judge the accuracy and honesty of verbal statements (Furnham, 1999). If a difference exists between nonverbal and verbal communication, people tend to trust more completely the nonverbal behavior; in such cases, the old maxim "Actions speak louder than words" is very true (Daresh, 2001). Thus, nonverbal communication is crucially important because it establishes trust and honesty in the eyes of the recipient. If trust is not established, then teachers or other stakeholder will not fully listen to what the assistant principal is trying to communicate.

Assistant principals must be able to communicate effectively in order to be considered leaders instead of managers. Their position as liaison between teachers and principal requires expert communication and listening skills. Effective communication skills also help to sustain the school's culture, build positive working relationships, and reduce the potential for problem or conflict situations. Effective assistant principals lead through influence and persuasion, and must be able to accurately and concisely state what they need and motivate others to cooperate and be committed (Weller & Weller, 2002). Assistant principals depend on oral and written communication to bring about understanding and support for their ideas and programs. As a cooperative process, communication is the key ingredient that determines the quality of interpersonal relationships and provides the foundation for successful school outcomes. Good communication skills are essential for change initiatives (Weller, 1999).

One of the key components to effective communication for school administrators is to also know how to actively and effectively listen. For assistant principals, skills in listening are essential to effective leadership, with daily demands coming from teachers, students, parents, and community members (Weller & Weller, 2002). Poor listening skills are very damaging to an assistant principal as this is one of the key skills to have as a principal. The principal spends a great deal of their daily schedule in meetings where they have to listen to all parties and then use the information to make an informed decision. For assistant principals to be successful at the next level they must demonstrate that they too can listen effectively and subsequently use said information to make better decisions.

O'Hair and Friedrich (1992) suggest ways to improve listening skills for effective leadership:

- Develop a positive attitude toward the sender and the sender's message.

- Screen out noise – environmental and personal distractions that interfere with concentration on the message's content.

- Maintain eye contact and be alert for facial expressions and other nonverbal cues.

- Remind yourself that the message is important, and that you must hear it regardless of the topic or your bias toward the sender.

- Do not draw conclusions while the sender is speaking.

- Concentrate on what is said and how it is said.

- Provide periodic verbal and nonverbal feedback to the sender.

- Paraphrase the content of the message with your own interpretations and seek feedback from the sender.

- Relate new information to old information.

Effective assistant principals use communication skills to lead others through influence, persuasion, and consensus, rather than through positional authority or policy. When communication is not clear, reliable, and continuous, sociopolitical tension increases, and teacher frustration and dissatisfaction result (Weller & Weller, 2002).

Interpersonal Skills

Newstrom & Davis (1997) found that a high level of personal drive, the desire to lead, personal integrity, self-confidence, flexibility, analytical ability, creativity, and personal warmth are the attributes of leaders in the most current research literature. Skrla et al (2001) defines interpersonal as recognizing the needs and apprehensions of others, and interacting diplomatically with others; dealing with conflict; acquiring feedback; acknowledging cultural diversity; interacting with individuals from various backgrounds; and working under stressful situations or disagreement.

In studying Level 5 Leadership (Collins, 2001), the characteristic that sets leaders apart and raises them up the leader hierarchy is there effective use of interpersonal skills. The level 5 leadership model also includes two seemly antithetical characteristics: professional will and personal humility.

Collins (2001) states personal humility traits as the following:

- Demonstrate a compelling modesty, shunning public adulation; never boastful.

- Acts with quiet, calm determination; relies principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate.

- Channels ambition into the company, not the self; sets up successors for even greater success in the next generation.

- Looks out the window, not in the mirror, to apportion credit for the success of the company to other people, external factors, and good luck.

In a qualitative study that interviewed 6 highly-effective principals, Gray & Streshly (2008) investigated why participants' schools were great using the same interest and qualities described by Collins (2001) from his book titled *Good to Great*. The researchers (2008) reported that a crucial component for principal leadership is the capacity to interact with individuals and develop relationships with students, teachers, parents, and community members. Leaders must be able to develop relationships with a diverse group of people and promote collegiality, teamwork, and dedication within this group. The interpersonal relationships established by the leader are important because they help to form the school's culture in ways that promote scholarship, cooperation, and atmosphere where stakeholders are valued and appreciated (Gray & Streshly, 2008).

Daresh & Playko (1994) conducted a study that involved 420 aspiring principals from different states. Each of the participants completed a "Beginning Principals' Critical Skills Survey." Using a five-point scale, ranged from extremely critical to irrelevant, aspiring principals were asked to assess the critical skills they perceived as necessary for beginning and aspiring principals. The survey grouped the questions into three categories using the Delphi Technique: technical skills, socialization skills, and self-awareness skills. In addition, the participants reported that the most important skill needed for aspiring principals was to determine who does what in a school setting. Hence, putting all

of the pieces in the right place and determining what each piece will do. This was deemed important because by knowing the "who and what", the leader will be able to better create the vision. The second most critical skill reported in this study was establishing a positive and cooperative relationship with other administrators in the district, which fell under the "socialization" category. The least important skill reported by experienced administrators was how to manage food service, custodial, and secretarial staff, which was represented within the "technical skill" category (Daresh & Playko, 1994). The technical skills were viewed as necessary for administrators but did not rate as high as the other categories. The conclusions and suggestions that came out of this study were the following:

1. Aspiring and experienced principals differed in the skills needed as a principal.

2. Improve the type of professional development at the pre-service and induction level.

3. Improving in-service once becoming a principal would have a significant impact on the performance of the administrator.

Attributes for Visionary Leadership

Malone, Sharp, and Thompson (2000) pointed out that regardless of the leadership model used in schools, there are some fundamental concepts that all models have in common. The effectiveness of the leader must result in a shared vision of an uplifting and enabling future, thereby enlisting others in the vision and appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams.

The Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (Competency 001) state that the principal must know how to shape campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. This competency listed under the state standards for educators wishing to receive an administrator certification reflects the same standard listed under the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC, 2010). These standards, written in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA), reflect the national standards that are commonly recognized as the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership in education. Vision is the cornerstone of leadership; both administrator and school will not be successful without a clear vision.

The state and national standard both explain that the vision needs to be developed, articulated, implemented and stewardship. The leader is responsible for facilitating this action and that it is shared and supported by his or her collective community. The cultivation of this collective vision is seeing that the process of developing a vision is shared and collaborated through at least a representation of all stakeholders. The leader must be able to articulate (i.e., communicate) this vision to all stakeholder to better ensure it is supported. Once the vision is developed and communicated there also has to be a process to implement the vision so all members are actively contributing to it. The leader must finally promote the organizational vision by making it a central focus of the tasks, roles, and engagements of the members in the collective community.

By examining the past and present, the leader is able to provide a clear and concise characterization of what the school can become, as well as a clear picture of what

its future may hold. It is impossible for a school to move forward until beliefs are established (Ramsey, 2006). The leader recognizes and considers the school's hopes and dreams; determines the cherished values and beliefs of the staff and community; engages a plan of action for consideration and discussion; and then incorporates the values of the mission statement (Deal & Peterson, 2007). Every great organization has a set of common beliefs and values as set out in a vision and mission. In a book titled *Search for Excellence*, vision is explained through the work of The Boeing Company (Peters & Waterman, 1982). In the book *Vision,* Boeing stated that they tried to build a team that is customer-oriented, and came to the realization that – if they were going to succeed in commercial business – the important ingredient was the customer (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Similarly, as in The Boeing Company's customer-centered approach, a school vision might also apply this business principle to education (i.e., students as our central "customer").

Sergiovanni (2006) expressed the need for leaders to implement what he refers to as the "heart, head, and hand" of leadership. The heart of leadership centers around the personal vision of what the leader believes. The head of leadership revolves around theoretical applications put into practice. Lastly, the hand of leadership involves the action taken by the leader, the decisions that are made, and the strategies that are implemented to be an effective school leader. The research clearly states that having the ability to effectively communicate the vision of the organization is paramount (Sergiovanni, 1995). Deal and Peterson (2007) stated that the school leader must be a visionary. They also stated the act of establishing a shared vision can serve as a motivator for the staff, community, and the students (Deal & Peterson, 2007). This research helps

support the notion set forth in the state and national standards for visionary leadership

that it needs to be developed, articulated, implemented, and stewarded. According to

Mullen (2005), the ISLLC standards support the school in its efforts to join with the

community and form a shared vision of learning which encompasses student achievement

and professional development for the professional staff.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) vividly describe the leader as the one who brings life to

the vision, allowing the abstract to become concrete. Hartley (2009) states that the

number one job for an assistant principal is to make the principal's instructional vision a

reality. One way to support this reality is through transformational leadership. Seyfarth

(1999) explained that transformational leadership entails the leader providing the vision,

mission, and goals for the organization, and then soliciting support from the members of

the organization. One of the goals of this type of leadership is to change the beliefs of the

organization's members to lend support for the greater good of the organization. Barth

(2006) suggested that teachers share ideas, validate one another's accomplishments, and

reward those who model collegiality to create a hospitable culture.

Attributes for Ethics/Values

The first standard for principal certification found in the Texas Administrative

Code, Chapter 241, is called "Learner Centered Values and Ethics of Leadership".

Learner centered values and ethics says that an educational leader is able to: (a) Promote

the success of all students, (b) Act with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner,

and (c) Be able to model and promote the highest standards of conduct, ethical principles,

and integrity in decision making, actions, and behaviors (Chapter 241). Furthermore,

Competency 003 in Domain 1 of the principal certification exam states that the principal

knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner. Maxcy (2002) used the ISLLC Standards for School Leadership (1996) as a reference to help administrators make sensible moral and ethical decisions.

Ramsey (2006) summarized his thoughts on ethical leadership by stating that leadership is pointless without ethics. He further characterized ethics as the act of doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons. In *Winning with People*, John Maxwell, a famous author of leadership books, explains that trust is the foundation of leadership (Maxwell, 2004). He also states that "Integrity" is the basis of trust; it is the single quality that cannot be acquired; rather, it must be earned. It is given by coworkers and followers, and the leader cannot function without it (Maxwell, 2004).

Starrat (2005) discussed five levels of ethical enactment which exists within an organization. Ethical leadership requires the leader of the organization to take into account the humanity of other people. People are delicate individuals who must be treated with respect and sacredness. The lack of respect shown to another person is an ethical violation. One which should be avoided (Starrat, 2005). The five levels of ethical enactment are as followed:

- First level deals with that of being a human being and the humanity of others.
- The second level is when the educational leader is called a citizen public servant. The citizen public servant puts the organization and the people in the organization before then individual needs of the leader.
- The third level of ethical enactment has to do with being an educational administrator. It can then be concluded that the act of educating is in itself an

ethical activity which requires the school leader to act in a moral and ethical manner at all times (Starrat, 2005).

- The fourth level is called the educational administrator. This level talks about being fair and consistent with all students. Certain biases can either advance or derail the honor of teaching and learning. The educational administrator must challenge the system and take risks to avoid being accused of ethical laziness in regard to allowing some to benefit from the educational processes at the expense of others (Starrat, 2005).

- The fifth level is about leadership. All levels of ethical enactment, humanity, citizen, educator, and administrator are at a heightened, deeper level of understanding towards the commitment to educating students. In accordance with the levels, educational administrators must act responsibly for the citizenry in which they serve. It would be difficult to be a good citizen and not take into account the rights of another. The work of educating students is human work, in addition to the work of being a public servant working for the good of the people. (Starrat, 2005)

In regard to each of the levels listed above, it is imperative to observe how the individual levels absorb the prior level which leads to leadership (Starrat, 2005). In any case, the leader must be humane when dealing with the school and the community. The leader has to validate each individual by exhibiting respect and dignity to all. Starrat (2005) concluded that the leader has to consider the ethics of the organization, which may hinder the rights and creativity of individuals within schools from time to time. The educational leader encourages others to reach beyond set norms to embrace learning at

higher levels. The ideal byproduct of such efforts and encouragements is mutual respect among leaders, teachers, and community stakeholders working together to create a harmonious, ethical working relationship and environment (Starrat, 2005).

