

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STATE OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN NORTH
CAROLINA FROM THE PRINCIPALS' EXECUTIVE PROGRAM SURVEYS OF
2003 and 2008

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ABSTRACT

ALISA R. MCLEAN: A Comparative Study of the State of the Principalship in North Carolina from the Principals' Executive Program Surveys of 2003 and 2008

(Under the direction of Dr. Fenwick English)

This study was designed to identify salient characteristics and features that can be added to the current body of literature on school administration as it pertains to the role of the principal in the 21st century; particularly as it relates to concerns proliferating around the role in North Carolina. The purpose of the study was to utilize data collected by the Principals' Executive Program in 2003 from the "State of the Principalship" survey to compare with principal perceptions of their roles from the re-administration of that same survey in 2008. These two surveys were designed to ask questions in four main areas that are grounded in research for the study. They were (a) demographic trends, (b) aspects of being a principal, (c) aspects of principal job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement, and (d) aspects of professional development for principals. The researcher reviewed secondary data sets from the two years and investigated issues pertaining to how time was spent, preparation for the principalship, professional development, principal priorities, district leadership and recent issues as drawn from the two survey administrations. To examine these issues, the major research question was "How has the role of the principal and the perceptions of principals in North Carolina changed from 2003 to 2008 as judged by the "State of the Principalship" surveys?" Five

hundred seven (44%) participants completed the survey in 2003, and 651 (56%) completed the survey in 2008.

Based on results, the study concluded that while only a few areas of significance were reported between the two years, principal respondents provided important data that will be useful to the Principals' Executive Program in its quest to deliver contemporary, effective professional development for principals in North Carolina. Major findings included that the job has become more demanding and the need for professional development in the following areas are of great concern for principals serving in that capacity today: curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. According to principal respondents in both administrations, the Principals' Executive Program is still considered the most rewarding professional development experience for principals in North Carolina. The data also suggested that universities continue to play an important role in the preparation of principals.

Patterns from the comparison of the two data sets by principal respondents suggested that principals report spending the majority of their time on instructional leadership (meaning curriculum and instruction, school improvement and student achievement) while principals in 2003 reported issues surrounding management routines as most important. Central Office and district support in school improvement was also reported more favorably in 2008 than in 2003. The PEP surveys were not perfect matches in all aspects of the principal's job when comparing responses between the two years. The data produced by them, however, is and will remain valuable and a continuing source of information about principal leadership in the state for policy makers, universities, local

districts, professional development providers, practicing principals and aspiring principals alike.

Using Pearson chi square and independent samples t test, findings support existing literature on principal leadership, school leadership and professional development for school leaders.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my amazing husband,
Frankie and my awesome daughter, Imari
for unconditional love, encouragement, support,
and understanding. You were my constant sources of inspiration.
Thank you. This belongs to all of us.

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family members, she told me in a very encouraging voice at my sister's graduation, "One day, maybe you'll graduate, mom." While we have laughed at this cute story for years, I must admit it was then that I realized I needed to return to school and complete my doctoral work. Although she may not have known the power of her words, I am grateful to her for getting me back on track. I also appreciate her smile. It always had a way of making everything seem just fine throughout this process. It was her ability to turn even the most turbulent situations into funny moments and her confidence in my talents that kept me devoted to the task.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Description</u>
ABCs	Accountability, Basic, Control – North Carolina’s accountability program
NCDPI	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
NCLB	No Child Left Behind legislation
PEP	Principals’ Executive Program
SBE	State Board of Education (North Carolina)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter states the problem that prompted this research study. It explains how this study was grounded in prior research, suggests potential contributions to educational research, practice and school leadership, and presents the research goals and questions this study was designed to investigate.

The study is a comparison of two North Carolina assessments designed for principals called “The State of the Principalship” surveys. The first was administered by The Principals’ Executive Program (PEP) in the fall of 2003. The second was administered in the fall of 2008. The survey is centered on perspectives of principals regarding the role of the principalship in North Carolina. The study was supported by The Principals’ Executive Program, a professional development agency for school leaders established in 1984 by the North Carolina General Assembly. Findings were used to help inform the field of educational administration, particularly as it pertains to the role of public school principals in North Carolina.

The study was principally concerned with seeking to understand the factors that influence principal roles as agents of school leadership, particularly those that address behaviors and practices in the following four main areas: demographic, principal roles and responsibilities, school improvement and professional development. For the study, these behaviors framed what is referred to as the “State of the Principalship.”