Kouzes and Posners (2002) developed a questionnaire which surveyed over 75,000 business professionals and executives from all over the world asking them to describe the seven qualities they seek and admire most in a leader. The characteristics listed for an admired leader are as followed: Honesty; Forward Looking; Competent; Inspiring; and Intelligent.

Not surprisingly, honesty was listed as the attribute most admired and desired in a leader. According to Kouzes and Posners (2002), the above characteristics have consistently been ranked in the top five since 1987. If people trust the leader, then they will be more likely to follow the leader's direction (Byrk & Schneider, 2003). Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that the values and ethics that are on display by the leader are tied to the leader's honesty. Seyfarth (1999) explained that leaders communicate the values that are of significance to others exemplifying the values through their actions on a daily basis.

Trust is the cornerstone of developing a successful school (Tschannen-Moran, 2007). Without trust the basic functions of the school will begin to breakdown. The principal plays a critical role in establishing that trust, because he or she will establish their school's climate through deliberate and displayed actions. The assistant principal plays an equally important role in establishing trust in an ethical manner. Thus, relationship building is the key to being a successful leader. A leader who has established trusted and respected based on time invested in building relationships will be successful

in any storm, and critical stakeholders remain dedicated to such leaders through good and bad times, serving as an important supporting foundation (Hartley, 2009).

Attributes needed for Positive Disposition

Another important attribute for effective leadership is to have a positive disposition. A positive disposition has been viewed as an important attribute that is considered to be of the importance for people in leadership positions (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A leader sets the tone for the organization, and the culture of the building often depends on the way the leaders carry themselves. The tone and climate of the school will depend on whether the leadership is essentially positive or negative. Kimbrough and Burkett (1990) are very explicit in stating that a principal must have a positive attitude. Negative attitudes do not prevail over the long run and are counterproductive to the overall mission of the school. This norm applies to assistant principals because, like principals, they are also always under the microscope. Again, when working in hallways, assistant principals are constantly being observed. More importantly, teachers are watching assistant principals for clues to gauge the daily climate and tone with the AP office. It is important to show a positive attitude and not let the frustrations that can often occur here carry over to the hallway for all to see. By sustaining a positive disposition, the leader controls the climate of the school in an encouraging fashion (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990).

Organizational Attributes for Effective Leadership

According to Wallace et al. (2009), the challenge for modern educational leaders is to build schools in which continuous organizational learning is a common occurrence.

These researchers also suggest that such environments should harness systems thinking, which creates a path to mental models that enable individuals and organizations to develop new ways of perceiving and recreating themselves and their surroundings. Lunenberg & Ornstein (2004) define organizational climate as the total environmental quality within an organization. Engelking (2008) speaks about organizational skills revolving around time and task management. Engelking reported that, in a best case scenario, organizational skills look like the following:

- Be Cognizant of when to plan

- Allocate resources in such a way as to maximize the funding

- Take immediate steps when a crisis arises

- Practice time and task management

- Develop process maps to determine procedures as well as construct schedules to ensure work is done efficiently and effectively

- Sort out short term problems while being ever mindful of long term goals

- Assess programs constantly to determine their feasibility

- Know when to delegate and to whom

- Examine small issues to determine its effect on the big picture

Effective school leaders should be proactive catalysts while at the same time monitoring progress and providing the focus without feeling the need to be in control of every situation (Engelking, 2008).

School leaders do several important things when creating culture. First, they read the culture, its history, and its current condition. Leaders should understand the deeper

meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. Second, leaders uncover and articulate core values – looking for those that reinforce what is best for students and that support student-centered learning. It is important to identify which aspects of the culture are negative and which are positive. Finally, leaders work to fashion a positive context, reinforcing cultural elements that are positive, and to modify those that are negative and dysfunctional. Positive school cultures are never monolithic or overly conforming, but core values and a sense of shared purpose should be pervasive and deep (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2004). As delineated by Lunenburg & Orstein (2004), the following are some of the specific ways school leaders shape organizational culture:

- They communicate core values in what they say and do.

- They honor and recognize those who have worked to serve students and the purpose of the school.

- They observe rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul.

- They recognize heroes and heroines and the work these exemplars accomplish.

- They eloquently speak of the deeper mission of the school.

- They celebrate the accomplishments of the staff, the students, and the community.

- They preserve the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement.

Often times, the operational issues come with many urgent labels, trapping the administrator into the nonacademic side of the job to meet mandated deadlines. The

assistant principal has to create the positive change through prioritize the work day (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2004).

The culture of an organization is composed of all the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that are characteristic of an organization. More specifically, organizational culture is defined as shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values (Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2004). Organizational culture can have several different meanings, but the following characteristics appear in almost every definition:

- Observed Behavioral Regularities – Common language throughout the organization.
- Norms – Standards of behavior
- Dominant Values – Members share major values
    - Philosophy – Policies guide an organization's beliefs.
- Rules – Guidelines that keep everything in line
- Feelings – Overall atmosphere in the school

The survey for this research study contains three set categories of questioning. Furthermore, in regard to attributes needed for effective leadership, the standards for the principal exam address and are organized in "Learner Centered Organizational Leadership and Management". The purpose of organizational leadership is to create a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. A campus leader understands and applies the following principles:

- Implements appropriate management techniques to define roles, assign functions, delegate authority, and determine accountability to reach campus goals.

- Gather and organize information to use in decision making.

- Develop, implement, and evaluate change processes for organizational effectiveness.

- Apply local, state, and federal laws and policies to support sound decision making.

- Plan and manage the campus budget.

- Technology to enhance school management

- Use effective planning, time management, and organization of work to maximize attainment of district and campus goals.

Possessing such organizational skills helps to ensure that the institution will function effectively and efficiently in meeting long- and short-term goals, and in completing the overall objectives the organization (Engelking, 2008). For assistant principals this often means that one needs to take care of the immediate needs of the situation and complete paperwork after students have left the building for the day (Hartley, 2009). Effective school leaders should be proactive catalysts while at the same time monitoring progress and providing the focus without feeling that they need to be in control of every situation (Engelking, 2008).

Summary

In summary, this literature review was set up to support the survey that was conducted on the knowledge, skills, and attributes for effective school leadership. The research continues to reveal that there is a limited amount of research that has been specifically conducted with respect to the assistant principal position. Even though this is the case, conclusions can be drawn on effective leadership, what an assistant principal should be doing, but also areas these aspiring principals should be focusing on using the available research. This research has revealed that the ISLLC standards (2010) do, in fact, set up a framework to prepare administrators for leadership, and that the standards delineate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be an effective leader. The state of Texas has not adopted any national standards to date, but the research demonstrate that the principal standards, and the Texes exam for certification to become an administrator within the state, do closely mirror the standards set forth in the ISLLC (2010).

This literature review has been exhaustive in demonstrating examples and studies that have been conducted on the specific knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership. The knowledge category that was conducted in the survey consists of knowledge of people, curriculum, and the law. Marzano et al. (2005) also stated that the principal must have extensive knowledge of the curriculum. The essential skills needed to be a successful principal include leadership ability and the art of effective communication (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Vision and good communication skills are also reported as important attributes of successful principals (Seyfarth, 1999). Knowledge, skills, and attributes are all important components for an assistant principal,

but Gordon (2006), I believe stated it the best by saying, "As with teachers, there is a widely held assumption that the primary criterion for excellence in the principal role (Also applied to the assistant principal) is the right combination of knowledge and skills. To be sure, every principal must possess a great deal of knowledge and many skills these days, perhaps more of each than ever before. But the critical attributes that set truly outstanding principals apart from the rest stem from innate qualities like their beliefs, motivation, ways of relating, Adaptability and orientation towards continuous improvement. These talents, combined with knowledge and skills, create strengths that lead to outstanding performance."

This study will enhance and contribute to the current body of research by providing information on what assistant principals perceive as the necessary knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership. In moving from a manager to a leader, and with the growing realms of instructional responsibility for the assistant principal, this study will help to conceptualize what is needed from an assistant principal. Lastly, the practical knowledge offered by such a study will help aspiring principals to move forward in their individual growth and professional journeys.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to examine the knowledge, skills, and attributes perceived as essential to be an effective assistant principal. The methods used to answer the research questions are detailed in this chapter. The chapter is arranged into eight components: (a) selection of the participants, (b) sampling procedures, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection procedures, (e) data analysis procedures, (f) internal/external validity, (g) limitations, and (h) implications for practice.

The current study is a section of a larger, multi-phase study of assistant principals in the Gulf Coast Region of Southeast Texas, which was employed by a large research university located in the region. The Principal as a Successful Leader Project (Waxman, MacNeil, and Lee, 2006) was originated to get a better understanding of the multiple issues that the assistant principal perceived as crucial factors in defining administrative success. The findings from this study will be used to inform principal's preparation programs within the university as well as inform the practice of acting school administrators. The Successful Leader Project was employed in three stages, which are as follows:

- Phase 1 – quantitative survey research of principals' attitudes and perceptions.

- Phase 2 – longitudinal study of how those attitude and perceptions change over time.

- Phase 3 – development, implementation, and evaluation of a new principal development program based on research from the two phases.

While the larger study focuses on many important issues facing the assistant principal such as parental involvement, student discipline, teacher supervision, as well as obstacles and frustration, the current study will focus exclusively on the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSA's) that are perceived as critical to be a successful school administrator. The responses ascertained from the Successful Principals Project pertaining to the KSA's were quantitative. This paper is part of Phase 1 of that study and focuses solely on the section of the survey dealing with assistant principals and their views on (KSA's). A survey research design will be the method used for this study. This design will be appropriate for the study because it describes the characteristics of a large group of assistant principals with respect to their perceptions of the knowledge, skills, and attributes to be an effective assistant principal.

Research Questions

The research questions that were compiled after looking at the survey are as followed:

1. What is the perceived knowledge needed to be an effective assistant principal?

2. What is the skill set needed to be an effective assistant principal?

3. What are the attributes needed to be an effective assistant principal?

4. What are the underlying constructs in the AP perceptions toward the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership?

5. Is there a statistical significance among the groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school rating; regarding the needed knowledge, skills, and attributes.

Participants

        The respondents that were a part of this study are 371 active campus assistant principals. The survey results primarily represent the viewpoint of assistant principals at public schools. The demographics of both the assistant principals and the campuses where they worked are quite varied. The respondents include both males and females from a variety of ethnicities including White, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and American-Indian. The ages of the assistant principals range from under thirty to over sixty-three years of age. The highest level of educational attainment for the vast majority of respondents is a Master's degree and, while the number of years of service in education varies amongst them, the majority of the respondents have worked between six and fifteen years. Their years of service as assistant principals range from less than five years to over sixteen years. A breakdown of the demographics of the schools and the assistant principals are listed as followed:

Table 3.1

Demographics of Assistant Principals in the Survey

Characteristics of Assistant Principals:

Male	Female
110	261

White	African American	Hispanic	Other
190	93	70	18

Age Range

<30	31-37	38-45	46-55	56-62	>63
21	112	103	92	36	5

Highest Degree Earned

Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
14	344	13

Years in Education

0-10	11-15	16-20	20+	Unreported
105	89	61	89	27

Years as Assistant Principal

0-5	6-10	11-15	16+	Unreported
236	90	26	11	8

The Texas Education Agency ranks all public schools in the state based on student achievement, attendance, dropout rates, and other factors as a part of the state accountability system. The state considers the overall achievement level of all students in the school as well as the achievement of certain populations based on student demographics, economics, and participation in certain programs. Based on the performance of the campus, or the district, it is possible to receive one of four different rankings (presented in order from lowest to highest possible ranking): Academically Unacceptable, Acceptable, Recognized, and Exemplary.