The study was executed in three parts. First, patterns from the data of the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey and interviews from former PEP faculty were investigated and described. Second, the 2003 survey was modified and

re-administered for the collection of 2008 data. The survey was administered to all public school North Carolina principals. Third, based on results from both surveys, 2003 and 2008, data was compared and analyzed. Emergent trends and patterns were identified and potential salient features of principal views were designed to contribute to the body of literature in the area of school administration.

Background of the Study

Some recent research has suggested that public demands for more effective schools have placed growing attention on the crucial role of school leaders (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Other research pertinent to school site leadership suggests that strong principal leadership is an essential characteristic for effective schools and ultimately student success (Cohen, 1983; Davis et al.; Fullan, 1993; Greenfield, 1982; Halliger & Leithwood, 1996; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994; Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008). Earlier relevant literature proffered in “Cubberley’s (1916) highly influential textbook, *Public School Administration*, that the principal is organizer, executive, and supervisor of work,” while claiming, “As is the principal, so is the school” (p. 15 as cited in Brown, 2005, p.117).

As insights into contemporary principal behaviors and patterns are investigated, it was critical for this study to provide some understanding of the historical context behind the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey and its re-administration in 2008.

The role, title, practices and expectations of the “principalship” emerged between 1840 and 1900 due to the rapid growth of the nation’s population, cities, and graded schools (Brown, 2005). According to Beck and Murphy (1993), in the 1920s, principals

were considered to be a link among spiritual values, the “truths” of scientific management and their schools. In the 1930s, “both the language and content of educational writings suggest that the principal came to be viewed as a business executive, a kind of manager within the school” (Beck & Murphy, p. 47). From 1940 to 1960, the principal’s role changed from authority figure to, process helper consultant, curriculum leader, supervisor, public relations representative, and leader on the home front (Beck & Murphy). The shift in the 1960s was to that of bureaucrat, accountability leader, and user of scientific strategies while growth of social problems in the 1970s, such as racial tension, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, required principals to turn their primary attention away from academics to that of community leader, juggler of multiple roles, and facilitator of positive relationships (Brown).

Various principal roles, behaviors and practices have contributed to the characteristics and patterns that have emerged and been executed in the principalship since its conception. But, what is significant about the behaviors of principals leading schools today and what trends or patterns are prevalent when compared with trends and patterns revealed in 2003 when the “State of the Principalship” survey was last administered?

Literature from the body of research supporting effective principal leadership suggests that the role of the school principal has continued to evolve dramatically over the last century (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Odden, 1995). In a recent study, researchers (Davis et al., 2005) suggested,

While the role of the principal has swelled to include a staggering array of tasks and competencies, principals are still expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians,

community builders, public relations and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. (p. 3)

Additionally, principals are expected to serve, respond to and balance the many needs and often conflicting interests of many stakeholders. In a 2005 school leadership study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and conducted by researchers from Stanford University's Educational Leadership Institute and the Finance project,

As a result, many scholars and practitioners argue that the job requirements far exceed reasonable capacities of any one person. The demands of the job have changed so that the traditional methods of preparing administrators are no longer adequate to meet the leadership challenges posed by public schools. (p. 3)

The North Carolina State Board of Education (2006), along with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, worked with an ad hoc committee charged with developing standards supported by practices to aid in the transformation and development of quality principals in North Carolina. North Carolina's new Standards for School Executives were adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in 2006 and prescribe seven leadership characteristics deemed essential for principals to be effective 21st century school leaders. These seven standards are borrowed from a 2003 Wallace Foundation study entitled, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship* (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2006).

Unlike many current efforts that look at all of the things principals "might" or "should" do, researchers in this study examined what principals actually do. As such, it is grounded in ongoing practice, and supports the distribution of leadership rather than the elements of managerial leadership that saturated school leadership in the 20th century

(NCDPI, 2006). As the precursor to many of the new policies and changes surrounding principal leadership and evaluation in North Carolina, the NC Standards for School Executives serves as one of the catalysts prompting the Principals' Executive Program's decision to revive the "State of the Principalship" survey, originally administered in 2002 and re-administered in 2003. In one of PEP's 2004 *Leadership* newsletters, it is reported that this instrument was used to "evaluate PEP's program offerings as well as validate PEP's existence" (Lewandowski, 2004). Dr. Anita Ware, a former PEP faculty member who oversaw the development and administration of the 2002 and 2003 PEP surveys stated, "The questions were designed to be relevant for what is interesting and important for the principalship and what is interesting and important to track over time" (A.Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). Further, she reported that "In addition to gauging and qualifying our [PEPs] existence as we have often had to do, we developed questions designed to measure: (a) how much time is spent in the role, (b) what principals actually did, and (c) what they felt confident in doing" (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The study compared findings from the 2003 administration of "The State of the Principalship" survey with the 2008 re-administration of that same survey (with modifications), through PEP, a North Carolina professional development organization designed for school leaders by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1984.