The respondents were asked to self-report their school's accountability ranking as a part of the survey; more than half of the respondents worked at Acceptable schools, and nearly a fourth worked in schools who had earned a Recognized ranking. The assistant principals surveyed for this study worked in all levels of schools. For this study, the schools have been divided into three categories: elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools. The schools are defined as follows: elementary schools are those who traditionally serve grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grades; junior high schools are those who serve any mix of fifth through ninth grades; and high schools serve either ninth or tenth through twelfth grades. Because different districts treat fifth and ninth grade differently, each of these grades could fall into two of the categories. For most of the respondents, high schools included grade 9 and elementary schools included grade 5, but some included either or both in their junior high schools. Because of this, the schools were categorized based on the majority of the students served in the school with guidance by the name of the school. These schools varied in size from less than 200 students to more than 3,000 and were located in rural, suburban, and urban areas. The following table contains a breakdown of the demographic information of the campuses in the survey:

Table 3.2

Demographics of Campuses in the Survey

Characteristics of Campuses:

	All	Elementary	Junior High	High Schools
Number of schools	371	168	90	101
Mean number of teachers	83.42	58.44	69	143.97
Mean number of students	1258.27	773	1115.57	773

Location

Rural	Suburban	Urban
12	156	191

Accountability Rating

Unacceptable	Acceptable	Recognized	Exemplary
16	189	102	35

Economically Disadvantaged Students

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%	Not Reported
49	32	47	71	134	38

Sampling Procedures

Due to the method of participant selection (convenience sampling by master's students) there was concern that the sample obtained was not representative of the overall population. However, the central location of the university and the fact those master's students do not reside on campus and commute from all over the greater metropolitan area help to ensure that the sample was representative of the overall population. The educational service region surrounding the university, where the respondents are employed, also increased the validity of the sample.

Instrumentation

Graduate students in the Educational Leadership program at a major university administered the survey. The students were trained on how to administer the survey and

limited the survey to practicing principals. It included a large range of questions

pertaining to the assistant principals' perceptions of successful school leadership. In its'

entirety, the survey instrument included 115 items. Of the 115 items, 22 gathered

information pertaining to the principals' background and school demographics as well as

experiential data. The information can be categorized into 3 levels of measurement:

nominal (e.g. gender), ordinal (e.g. 5 or less years as a principal), and ratio (the number

of years as a principal). There were 62 Likert questions as well as 31 open-ended

questions, which required descriptive responses from the assistant principals. The

complete form of the survey is given in appendix D.

The instrument was developed by a professor with a group of principals and

Master of Education program students in Educational Leadership Department at College

of Education of a large research university as a part of a larger study, which focuses on a

larger study that focuses on school principals' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs related to

their leadership function (Waxman, MacNeil, and Lee, 2006). The survey questions were

open-ended, which provided a standardized framework for the Master's students to

engage in engaging interactions with the assistant principals that were surveyed. The

topics selected for the survey were developed by principals who allowed them to hone in

on topics that they felt were critical areas to the field of education. After a semesters time,

the survey questions were revisited to narrow the focus of the survey.

The current study focuses on Section H of the Successful School Leadership

Project. The survey asked each of the 371 assistant principals to rate on a scale from 1 to

5 with 5 being the most and one being the least which of following represents the

important *knowledge, skills, and attributes* an assistant principal should have to be an administrator.

The survey included three quantitative questions about the knowledge, skills, and attributes that are needed to be a successful assistant principal. The survey asked assistant principals to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being the least which of following represents the important *knowledge* you should have to be a successful assistant principal?

- Knowledge of people   1 2 3 4 5
- Curriculum   1 2 3 4 5
- Law   1 2 3 4 5
- Fiscal   1 2 3 4 5

Which of following represents important *skills* you should have to be a successful assistant principal?

- Interpersonal   1 2 3 4 5
- Communication   1 2 3 4 5
- Leadership   1 2 3 4 5
- Management   1 2 3 4 5
- Technical   1 2 3 4 5

Which of following represents important *attributes* you should have to be a successful assistant principal?

- Positive disposition   1 2 3 4 5
- Visionary   1 2 3 4 5
- Ethics and Values   1 2 3 4 5

- Good Communicator   1 2 3 4 5

- Organize   1 2 3 4 5

Data Collection Procedures

     The Principal as a Successful Leader Project is a detailed survey that required skilled interviewers to accurately record the information imparted by the 371 participating active assistant principals. As a result, face-to-face interviews were conducted to ensure surveys were completed thoroughly and probe for clarifying answers when asking open-ended questions. The interviewers were Master's students from the University of Houston's Educational Leadership program. The survey was administered over an 18-month period as a part of core course requirements. Each semester, a different set of graduate students was asked to administer the survey to practicing assistant principals.

     During the course of this study some of the assistant principals over the course of the 18-month interviewing period were interviewed more than once and completed duplicate surveys. As a result, the duplicate surveys were deleted from the current study. Although the duplicate surveys were deleted from the study, the information was of great value because it provided invaluable knowledge about the test-retest reliability. The duplicate surveys that were deleted also helped to establish instrument reliability by capturing the beliefs of the respondents regardless of who was interviewing them. When an assistant principal was interviewed more than once, this study took only the results from the first interview taken.

Data Analysis Procedures

      The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for all data

analyses. Descriptive statistics will be reported for all variables. Factor analysis will be

used to reduce the survey factors (constructs) in an effort to better manage the survey and

determine any pre-dominant factors on the survey. A general linear model (GLM) using

an univariate analysis of variance will be used to determine if there are statistically

significant differences on the survey items by assistant principal years of experience,

gender, and school rating. The general linear model (GLM) is a flexible statistical model

that incorporates normally distributed dependent variables and categorical or continuous

independent variables in order to present the results to easily edit the output (SAS, 2011).

Internal/External Validity

      Due to the method of participant selection (convenience sampling by master's

students) there was concern that the sample obtained was not representative of the overall

population. However, the central location of the university and the fact that those

master's students do not reside on campus and commute from all over the greater

metropolitan area help to ensure that the sample was representative of the area. The

educational service region surrounding the university, where the respondents are

employed, also increased the validity of the sample. In this survey, all of the students in

the Master's program had to conduct the interviews as part of a requirement for a class.

The interviewers were free to choose the administrators they wanted to interview and

chose administrators they felt comfortable with inside their own building. The 371

assistant principals represent 37 public school districts and more than 20 private and

charter schools in the Gulf Coast Region of Southwest Texas. The varied representation

of the group that was interviewed is considered reliable due to the number of districts and

private institutions that were accounted for. An integral part of this study was to test the

Principal Survey for construct validity by analyzing the items through an exploratory axis

factor analysis and the alpha reliability program with SPSS 17.0.

Limitations

This main limitation of this study is that the study does not allow for a true

random sampling of participants. Students in the master's level principal preparation and

certification program at the research university were required to administer and return

these surveys as part of one of their courses. Because of this approach, the distribution of

the surveys was often limited, by convenience, to the districts in which the students

worked. This also led to eighty-three instances of duplicate interviews. While the

duplicates were eliminated from use in the study, they did prove useful as they allowed

for validation of the survey instrument. The answers from the duplicated responses were

found to be quite similar which helped prove the reliability of the instrument.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study will be combined with the others and will directly

influence the principal preparation and certification portion of the university's Masters of

Education in Administration and Supervision program, This study will help universities

focus in on the alignment of what is offered by the university and what is needed for

practice in the field. At the district level, this study will have an impact in professional

development. By looking at AP perceptions, districts will be able to more accurately

provide professional development tailored to what the assistant principal needs to be an

effective practitioner and leader.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study examined assistant principals' perceptions about the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership and wanted to see if there were any statistical differences among the following groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school accountability rating. In investigating these groups, the researcher sought to determine whether there were any perceived differences of the knowledge, skills, and attributes that assistant principals felt were important for effective leadership. In addition, the researcher wanted to see whether there were any predetermined constructs with the survey and the 14 characteristics used for questioning. This chapter will present the results of the data analysis that was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Demographics

The participants for this study are assistant principals from a large metropolitan area located in the south central region of the U.S. There were 383 assistant principals who were given the Likert Scale survey with roughly 371 respondents. The assistant principals were characterized by gender (Table #1 and 8) with 27% males (N = 110), and 62% females (N = 261) responding to the survey. The ethnic groups represented by assistant principals respondents (Table #2) were: Caucasian (N=190), African American (N=93), Hispanic (N=70), and those characterized as Other (N=18). Another demographic figure closely examined was the years of experience of the assistant principals survey respondents (Table #8). The respondents were placed into two categories: (1) assistant principals with 5 years or less of experience (N = 236 or 65%)

and (2) assistant principals with more than 5 years of experience (N = 127 or 34%). Eight participants did not respond with an answer to number of years of experience. The assistant principals surveyed for this study worked in all levels of schools and represented the four accountability ratings. Low performing schools were characterized as schools with an accountability rating of academically unacceptable and academically acceptable. The survey results (Table #8) showed that there were 205 low performing schools (52%). High performing schools were characterized as schools with an accountability rating of recognized or exemplary. The survey results (Table #8) showed that there were 137 high performing campuses (34%).

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions from the sample population tested. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used for all data analysis. Descriptive statistics will be reported for all variables. A General Linear Model of univariate analysis of variance will be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences on the survey by assistant principal years of experience, gender, and school rating. I will use a factor analysis to determine any predominant factors on the survey.

Research Question #1

Research question #1 asks: On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being the least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important knowledge you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Table 4.1

*Distribution of Respondent Answers for Each of the 4 Characteristics Asked In the
Survey that Apply to Research Question #1*

Knowledge of People

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	0.3	0.3	0.3
	2				
	3	18	4.7	4.9	5.2
	4	49	12.8	13.4	18.6
	5	297	77.5	81.4	100
	Total	365	95.3	100	
Missing	System	18	4.7		
Total		383	100		

Curriculum

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	.5	.5	.5
	2	3	.8	.8	1.4
	3	56	14.6	15.4	16.8
	4	101	26.4	27.7	44.5
	5	202	52.7	55.5	100
	Total	364	95	100	
Missing	System	19	5		
Total		383	100		

Law

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	3	.3	.3
	2	12	3.1	3.3	3.6
	3	47	12.3	12.9	16.4
	4	115	30	31.5	47.9
	5	190	49.6	52.1	100
	Total	365	95.3	100	
Missing	System	18	4.7		
Total		383	100		

Fiscal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	10	2.6	2.7	2.7
	2	27	7.0	7.0	10.2
	3	87	22.7	23.9	34.1
	4	118	30.8	32.4	66.5
	5	122	31.9	33.5	100
	Total	364	95	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Essential knowledge for an assistant principal includes knowledge of people, curriculum, law, and fiscal. In a rank order comparison of the 14 characteristics the category of knowledge ranked as follows: fiscal ranked last (14), Curriculum (12), Law (11), and Knowledge of People (6). Only 65.9% of respondents felt that Fiscal was important.

Research Question #2

Research Question #2 asks: On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 = the most, and 1 = the least), indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important skills you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Table 4.2

Distribution of Respondent Answers for Each of the 5 Characteristics Asked In the Survey that Apply to Research Question #2

Interpersonal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	2	.3	.3	.5
	3	9	2.3	2.5	3.0
	4	59	15.4	16.2	19.2
	5	294	76.8	80.8	100
	Total	364	95.0	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	2	.5	.5	.8
	3	5	1.3	1.4	2.2
	4	28	7.3	7.7	9.9
	5	328	85.6	90.1	100
	Total	364	95.0	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	2	.5	.5	.8
	3	18	4.7	4.7	5.9
	4	61	15.9	15.9	22.9
	5	276	72.1	72.1	100
	Total	358	93.5	93.5	
Missing	System	25	6.5	6.5	
Total		358	100	100	

Management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1				
	2	4	1.0	1.1	1.1
	3	40	10.4	11.1	12.2
	4	92	24.0	25.5	37.7
	5	225	58.7	62.3	100
	Total	361	94.3	100	
Missing	System	22	5.7		
Total		383	100		

Technical

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	2.3	2.5	2.5
	2	22	5.7	6.1	8.6
	3	91	23.8	25.1	33.7
	4	139	36.3	38.4	72.1
	5	101	26.4	27.9	100
	Total	362	94.5	100	
Missing	System	21	5.5		
Total		383	100		

Essential skills as reported in the survey were Interpersonal, communication, leadership, management, and technical. In a rank order comparison of the 14 characteristics the following skills were reported: Communication (2), Interpersonal (4), Leadership (7), Management (9), and Technical (13). Communication had the second highest frequency with 97.8% of respondents reporting it as important while technical was the second lowest with 66.3%.

Research Question #3

Research Question #3 asks: On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 = the most, and 1 = the

least), indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important attributes

you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Table 4.3

*Distribution of Respondent Answers for Each of the 5 Characteristics Asked in the Survey
that Apply to Research Question #3*

Positive Disposition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	.5	.5	.5
	2	1	.3	.3	.8
	3	15	3.9	4.1	4.9
	4	59	15.4	16.2	21.2
	5	287	74.9	78.8	100
	Total	364	95.0	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Visionary

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	1.0	1.1	1.1
	2	6	1.6	1.6	2.7
	3	35	9.1	9.6	12.4
	4	93	24.3	25.5	37.9
	5	226	59.0	62.1	100
	Total	364	95.0	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Ethical Values

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	1	.3	.3	.5
	3	6	1.6	1.6	2.2
	4	41	10.7	11.2	13.4
	5	317	82.8	86.6	100
	Total	366	95.6	100	
Missing	System	17	4.4		
Total		383	100		

Good Communicator

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1				
	2	1	.3	.3	.3
	3	4	1.0	1.1	1.4
	4	36	9.4	9.9	11.3
	5	323	84.3	88.7	100
	Total	364	95.0	100	
Missing	System	19	5.0		
Total		383	100		

Organizer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	.3	.3	.3
	2	2	.5	.5	.8
	3	33	8.6	9.0	9.9
	4	112	29.2	30.7	40.5
	5	217	56.7	59.5	100
	Total	365	95.3	100	
Missing	System	18	4.7		
Total		383	100		

Important attributes listed for question 3 are positive disposition, good

communicator, ethical values, visionary, and organizer. In a rank order comparison of the

14 characteristics the attributes ranked as follows: good communicator (1), ethical values

(3), positive disposition (5), organizer (8), and visionary (10). The percentage of

respondents that ranked good communicator the most important of the 14 characteristics

was 98.6%.

Descriptive Statistics

      Tables 4.4 and Table 4.5 represent descriptive statistics as a whole of distributed

responses to answer research questions 1-3. Table 4.4 shows that there are no significant

differences among the survey items meaning additional statistical data is needed to

determine any significance. The lowest standard deviation is for good communicator,

which scored the highest on the frequency for most important by assistant principals

taking the survey. The two highest standard deviation scores (i.e., the farthest from

showing any significant relation) were fiscal and technical. These two characteristics

were also rated least important by assistant principals.

Table 4.4

Rank Order Mean Scores of Perceived KSAs of Assistant Principals

	KSAs	Mean	Standard Deviation
Good Communicator	Attribute	4.87	.389
Communication	Skill	4.87	.457
Ethical Values	Attribute	4.84	.469
Interpersonal	Skill	4.77	.526
Knowledge/People	Knowledge	4.76	.563
Positive Disposition	Attribute	4.73	.604
Leadership	Skill	4.70	.615
Management	Skill	4.49	.734
Organizer	Attribute	4.48	.705
Visionary	Attributes	4.46	.821
Curriculum	Knowledge	4.37	.811
Law	Knowledge	4.32	.840
Fiscal	Knowledge	3.87	1.050
Technical	Skill	3.83	.986

Table 4.5

Rank Order Percentage of Combined 4 and 5 Combined Value Percent Scores of Perceived

KSAs of Assistant Principals

	KSAs	Rank	Percentage
Good Communicator	Attribute	1	98.6%
Communication	Skill	2	97.8%
Ethical Values	Attribute	2	97.8%
Interpersonal	Skill	4	97.0%
Positive Disposition	Attribute	5	95.0%
Knowledge/People	Knowledge	6	94.8%
Leadership	Skill	7	94.1%
Organizer	Attribute	8	90.2%
Management	Skill	9	87.8%
Visionary	Attributes	10	87.6%
Law	Knowledge	11	83.6%
Curriculum	Knowledge	12	83.2%
Technical	Skill	13	66.3%
Fiscal	Knowledge	14	65.9%

This table reflects the frequency of most important characteristics needed for the

assistant principal as perceived by the 371 assistant principals who responded to the

survey. The attribute of good communicator was rated as most important with a

percentage rank score of 98.6%. Technical (skill) and Fiscal (knowledge) were rated as

least important by the assistant principals taking the survey. The results showed that the most important category between: knowledge, skills, and attributes; as perceived by the respondents was important attributes. Three of the top five characteristics from the survey were attributes (good communicator, ethical/values, and positive disposition) and all five attributes scored in the top ten. Gordon (2006) describes characteristics of attributes as what is most important for leadership and what separates leaders apart from others. The category of knowledge scored the lowest among important knowledge, skills, and attributes with three of the four knowledge characteristics scoring in the bottom four, and only knowledge of people scoring as high as sixth.

School accountability rating was further broken down into school performance rating: low performing and high performing. Low performing represented schools with an accountability rating of academically unacceptable or academically acceptable (N = 199). High performing represented schools with accountability rating of recognized or exemplary (N = 131). 53 assistant principals did not report an accountability rating for their school. AP experience of the respondents was further broken down into two categories: AP experience of 5 years or less (N = 239), and AP experience of more than 5 years (N = 127). Females represented 61% of the assistant principals taking the survey while males represented 27%.

Table 4.6

Frequency Tables for Descriptive Statistics for Age, School Accountability Rating, AP

Experience, Gender, and School Performance Rating

Age of Respondents		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Missing	System	11	2.9	2.9	2.9
Valid	30 and Under	21	5.5	5.5	8.4
	31-37	113	29.5	29.5	37.9
	38-45	104	27.2	27.2	65
	46-55	92	24	24	89
	56-62	37	9.7	9.7	98.7
	Over 63	5	1.3	1.3	100
	Total	383	100	100	

School Accountability Rating		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AU	15	3.9	4.5	4.5
	AA	184	48	55.8	60.3
	R	97	25.3	29.4	89.7
	E	34	8.9	10.3	100
	Total	330	86.2	100	
Missing	System	53	13.8		
	Total	383	100		

Note. AU=Academically Unacceptable; AA=Academically Acceptable; R=Recognized;
E=Exemplary.

AP Experience		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Valid	0-5 Years	239	62.4	65.3	65.3
	5+ Years	127	33.2	34.7	100
	Total	366	95.6	100	
Missing	System	17	4.4		
	Total	383	100		

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Missing	System	43	11.2	11.2	11.2
Valid	Males	105	27.4	27.4	38.6
	Females	235	61.4	61.4	100
	Total	383	100	100	

School Performance Rating		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Missing	System	53	13.8	13.8	13.8
Valid	Low Performing (AU & AA)	199	52	52	65.8
	High Performing (R & E)	131	34.2	34.2	100
	Total	383	100	100	

Research Question #4

Research Question #4 asks: What are the underlying constructs in the AP

perceptions towards the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership.

A principal component factor analysis was conducted on the 14-item survey to explore

and possibly extract salient discrete measures. Factor analysis reduces the survey into

factors (constructs) to better manage the survey to see if there are any significant

differences. From the analysis, two constructs surfaced with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0.

The factor analysis revealed two categories of constructs with each having 7

characteristics from the 14-item survey. Component 1 is broken down into Interpersonal

Skills, which includes the following characteristics:

- Knowledge of People

- Interpersonal

- Communication

- Leadership

- Positive Disposition

- Ethical Values

- Good Communicator

Component 1 (Interpersonal Skills) has an Eigenvalue of 5.827 and represents 42% of the variance in the survey given.

Component 2 is broken down into Job-Related Skills, which includes the following characteristics:

- Curriculum

- Law

- Fiscal

- Management

- Technical

- Visionary

- Organizer

Component 2 (Job-Related Skills) has an Eigenvalue of 1.865 and represents 13 % of the variance in the survey.

The factor analysis revealed two constructs, Interpersonal and Job Related Skills and together these two factors accounted for 55% of the variance. The variance of 42%

for interpersonal skills over 13% for job-related skills shows that interpersonal skills were seen as the most important by assistant principals.

Table 4.7

Factor Analysis to Determine Factors (Constructs) in the Survey

Rotated Component Matrix

Factor	Component 1	Component 2
	Interpersonal Skills	Job-Related Skills
Knowledge	.774	
Curriculum		.651
Law		.603
Fiscal		.738
Interpersonal	.827	
Communication	.805	
Leadership	.532	
Management		.734
Technical		.761
Positive Disposition	.579	
Visionary		.597
Ethical	.752	
Good Communicator	.634	
Organizer		.624
Variance	42%	13%

Research Question #5

Research Question #5 asks: Do statistical significance exist among the groups: AP

years of experience, gender, and school rating; regarding the knowledge, skills, and

attributes for effective leadership.

Table 4.8

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Between-Subjects: Indicating a Significant Difference
between Sex and AP Experience (sex) for Interpersonal Skills Construct

Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Interpersonal Skills

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2.143(a)	11	0.195	1.282	0.233
Intercept	3195.550	1	3195.550	21031.358	0.000
APexperience	0.247	1	0.247	1.625	0.203
Sex	1.452	2	0.726	4.779	0.009
TAKS rating	.000	1	0.000	.002	0.969
APexperience * Sex	1.060	2	0.530	3.489	0.032
APexperience * Rating	.034	1	0.034	.222	0.638
Sex * Rating	0.237	2	0.118	0.779	0.460
APexperience * Sex * Rating	0.347	2	0.174	1.143	0.320
Error	46.798	308	0.152		
Total	7403.467	320			
Corrected Total	48.941	319			

A R Squared = .044 (Adjusted R Squared = .010)

A univariate analysis was used to determine if there were any significant differences among the following groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school accountability rating. The analysis ran each group against the two constructs: interpersonal and job-related skills for significance. A significant difference was found to exist as it relates to the subgroups and the construct of interpersonal skills (Table 4.8). A significance difference for gender was found with a standard deviation score of .009. Another significant difference was found in the subgroup of AP years of experience for gender with a standard deviation of .032. Any standard deviation score below .005 shows a significant difference. No significant difference of standard deviation was found for the group of school accountability rating.

Figure 4.1. Estimated marginal means of construct #1 (Interpersonal skills) showing a significant standard deviation difference in responses between male and female, and also between male and female in relation to their years of experience as an assistant principal. Females rated interpersonal skills as more important than males overall and also in years of experience as an assistant principal especially for APs with more than five years of experience.
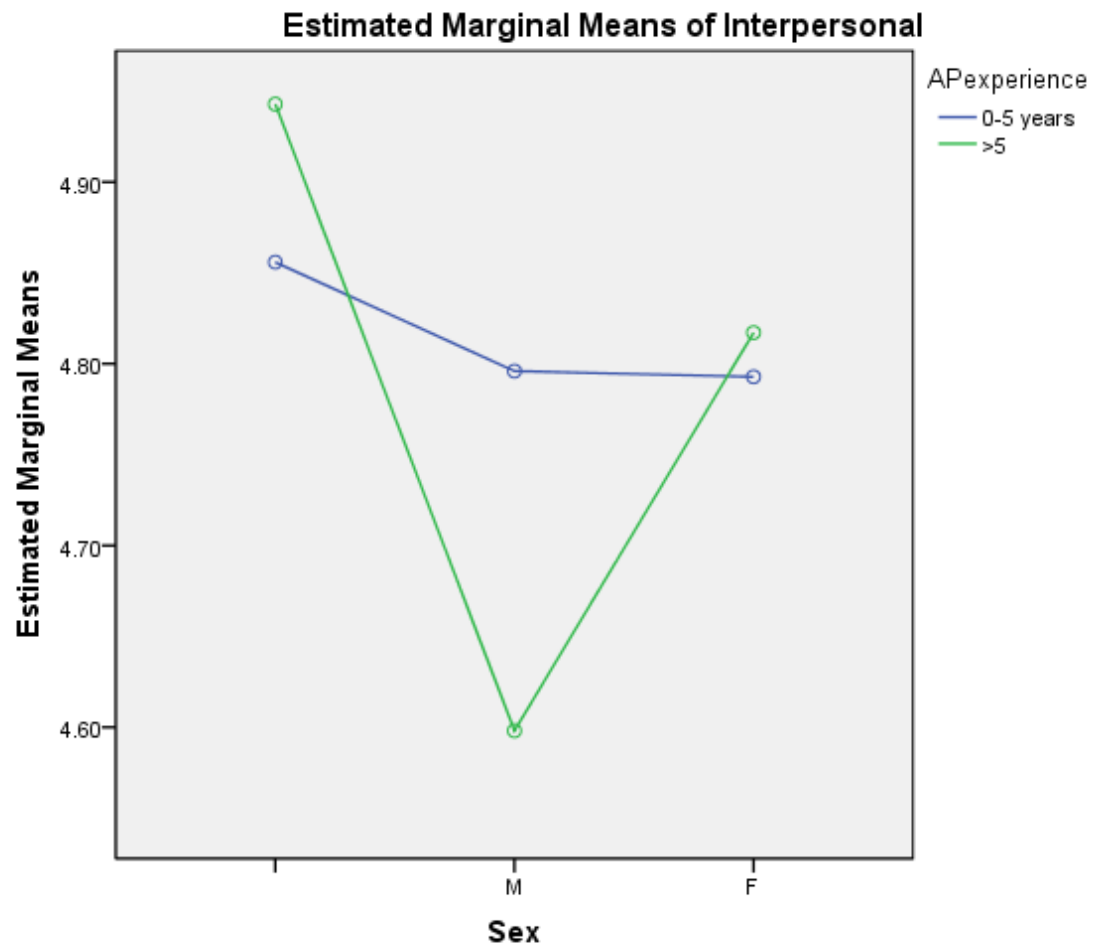
Figure 4.1. Estimated Marginal Means of Interpersonal

Table 4.9

Univariate Analysis of Variance of Between-Subjects: Indicating a Significant Difference

between Sex for Job Related Skills Construct

| | Test of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | |
| | Job Related Skills | | | | |
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.925(a)	11	0.357	1.045	0.407
Intercept	2608.011	1	2608.011	7636.931	0.000
APexperience	0.130	1	0.130	.380	0.538
Sex	2.986	2	1.493	4.371	0.013
TAKS rating	.064	1	0.064	.186	0.666
APexperience * Sex	.609	2	0.304	892	0.411
APexperience * Rating	.024	1	0.024	.072	0.789
Sex * Rating	0.416	2	0.208	0.609	0.545
APexperience * Sex * Rating	0.075	2	0.038	.110	0.895
Error	105.182	308	0.341		
Total	6012.666	320			
Corrected Total	109.107	319			

A R Squared = .036 (Adjusted R Squared = .002)

A univariate analysis was used to determine if there were any significant differences among the following groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school accountability rating. The analysis ran each group against the two constructs: interpersonal and job-related skills for significance. A significant difference was found to exist as it relates to the subgroups and the construct of job-related skills (Table 11). A significance difference for sex was found with a standard deviation score of .013. Any standard deviation score below .005 shows a significant difference. No significant difference of standard deviation was found for the other two groups of school accountability rating and gender by AP years of experience.

Figure 4.2. Estimated marginal means of construct #2 (Job-Related skills) showing a significant standard deviation difference in responses between male and female. Females rated job-related skills as more important than males overall but not in years of experience as an assistant principal for gender as shown in graph #1.
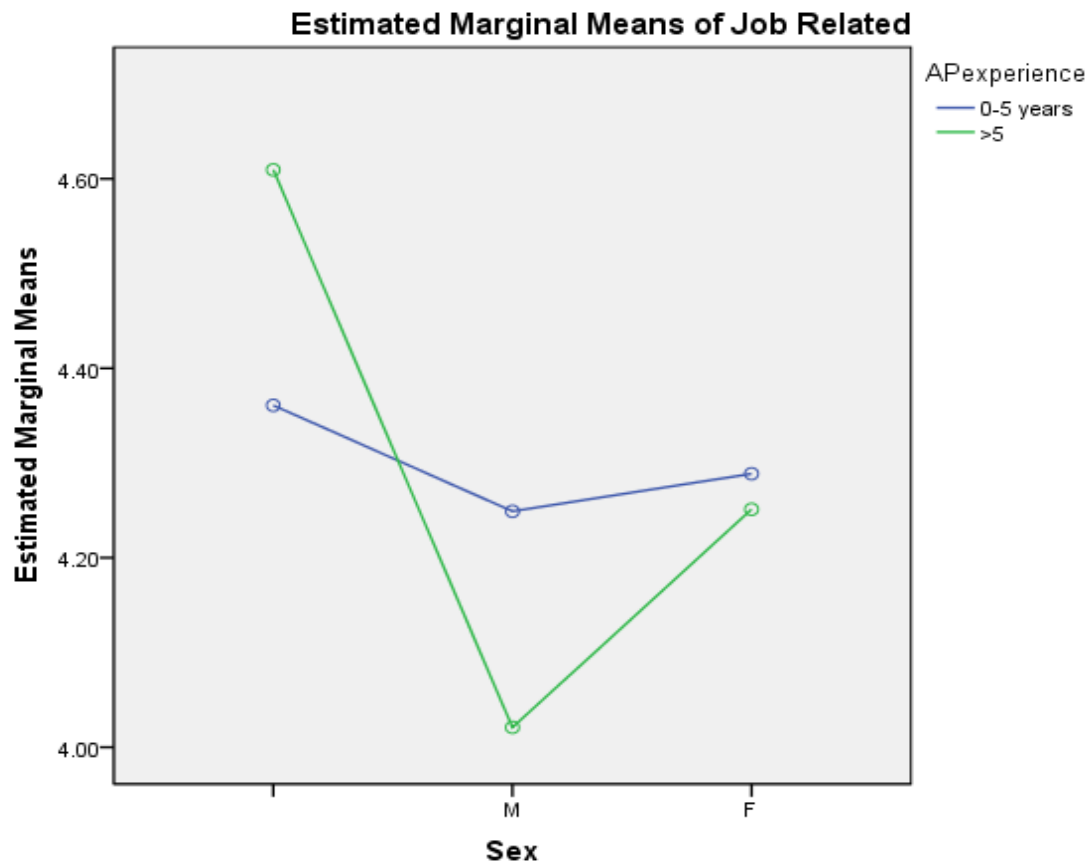
Figure 4.2. Estimated Means of Job Related.

Table 4.10. This table is in support of research question #5 and the univariate analysis of variance that was used in Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 showing a significant difference between male and female responses on the 14 characteristics that were asked in the survey. This sex cross-tabulation shows the representation of both male and female responses on the survey questions. The counts are described as follows:

- Count 1 represents the combined 1 and 2 choices on the survey which reflects the AP

perception of the item being least important.

- Count 2 represents the choice #3 on the survey which reflects a neutral response to the

survey item by the AP.

- Count 3 represents the combined 4 and 5 choices on the survey which reflects the AP

perception of the item being most important.

When looking at count 3 of each of the 14 characteristics, it is shown that females scored 13 of the 14 characteristics as more important than males for knowledge, skills, and attributes for effective leadership. The only characteristic that was scored higher for males than females was for positive disposition, males (96%) to females (93.9%).

Table 4.10

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Knowledge of People"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	1	0	1
	(1.00%)	(0%)	(0.30%)
Count 3	7	9	18
	(6.90%)	(3.90%)	(4.90%)
Count 5	93	221	346
	(92.10%)	(96.10%)	(94.80%)
Total	101	230	365
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Curriculum"

	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Count 1	3	2	5
	(3.0%)	(0.9%)	(1.4%)
Count 3	19	33	56
	(19%)	(14.3%)	(15.4%)
Count 5	78	195	303
	(78%)	(84.8%)	(83.2%)
Total	100	230	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Law"

	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Count 1	7	6	13
	(6.9%)	(2.6%)	(3.6%)
Count 3	12	32	47
	(11.9%)	(13.9%)	(12.9%)
Count 5	82	192	305
	(81.2%)	(83.5%)	(83.6%)
Total	101	230	365
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Fiscal"

	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Count 1	12	23	37
	(12.0%)	(10.0%)	(10.2%)
Count 3	23	54	87
	(23.0%)	(23.5%)	(23.9%)
Count 5	65	153	240
	(65.0%)	(66.5%)	(65.9%)
Total	100	230	365
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Interpersonal"

	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Count 1	2	0	2
	(2.0%)	(0.0%)	(0.5%)
Count 3	3	6	9
	(3.0%)	(2.6%)	(2.5%)
Count 5	96	223	353
	(95.0%)	(97.4%)	(97.0%)
Total	101	229	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Communication"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	2	1	3
	(2.0%)	(0.4%)	(0.8%)
Count 3	2	3	5
	(2.0%)	(1.3%)	(1.4%)
Count 5	97	225	356
	(96.0%)	(98.3%)	(97.8%)
Total	101	229	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Leadership"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	3	0	3
	(3.0%)	(0.0%)	(0.8%)
Count 3	7	11	18
	(7.0%)	(4.9%)	(5.0%)
Count 5	90	215	337
	(90.0%)	(95.1%)	(94.1%)
Total	100	226	358
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Management"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	1	2	4
	(1.0%)	(0.9%)	(1.1%)
Count 3	14	26	40
	(14.1%)	(11.4%)	(11.1%)
Count 5	84	200	317
	(84.8%)	(87.7%)	(87.8%)
Total	99	228	361
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Technical"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	9	20	31
	(9.0%)	(8.8%)	(8.6%)
Count 3	31	55	91
	(31.0%)	(24.1%)	(25.1%)
Count 5	60	153	240
	(60.0%)	(67.1%)	(66.3%)
Total	100	228	362
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Positive Disposition"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	1	2	3
	(1.0%)	(0.9%)	(0.8%)
Count 3	3	12	15
	(3.0%)	(5.2%)	(4.1%)
Count 5	96	216	346
	(96.0%)	(93.9%)	(95.1%)
Total	100	230	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Visionary"

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Count 1	4	6	10
	(4.0%)	(2.6%)	(2.7%)
Count 3	10	21	35
	(10.1%)	(9.1%)	(9.6%)
Count 5	85	204	319
	(85.9%)	(88.3%)	(87.6%)
Total	99	231	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Ethical Values"

| | Sex | | Total |
	Male	Female	
Count 1	1	1	2
	(0.0%)	(0.4%)	(0.5%)
Count 3	3	3	6
	(3.0%)	(1.3%)	(1.6%)
Count 5	97	227	358
	(96.0%)	(98.3%)	(97.8%)
Total	101	231	366
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Male and Female Survey Responses to "Good Communicator"

| | Sex | | Total |
	Male	Female	
Count 1	1	0	1
	(1.0%)	(0.0%)	(0.3%)
Count 3	1	2	4
	(1.0%)	(0.9%)	(1.1%)
Count 5	98	228	359
	(98.0%)	(99.1%)	(98.6%)
Total	100	230	364
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

Table 4.11

Rank Order Percentage of Combined 4 and 5: Combined Value Percent Scores for Males

and Females Showing Significant Difference between Two Groups

Survey Item/Group	Males	Rank Order	Females	Rank Order
Important Knowledge				
Knowledge of People	92.1%	6	96.1%	5
Curriculum	78.0%	12	84.8%	11
Law	81.2%	11	83.5%	12
Fiscal	65.0%	13	66.5%	14
Important Skills				
Interpersonal	95.0%	5	97.4%	4
Communication	96.0%	2	98.3%	2
Leadership	90.0%	7	95.1%	6
Management	84.8%	9	87.7%	10
Technical	60.0%	14	67.1%	13
Important Attributes				
Positive Disposition	96.0%	3	93.9%	7
Visionary	85.9%	8	88.3%	9
Ethical Values	96.0%	4	98.3%	3
Good Communicator	98.0%	1	99.1%	1
Organizer	84.0%	10	91.8%	8

Females and males both ranked good communicator as the most important characteristic for effective leadership as perceived by assistant principals. Females and males also ranked fiscal and technical as the bottom two characteristics. Males ranked the category of attributes as more important than females with the characteristics of good communicator, positive disposition, and ethical values in the top five – compared to females who only had the attributes of good communicator and ethical values in the top five. Overall, female assistant principals rated 13 of the 14 characteristics as more important than male assistant principals. The only characteristic that male assistant principals perceived as more important than did female assistant principals was positive disposition.

Summary

This chapter began by detailing the statistical analysis that was used to analyze the data from the survey of the perceptions of successful school leadership questionnaire, which specifically focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership. The researcher wanted to see if there were any statistical differences among the groups. Three specific factors were examined: AP years of experience, gender, and school accountability rating. In investigating these factors, the researcher wanted to determine whether there were any perceived differences of the knowledge, skills, and attributes that assistant principals felt were important for effective leadership. In addition, the researcher wanted to see whether there were any predetermined constructs with the survey and the 14 characteristics used for questioning.

First, descriptive statistics were used to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3, which were the perceived knowledge, skills, and attributes for effective leadership by

assistant principals. The survey item of good communicator was scored as the most important characteristic for by assistant principals for assistant principals. Descriptive statistics also revealed that fiscal and technical were the least important characteristics to need while the category of needed attributes was rated overall most important. Because of the large scale of the survey a factor analysis was used to help reduce the survey into factors (constructs), which helps to better manage the survey and see if there are any significant differences in the survey that need to be reported. The factor analysis described a 55% variance between two determined constructs of interpersonal skills and job-related skills. Each of these two constructs had seven characteristics each in their category. Assistant principals viewed interpersonal skills (42% variance) as more important than job-related skills (13% variance).

A univariate analysis then was used to see if there was a significant difference between the two constructs and the following groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school accountability rating. The univariate showed that there was a standard deviation of significant difference for gender inside both constructs and with AP years of experience for gender in the construct of interpersonal skills. For sex, females rated 13 of the 14 survey items more important than males with males only scoring higher for positive disposition. The genders showed the greatest significant difference in their perceptions of the needed knowledge, skills, and attributes with the more AP experience that was gained.

The next chapter will present the findings, conclusions, and the implications of the Perceptions of Successful School Leadership Questionnaire specifically focusing on the knowledge, skills, and attributes perceived as important for assistant principals.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

DISCUSSION

The present study advances the understanding of the assistant principal and the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective school leadership. In the previous chapter, a detailed analysis of the data was reported. Chapter 5 will include the following sections: discussion, the findings, the implications for the field of education, the recommendations for future research, and the conclusions. This chapter will present and discuss recommendations on how this study is applicable to practicing assistant principals and how to improve the position of the assistant principal. In the findings section, the researcher will discuss, analyze, and explain the results of the research questions. The implications and recommendations section will allow the researcher to understand how the results might be applied to the field and to generate ideas to recommend to the improvement of the position of assistant principal. The final piece of this chapter, the conclusion section, will bring the research to its summation and provide closure to this study.

Few people recognize the efforts of assistant principals to expand their responsibilities and to make individual contributions to improving school programs and school climate. No celebrity drama or television series brings the life and show the valiant efforts, the dilemmas, and the important issues faced by assistant principals. Few novels are generally written about educators (let alone about assistant principals). Television and film portrayals of assistant principals are consistently unflattering. Yet,

every assistant principal has the sense that important elements in his or her school would disintegrate without an assistant principal's efforts (Marshall, 1992).

The assistant principal who is destined to remain an assistant principal may be doing an excellent job, or organizing his or her time, to ensure that these incidents flow smoothly and that no time is wasted. He or she may, in fact, be complimented on this orderly flow and on the way students and parents are dealt with. The assistant principal destined to move on to other leadership positions, on the other hand, will analyze the types of discipline incidents, the possible causes of the incidents, and such factors as the time of day the incidents occurred, searching for patterns that may reveal clues on how these incidents could be avoided in the future (Weller & Weller, 2002).

This study is important to assistant principals because it demonstrates the current trend of knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for the assistant principal position. In the present study it was important to find if there were any pre-determined factors. Two important constructs came out of the factor analysis: interpersonal and job-related skills. Three groups – AP years of experience, gender, and school rating – were then examined though a univariate analysis to see what their impact would be on the constructs. Each question was answered using quantitative data that was obtained from the participants' responses from The Principal as Successful Leader Project questionnaire, which included 14 survey items. Descriptive statistics were used to find AP perceptions of the needed knowledge, skills, and attributes of the 14 items on the survey.

Findings

This study addressed five research questions:

1. What is the perceived knowledge needed to be an effective assistant principal?

2.   What is the skill set needed to be an effective assistant principal?

3.   What are the attributes needed to be an effective assistant principal?

4.   What are the underlying constructs in the AP perceptions towards the knowledge, skills, and attributes?

5.   Do statistical significance exist among the groups; AP years of experience, gender, and school rating, regarding knowledge, skills, and attributes?

This study revealed several findings of significant importance.

Research Question #1

The head principal almost exclusively determines the duties and responsibilities of the assistant principal (Golanda, 1991). When given tasks to complete by the principal it is important to have knowledge of what is needed. Several studies have been talked about in this study that talk about the role and duties of the assistant principal. This question solicited responses from 371 practicing assistant principals in regard to their perceptions of what the needed knowledge is for assistant principals. This study revealed that the assistant principals rated the category of "Knowledge" as the least important of the three categories. "Knowledge of People" was the knowledge characteristics found to be most important from the respondents. Females ranked all four knowledge characteristics as more important than males.

Research Question #2

Using descriptive statistics this study revealed what important skills were needed for the assistant principal to be effective. "Communication" was the most important skill needed for effective leadership. "Interpersonal" was also rated very high and was in the

top five for all characteristics. "Technical" was the least important skill needed by the assistant principal. Females scored higher than males in all five of the skill characteristics. In the case of the assistant principal, the development of such skills may be the pathway to a principalship or central office position (Weller, 2002).

Research Question #3

Gordon (2006) states, "As with teachers, there is a widely held assumption that the primary criterion for excellence in the principal role is the right combination of knowledge and skills." To be sure, every principal must possess a great deal of knowledge and many skills these days, perhaps more of each than ever before. But the critical attributes that set truly outstanding principals apart from the rest stem from innate qualities like their beliefs, motivation, ways of relating, adaptability and orientation towards continuous improvement. These talents, combined with knowledge and skills, create strengths that lead to outstanding performance."

Research question #3 explored what the perceptions were of the most important attributes needed by assistant principals. Both males and female assistant principals ranked "Good Communicator" as the most important attribute and overall characteristic to possess for an effective assistant principal. Three of the top five characteristics were attributes as reported by both males and females. Females ranked higher in all of the characteristics except in the attribute of "Positive disposition". One surprising finding from this research question is that the respondents rated "Visionary" as the lowest attribute needed for assistant principals and it also ranked in the bottom five for all characteristics. Deal & Peterson, (2007) stated that the school leader must be a visionary. They also stated the act of establishing a shared vision can serve as a motivator for the

staff, community, and the students. The research indicates a strong belief in the importance of being a visionary leader, but the 371 assistant principals that took the survey rated visionary as the lowest attribute and in the bottom five. One reason that this could be explained is that 62 % of the assistant principals have five years or less of experience and for most people you have to have an understanding of the position and what is going on inside the organization before you can begin to develop a vision for where the organization needs to go.

Research Question #4

A factor analysis was used to reduce the survey into factors (constructs) in order to better manage the survey. The 14 items on the survey were determined to fall under two distinct constructs. Construct #1 labeled interpersonal skills included knowledge of people, interpersonal, communication, leadership, positive disposition, ethical values, and good communicator. Construct #2 labeled job-related skills included curriculum, law, fiscal, management, technical, visionary, and organizer. All seven of the interpersonal skills were perceived by assistant principals as more important than job related skills by both males and females.

Research Question #5

Once the two constructs were revealed from the factor analysis a univariate analysis was used to reveal any significant differences in the study. The three groups – AP years of experience, gender, and school rating – were all used to cross reference for any significance. There was a strong significant difference as shown by standard deviation scores for gender and also gender for AP years of experience for interpersonal

skills. The major significance came in comparing results for males and females with more than five years of experience. "Job Related Skills" only showed a significant difference for gender. The third group of school rating when compared to the two constructs of interpersonal and job related skills showed no significant difference of importance.

With a standard deviation score of significance appearing for gender under both constructs a further cross tabulation of descriptive statistics was used to show gender scores by each of the 14 characteristics. Females scored 13 of the 14 characteristics higher than males, with only positive disposition as more important for males.

Implications for Practice

This study helps support the implication for practice in two areas (a) improvements at the university level, and (b) improvement in the assistant principal position at the district level. Principal preparation programs play a key role in the success of the assistant principal. All aspiring administrators, which also include future assistant principals that want to go into administration, must go through a formal college-level master's program before taking their certification test. The program's effectiveness in preparing the assistant principal plays a critical role in determining the type of leader they will become and whether they will be successful, especially early in their development – as most administrators will fall back on their past experiences to help them before they feel truly comfortable in the position. University programs need to have alignment between what is offered and what is needed.

The survey conducted in this study further illustrates the "disconnect" at the University level between what is offered and what is needed. The factor analysis showed two constructs: interpersonal and job-related skills. The interpersonal skills had the

highest variance and scored the highest among both males and females in the study. Many classes at the university level in the preparation program center on the bottom half of this study, which is job related skills. To better equip future administrators, preparation programs do not necessarily have to have individual classes for each of the interpersonal skills, but instead they can be incorporated into the current classes. Students need to be doing more collaborative learning based on assistant principals' perceptions that both "Good Communicator" and "Communication" were the two highest characteristics that were reported. Also, universities can further support future leaders by tailoring programs that offer better leadership development for women.

Two of the lowest scored characteristics on the survey by both men and women were "Fiscal" and "Law". For a long time, both of these classes have been free standing classes offered in many university master's programs. This research shows that assistant principals do not see these two characteristics as important to the AP position. Universities might consider formatting their program to better fit the needs of their students. While both of these classes are important for the position of principal, they are not as important for the assistant principal position. By adding more leadership classes, and incorporating law and fiscal as a part of these classes, they will also be able to address the other end of the survey spectrum which calls for more training on communication and ethical values.

At the district level there is a "disconnect" in what APs are saying is needed and what is offered to assistant principals in the form of professional development. Assistant principals often receive further professional development at the district level that helps them improve the daily functions of their job, which solely falls under job related skills

and, specifically, management skills. Districts need to listen to APs in their district and tailor professional development based on their needs. In addition, assistant principals need more opportunities to further their growth through collaboration with other assistant principals from surrounding schools or those from schools with similar demographic data. This reflects the perception in the study that good communicator and communication are of vital importance. Some suggestions for the position of assistant principal to improve collaboration are as follows:

- Assistant Principal field experiences where APs' exchange with an AP from another campus. By working on another campus even for a day, that assistant principal will gain further insight into the position that they will then be able to take back to their home campus for collaboration.

- At district level meetings, assistant principals should not be sitting with APs' from their own campus except on a limited basis. The rest of the time they need to be working with and collaborating with assistant principals from similar campus demographics to work and investigate together information that will further both campuses.

- With technology at the forefront, districts need to set up a communication web for assistant principals either thru Wiki, blackboard, moodle, or some other communication thread network. Assistant principals can then go in and pose a question or a problem and then get immediate feedback from other campuses on how they are addressing the situation. These campuses would then also be able to read the information so they could look at their own procedures and make updates as needed.

School districts need to have a succession plan for administrators to move into the principal position. This approach should include a preparation program; developing assistant principals as instructional leaders and providing APs' with mentors that can help guide professional growth.

Instructional Leadership

The problem assistant principals often have when it comes to instructional leadership is their credibility, because teachers know that assistant principals may have very little time to spend in the classrooms as a result of putting out fires. With this in mind, the opinion may be that assistant principals are trying to train teachers instructionally when they do not know what is happening in the classroom (Hartley, 2009). This is a key problem as the assistant principal tries to establish credibility with classroom teachers who probably view the assistant principal as more of an asset outside of the classroom (i.e., where his or her greatest strengths lie). In order for the assistant principal to become an instructional leader and find time to get into classrooms, he or she must have strong time-management skills. Meetings, parent phone calls and conferences, students, teachers, and other duties as assigned all take time away from the assistant principal to be able to spend time in the classroom. Granted that if everything goes well throughout the day the assistant principal is still left with minimal time for the quality examination of instruction. This is no surprise to most teachers who feel they know what the typical day looks like for assistant principals. To gain credibility as an instructional leader the assistant principal has to model passion for the work, and not appear as though that they are just checking another item off a list. It also means providing support and

clarification for teachers and that there are no repercussions for taking educationally appropriate risks to change (Hartley, 2009).

Preparation for the Principalship

The amount of turnover in the principalship has grown due to baby boomers reaching retirement age and the job market widening for women. Districts across the nation are dealing with a trend of retiring principals. Up to 40 percent of principals are expected to retire within this decade (Wallace, 2007). Most school districts tend to select new principals from within their own ranks (Johnson, 1995). In building their pool of candidates for the principalship, districts must plan for the future and not just for the next school year. Districts need to have a succession plan that build their talent up having enough assistant principals and other administrators ready for the principalship so they will be ready when the time comes and the district will not have a significant drop off in building leadership. Principals are constantly being replaced, and many times by a leader who is inexperienced and has not had the leadership opportunities to develop their skills to the needed level (Fuller, 2009). Demographically driven retirement, the difficulty of retaining leaders in urban schools, and the popular practice of moving around principals to address failing schools mean that principal turnover is accelerating dramatically (Hargreaves, 2005).

Golanda (1991) describes the way schools prepare an assistant principal for the job of principal as the osmosis theory, which expects that mere experience within the atmosphere of a school and occasional observation of leadership behavior will result, over time, in the acquisition of the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for such a leadership position. Rather than investing money in a campus overhaul of

professional development, the investment into building and maintaining a quality principal can be a cost effective path of school reform (Wallace, 2009). Assistant principals are currently not receiving the needed guidance and development to move into a principalship. Limited research on succession planning for the principal position shows that little preparation is being made to prepare for future principal positions.

Human resource directors and superintendents agree with the top three reasons why prospective principals are bowing out of the race for a job (Cushing, 2003):

1. Low pay for beginning principals – The salary is bigger but after you figure the number of extra days plus hours worked it becomes a disproportionate wage.

2. Stress of the job – accountability, public criticism, and health problems.

3. Long hours of the job are detrimental to the position and to the principal's family (Cushing, 2003).

Mentoring

Hopkins-Thompson (2000) suggested a strong mentoring program for assistant principals as the best way to prepare them for the principalship. The mentoring program of the Santa Cruz schools is described by Bloom and Krovetz (2001). This program includes the following:

- Developing future principals through structuring the assistant principalship as an apprenticeship.

- Developing future school leaders who have the skills, attitudes, behaviors, and courage to lead and manage public schools in a manner that will maximize the learning of all students.

- Designing the role of the assistant principal in a manner that supports the work of the principal as a site leader.

- Designing the principalship and assistant principalship in a manner so that the individuals who serve in these positions not only survive, but thrive.

Bloom and Krovetz (2001) reported that, with components such as these, the program was successful. One assistant principal reported after moving into the principalship that she was prepared to take on the responsibility of principal because of the coaching and mentoring interactions between her and her principal mentor (Madden, 2008). Over half of all states and many districts in the other states now have a mentoring program for principals (Wallace, 2007). It is critical that the programs are built upon student success, not just providing a buddy system for new leaders. This results in the need for funding and training of a mentoring program, rather than just friendly conversation (Wallace, 2007).

Implications for Further Research

The following suggestions are presented for further research regarding the knowledge, skills, and attributes that are perceived as important for assistant principals. This study was limited to those assistant principals selected by master's students in a large geographic area in the Gulf Coast region of Southwest Texas. This study could easily be broadened to other surrounding areas to gain a better sampling of respondents. Next, the present study looked at quantitative data to determine the perceptions of assistant principals about the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for effective leadership. It would be interesting to compare the results of this study with the same

study given to principals to see if the perceptions of principals and assistant principals are similar in relation to the needed knowledge, skills, and attributes.

Further research is still needed on the position of the assistant principal must of the current practices deal with the position of the principal or current leadership research that hits at the position of the principal but does not tie into the role of the assistant principal. One of the most compelling parts of this study was that it revealed that females scored 13 of 14 indicators in the survey as more important than men. With even less research out there on women administrators this research shows the importance to continue studying this field.

Conclusions

This study provides insight into the characteristics assistant principals perceive as the important knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to be a successful assistant principal. This study also provides added research to the field of the assistant principal and shows the need to continue with research on the position that will also address women as administrators. Two pre-determined factors; interpersonal and job-related skills, each with 7 characteristics were found from using a factor analysis. A univariate analysis of the two constructs was used using three groups: AP years of experience, gender, and school rating. In the interpersonal construct a standard deviation of significant difference was found in gender and AP experience with gender especially with more than 5 years of experience. In the job related skills construct, gender was the only standard deviation of significance that was found. Using the univariate and a cross tabulation of males and females it was discovered that females scored 13 of 14 characteristics more important that the males.

These findings are important because they show a "disconnect" in what is offered and what is needed by the assistant principal at both the district and university level. By listening to assistant principals, and making practice-based programmatic alignment, principal preparation programs have the ability to lead the charge in making the necessary changes to their curriculum to help build assistant principals into the next line of principals in a succession plan. Furthermore, by developing a full understanding of the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed by an assistant principal for both men and women with more emphasis put on those revealed interpersonal skills, future leaders will be better equipped to take over schools. School districts are also facing the same concern with their own professional development and administrator succession plans. Districts need to look at their plans and make sure what they are offering in professional development is what is needed by their assistant principals. Given the complexity of the assistant principal position, and the changing role of the position to more of an instructional leader, researchers will need to continue to explore the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for the position and how it relates to both men and women administrators.

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APPENDIX A PRINCIPAL STANDARDS

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19	EDUCATION
PART 7	STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION
CHAPTER 241	PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATE
RULE §241.15	**Standards Required for the Principal Certificate**

(a) Principal Certificate Standards. The knowledge and skills identified in this section must be used by an educator preparation program in the development of curricula and coursework and by the State Board for Educator Certification as the basis for developing the examinations required to obtain the standard Principal Certificate. The standards also serve as the foundation for the individual assessment, professional growth plan, and continuing professional education activities required by §241.30 of this title (relating to Requirements to Renew the Standard Principal Certificate).

(b) Learner-Centered Values and Ethics of Leadership. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) model and promote the highest standard of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions, and behaviors;

  (2) implement policies and procedures that encourage all campus personnel to comply with Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics);

  (3) model and promote the continuous and appropriate development of all learners in the campus community;

  (4) promote awareness of learning differences, multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and ethnic appreciation in the campus community; and

  (5) articulate the importance of education in a free democratic society.

(c) Learner-Centered Leadership and Campus Culture. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students and shapes campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) create a campus culture that sets high expectations, promotes learning, and provides intellectual stimulation for self, students, and staff;

  (2) ensure that parents and other members of the community are an integral part of the campus culture;

  (3) use strategies to ensure the development of collegial relationships and effective collaboration of campus staff;

  (4) respond appropriately to the diverse needs of individuals within the community in shaping the campus culture;

  (5) use emerging issues, trends, demographic data, knowledge of systems, campus

climate inventories, student learning data, and other information to develop a campus vision and plan to implement the vision;

  (6) facilitate the collaborative development of a shared campus vision that focuses on teaching and learning;

  (7) facilitate the collaborative development of a plan in which objectives and strategies to implement the campus vision are clearly articulated;

  (8) align financial, human, and material resources to support the implementation of the campus vision;

  (9) establish processes to assess and modify the plan of implementation to ensure achievement of the campus vision;

  (10) support innovative thinking and risk-taking efforts of everyone within the school community and view unsuccessful experiences as learning opportunities; and

  (11) acknowledge, recognize, and celebrate the contributions of students, staff, parents, and community members toward the realization of the campus vision.

(d) Learner-Centered Human Resources Leadership and Management. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by implementing a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, selects and implements appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and applies the legal requirements for personnel management. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) collaboratively develop, implement, and revise a comprehensive and on-going plan for professional development of campus staff that addresses staff needs and aligns professional development with identified goals;

  (2) facilitate the application of adult learning and motivation theory to all campus professional development, including the use of appropriate content, processes, and contexts;

  (3) ensure the effective implementation of the professional development plan by allocation of appropriate time, funding, and other needed resources;

  (4) implement effective, legal, and appropriate strategies for the recruitment, selection, assignment, and induction of campus staff;

  (5) use formative and summative evaluation processes appropriate to the position held to further develop the knowledge and skills of campus staff;

  (6) diagnose and improve campus organizational health and morale through the implementation of strategies designed to provide on-going support to campus staff members; and

  (7) engage in on-going, meaningful, and professional growth activities to further develop necessary knowledge and skills and to model lifelong learning.

(e) Learner-Centered Communications and Community Relations. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) demonstrate effective communication through oral, written, auditory, and nonverbal expression;

  (2) use effective conflict management and group consensus building skills;

  (3) implement effective strategies to systematically gather input from all campus stakeholders;

  (4) develop and implement strategies for effective internal and external communications;

  (5) develop and implement a comprehensive program of community relations, which uses strategies that will effectively involve and inform multiple constituencies, including the media;

  (6) provide varied and meaningful opportunities for parents to be engaged in the education of their children;

  (7) establish partnerships with parents, businesses, and other groups in the community to strengthen programs and support campus goals; and

  (8) respond to pertinent political, social, and economic issues that exist in the internal and external environment.

(f) Learner-Centered Organizational Leadership and Management. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students through leadership and management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) implement appropriate management techniques and group processes to define roles, assign functions, delegate authority, and determine accountability for campus goal attainment;

  (2) gather and organize information from a variety of sources for use in creative and effective campus decision making;

  (3) frame, analyze, and creatively resolve campus problems using effective problem-solving techniques to make timely, high-quality decisions;

  (4) develop, implement, and evaluate change processes for organizational effectiveness;

  (5) implement strategies that enable the physical plant, equipment, and support systems to operate safely, efficiently, and effectively to maintain a conducive learning environment;

  (6) apply local, state, and federal laws and policies to support sound decisions while considering implications related to all school operations and programs;

  (7) acquire, allocate, and manage human, material, and financial resources according to school district policies and campus priorities;

  (8) collaboratively plan and effectively manage the campus budget;

  (9) use technology to enhance school management; and

  (10) use effective planning, time management, and organization of work to maximize attainment of school district and campus goals.

(g) Learner-Centered Curriculum Planning and Development. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; alignment of curriculum, curriculum resources, and assessment; and the use of various forms of assessment to measure student performance. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

  (1) use emerging issues, occupational and economic trends, demographic data, student

learning data, motivation theory, learning theory, legal requirements, and other information as a basis for campus curriculum planning;

(2) facilitate the use of sound research-based practice in the development and implementation of campus curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs;

(3) facilitate campus participation in collaborative school district planning, implementation, monitoring, and curriculum revision to ensure appropriate scope, sequence, content, and alignment;

(4) facilitate the use and integration of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich the campus curriculum; and

(5) facilitate the effective coordination of campus curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs in relation to other school district programs.

(h) Learner-Centered Instructional Leadership and Management. A principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a campus culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. At the campus level, a principal understands, values, and is able to:

(1) facilitate the development of a campus learning organization that supports instructional improvement and change through an on-going study of relevant research and best practice;

(2) facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based instructional strategies, decisions, and programs in which multiple opportunities to learn and be successful are available to all students;

(3) implement special campus programs to ensure that all students are provided quality, flexible instructional programs and services to meet individual student needs (i.e., guidance and counseling programs and services);

(4) use interpretation of formative and summative data from a comprehensive student assessment program to develop, support, and improve campus instructional strategies and goals;

(5) facilitate the use and integration of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enhance learning;

(6) facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based theories and techniques of classroom management, student discipline, and school safety to ensure an environment conducive to teaching and learning;

(7) facilitate the development, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of student activity programs to fulfill academic, developmental, social, and cultural needs; and

(8) acquire and allocate sufficient instructional resources on the campus in the most equitable manner to support and enhance student learning.

Source Note: The provisions of this §241.15 adopted to be effective March 14, 1999, 24 TexReg 1616; amended to be effective June 10, 2001, 26 TexReg 3929; amended to be effective October 25, 2009, 34 TexReg 7200

APPENDIX B TEXES PRINCIPAL DOMAINS FOR EXAM

TExES
Texas Examinations of Educator Standards

Field 068: Principal
Test Framework

Domain I—School Community Leadership (approximately 33%)
Domain II—Instructional Leadership (approximately 44%)
Domain III—Administrative Leadership (approximately 22%)

DOMAIN I—SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP*

Competency 001

The principal knows how to shape campus culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

The principal knows how to:

- create a campus culture that sets high expectations, promotes learning, and provides intellectual stimulation for self, students, and staff.

- ensure that parents and other members of the community are an integral part of the campus culture.

- implement strategies to ensure the development of collegial relationships and effective collaboration.

- respond appropriately to diverse needs in shaping the campus culture.

- use various types of information (e.g., demographic data, campus climate inventory results, student achievement data, emerging issues affecting education) to develop a campus vision and create a plan for implementing the vision.

- use strategies for involving all stakeholders in planning processes to enable the collaborative development of a shared campus vision focused on teaching and learning.

- facilitate the collaborative development of a plan that clearly articulates objectives and strategies for implementing a campus vision.

- align financial, human, and material resources to support implementation of a campus vision.

- establish procedures to assess and modify implementation plans to ensure achievement of the campus vision.

- support innovative thinking and risk taking within the school community and view unsuccessful experiences as learning opportunities.

- acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of students, staff, parents, and community members toward realization of the campus vision.

* "School Community" includes students, staff, parents/caregivers, and community members.

Competency 002

The principal knows how to communicate and collaborate with all members of the school community, respond to diverse interests and needs, and mobilize resources to promote student success.

The principal knows how to:

- communicate effectively with families and other community members in varied educational contexts.

- apply skills for building consensus and managing conflict.

- implement effective strategies for systematically communicating with and gathering input from all campus stakeholders.

- develop and implement strategies for effective internal and external communications.

- develop and implement a comprehensive program of community relations that effectively involves and informs multiple constituencies, including the media.

- provide varied and meaningful opportunities for parents/caregivers to be engaged in the education of their children.

- establish partnerships with parents/caregivers, businesses, and others in the community to strengthen programs and support campus goals.

- communicate and work effectively with diverse groups in the school community to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for educational success.

- respond to pertinent political, social, and economic issues in the internal and external environment.

Competency 003
The principal knows how to act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical and legal manner.

The principal knows how to:

- model and promote the highest standard of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions, and behaviors.

- implement policies and procedures that promote professional educator compliance with *The Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*.

- apply knowledge of ethical issues affecting education.

- apply legal guidelines (e.g., in relation to students with disabilities, bilingual education, confidentiality, discrimination) to protect the rights of students and staff and to improve learning opportunities.

- apply laws, policies, and procedures in a fair and reasonable manner.

- articulate the importance of education in a free democratic society.

- serve as an advocate for all children.

- promote the continuous and appropriate development of all students.

- promote awareness of learning differences, multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and ethnic appreciation.

DOMAIN II—INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Competency 004

The principal knows how to facilitate the design and implementation of curricula and strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment; and promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance.

The principal knows how to:

- facilitate effective campus curriculum planning based on knowledge of various factors (e.g., emerging issues, occupational and economic trends, demographic data, student learning data, motivation theory, teaching and learning theory, principles of curriculum design, human developmental processes, legal requirements).

- facilitate the use of sound, research-based practice in the development, implementation, and evaluation of campus curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs.

- facilitate campus participation in collaborative district planning, implementation, monitoring, and revision of curriculum to ensure appropriate scope, sequence, content, and alignment.

- facilitate the use of appropriate assessments to measure student learning and ensure educational accountability.

- facilitate the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich the campus curriculum.

- facilitate the effective coordination of campus curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs in relation to other district programs.

- promote the use of creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving by staff and other campus stakeholders involved in curriculum design and delivery.

Competency 005

The principal knows how to advocate, nurture, and sustain an instructional program and a campus culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

The principal knows how to:

- facilitate the development of a campus learning organization that supports instructional improvement and change through ongoing study of relevant research and best practice.

- facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based instructional strategies, decisions, and programs in which multiple opportunities to learn and be successful are available to all students.

- create conditions that encourage staff, students, families/caregivers, and the community to strive to achieve the campus vision.

- ensure that all students are provided high-quality, flexible instructional programs with appropriate resources and services to meet individual student needs.

- use formative and summative student assessment data to develop, support, and improve campus instructional strategies and goals.

- facilitate the use and integration of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enhance learning.

- facilitate the implementation of sound, research-based theories and techniques of teaching, learning, classroom management, student discipline, and school safety to ensure a campus environment conducive to teaching and learning.

- facilitate the development, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of student services and activity programs to fulfill academic, developmental, social, and cultural needs.

- analyze instructional needs and allocate resources effectively and equitably.

- analyze the implications of various factors (e.g., staffing patterns, class scheduling formats, school organizational structures, student discipline practices) for teaching and learning.

- ensure responsiveness to diverse sociological, linguistic, cultural, and other factors that may affect students' development and learning.

Competency 006

The principal knows how to implement a staff evaluation and development system to improve the performance of all staff members, select and implement appropriate models for supervision and staff development, and apply the legal requirements for personnel management.

The principal knows how to:

- work collaboratively with other campus personnel to develop, implement, evaluate, and revise a comprehensive campus professional development plan that addresses staff needs and aligns professional development with identified goals.

- facilitate the application of adult learning principles and motivation theory to all campus professional development activities, including the use of appropriate content, processes, and contexts.

- allocate appropriate time, funding, and other needed resources to ensure the effective implementation of professional development plans.

- implement effective, appropriate, and legal strategies for the recruitment, screening, selection, assignment, induction, development, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and dismissal of campus staff.

- use formative and summative evaluation procedures to enhance the knowledge and skills of campus staff.

- diagnose campus organizational health and morale and implement strategies to provide ongoing support to campus staff.

- engage in ongoing professional development activities to enhance one's own knowledge and skills and to model lifelong learning.

Competency 007

The principal knows how to apply organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to ensure an effective learning environment.

The principal knows how to:

- implement appropriate management techniques and group process skills to define roles, assign functions, delegate authority, and determine accountability for campus goal attainment.

- implement procedures for gathering, analyzing, and using data from a variety of sources for informed campus decision making.

- frame, analyze, and resolve problems using appropriate problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills.

- use strategies for promoting collaborative decision making and problem solving, facilitating team building, and developing consensus.

- encourage and facilitate positive change, enlist support for change, and overcome obstacles to change.

- apply skills for monitoring and evaluating change and making needed adjustments to achieve goals.

DOMAIN III—ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Competency 008

The principal knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to campus budgeting, personnel, resource utilization, financial management, and technology use.

The principal knows how to:

- apply procedures for effective budget planning and management.
- work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop campus budgets.
- acquire, allocate, and manage human, material, and financial resources according to district policies and campus priorities.
- apply laws and policies to ensure sound financial management in relation to accounts, bidding, purchasing, and grants.
- use effective planning, time management, and organization of personnel to maximize attainment of district and campus goals.
- develop and implement plans for using technology and information systems to enhance school management.

Competency 009

The principal knows how to apply principles of leadership and management to the campus physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.

The principal knows how to:

- implement strategies that enable the school physical plant, equipment, and support systems to operate safely, efficiently, and effectively.
- apply strategies for ensuring the safety of students and personnel and for addressing emergencies and security concerns.
- develop and implement procedures for crisis planning and for responding to crises.
- apply local, state, and federal laws and policies to support sound decision making related to school programs and operations (e.g., student services, food services, health services, transportation).

APPENDIX C ISLLC STANDARDS

ISLLC Standards

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• learning goals in a pluralistic society,
• the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans,
• systems theory,
• information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies,
• effective communication,
• effective consensus-building and negotiation skills.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• the educability of all,
• a school vision of high standards of learning,
• continuous school improvement,
• the inclusion of all members of the school community,
• ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults,
• a willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices,
• doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance.

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that
• the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members,
• the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities,
• the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders,
• the vision is developed with and among stakeholders,
• the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated,
• progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders,
• the school community is involved in school improvement efforts,

• the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions,
• an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated,
• assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals,
• relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals,
• barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed,
• needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals,
• existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals,
• the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised.

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• student growth and development,
• applied learning theories,
• applied motivational theories,
• curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement,
• principles of effective instruction,
• measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies,
• diversity and its meaning for educational programs,
• adult learning and professional development models,
• the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals,
• the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth,
• school cultures.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling,
• the proposition that all students can learn,
• the variety of ways in which students can learn,
• life long learning for self and others,
• professional development as an integral part of school improvement,
• the benefits that diversity brings to the school community,

• a safe and supportive learning environment,
• preparing students to be contributing members of society.

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that
• all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect,
• professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals,
• students and staff feel valued and important,
• the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged,
• barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed,
• diversity is considered in developing learning experiences,
• life-long learning is encouraged and modeled,
• there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance,
• technologies are used in teaching and learning,
• student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated,
• multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students,
• the school is organized and aligned for success,
• curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined,
• curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
• the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis,
• a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions,
• student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques,
• multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students,
• a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed,
• pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families.

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development,
• operational procedures at the school and district level,
• principles and issues relating to school safety and security,

• human resources management and development,
• principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management,
• principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space,
• legal issues impacting school operations,
• current technologies that support management functions.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching,
• taking risks to improve schools,
• trusting people and their judgments,
• accepting responsibility,
• high-quality standards, expectations, and performances,
• involving stakeholders in management processes,
• a safe environment.

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that
• knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions,
• operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning,
• emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate,
• operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place,
• collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed,
• the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively,
• time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals,
• potential problems and opportunities are identified,
• problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner,
• financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools,
• the school acts entrepreneurally to support continuous improvement,
• organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed,
• stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools,
• responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability,
• effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used,
• effective conflict resolution skills are used,
• effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used,
• effective communication skills are used,

• a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained,
• human resource functions support the attainment of school goals,
• confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained.

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community,
• the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community,
• community resources,
• community relations and marketing strategies and processes,
• successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• schools operating as an integral part of the larger community,
• collaboration and communication with families,
• involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes,
• the proposition that diversity enriches the school
• families as partners in the education of their children,
• the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind,
• resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students,
• an informed public.

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that
• high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community are priorities,
• relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured,
• information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly,
• there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies

and organizations,
• credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict,
• the school and community serve one another as resources,
• available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals,
• partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals,
• community youth family services are integrated with school programs,
• community stakeholders are treated equitably,
• diversity is recognized and valued,
• effective media relations are developed and maintained,
• a comprehensive program of community relations is established,
• public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely,
• community collaboration is modeled for staff,
• opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided.

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society,
• various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics,
• the values of the diverse school community,
• professional codes of ethics,
• the philosophy and history of education.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• the ideal of the common good,
• the principles in the Bill of Rights,
• the right of every student to a free, quality education,
• bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process,
• subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community,
• accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions,
• using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families,
• development of a caring school community.

Performances

The administrator
• examines personal and professional values,
• demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics,
• demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance,
• serves as a role model,
• accepts responsibility for school operations,
• considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others,
• uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain,
• treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect,
• protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff,
• demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community,
• recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others,
• examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community,
• expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior,
• opens the school to public scrutiny,
• fulfills legal and contractual obligations,
• applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately.

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of
• principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools,
• the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation,
• the law as related to education and schooling,
• the political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools,
• models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling,
• global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning,
• the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system,
• the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society.

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to
• education as a key to opportunity and social mobility,
• recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures,
• importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education,
• actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education,
• using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities.

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that
• the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families,
• communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate,
• there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups,
• the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities,
• public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students.

APPENDIX D SURVEY

Survey

__Section H__

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important knowledge you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Knowledge of People	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Law	1	2	3	4	5
Fiscal	1	2	3	4	5

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which each of the following represents important skills you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Interpersonal	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Management	1	2	3	4	5
Technical	1	2	3	4	5

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most and 1 being least indicate the extent to which of the following represents important attributes you should have to be a successful assistant principal.

Positive Disposition	1	2	3	4	5
Visionary	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical Values	1	2	3	4	5
Good Communicator	1	2	3	4	5
Organizer	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL LETTER