The purpose of the comparison of the two surveys represented an effort to learn more about changes in principal-leadership indicators over time. Analysis and

comparison of the data from the 2 years (2003 and 2008) allowed the researcher to identify significant trends and patterns, if any, that emerged over the past 5 years.

It was anticipated that, if the comparison study identifies statistically significant characteristics and patterns, the findings will contribute to the current body of principal research and literature for aspiring principals, professional development and university preparation programs, and those seeking to hire principals to meet the demands for effectively leading schools in the 21st century. In 2004, Dr. Debbie Goldbeck, former PEP faculty member, used results from the 2002 and 2003 “State of the Principalship” surveys to inform her dissertation research on “North Carolina Principals’ Perspectives On Mentoring Assistant Principals: Preparing Assistant Principals For The Principalship” (Goldbeck, 2004). In her study, she indicated,

Although there is a literature base that describes how universities prepare school administrators (Fults, 2002; Marshall, 1992; Public Schools of North Carolina, 1998; Weller & Weller, 2002), what standards are important for principals (Ferradino, 2002; ISLLC, 1996; Murphy, 2002; NAESP, 2001; NCSBPSSA, 2000), and what principals need to know and be able to do (Advanced PEP for LPAP Graduates, 1996; Checkley, 2000; Cunningham & Thompson, 2002; Daresh & Playko, 1997; Leadership Program for New Principals, 1999; Tirozzi & Ferrandino, 2000; UNC Division of University-School Partnerships Conference, 2001), there is much less in the literature that discusses what should be done to mentor assistant principals who plan to move into the principalship. (Goldbeck, p. 18)

Her study indicated the importance of continued research for these entities. It was hoped that the re-administration of the “State of the Principalship” survey and the comparison to the 2003 data also contributes to the body of research pertinent to educational administration and school leadership.

Major and Guiding Research Questions

The major research question for this study was “How have the role of the principal and the perceptions of principals in North Carolina changed from 2003 to 2008 as judged by “The State of the Principalship” survey?” The researcher investigated issues pertaining to how time is spent, preparation for the principalship, professional development, principal priorities, district leadership and recent issues. From this major research question, four guiding questions emerged to serve as integral components of the study:

1. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics cited by respondents?

2. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences on aspects of being a principal in North Carolina?

3. Based on a comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in aspects of the principal’s job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement?

4. Based on comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in the aspects of professional development?

Limitations of the Study

As with any research study, there were limitations. In this study, the following limitations are noted:

1. The study sample only included perspectives from principals in the state of North Carolina. To the extent that working conditions in North Carolina are similar or comparable only in North Carolina, the parameters to which generalizations from the comparison may be insightful outside the state are limited.

2. To maintain the validity of this comparative study and to improve 2003 response rates, it was important that the online method for contacting all North Carolina principals electronically be updated to reflect available e-mail capabilities today. This is different from the method utilized in 2003 when PEP sought to reach all North Carolina principals by (a) e-mailing principals who existed in the PEP listserv (as a result of either having attended a PEP program or requesting to be in the database) and by (b) e-mailing all North Carolina superintendents, requesting that they forward the survey to principals in their district. For the 2008 administration of the “State of the Principalship Survey,” PEP partnered with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and ascertained accurate e-mail addresses for all N.C. principals as of September 2008. The online survey was e-mailed directly to every principal in the state of North Carolina by way of the *K12 Insight* software company, hired by PEP for surveying needs.

3. Respondents in both 2003 and 2008 included only those individuals who were serving in the capacity as school principal at the time the survey was administered. Individuals who may have been principals in North Carolina in 2003 and may have responded to the 2003 survey may no longer have been a principal in 2008.

4. Anonymity was still guaranteed for respondents. Therefore, survey participant responses could not be compared for individual analysis over the 5 year span.

5. Survey content was limited to principal perspectives only. Views from others (i.e. teachers, superintendents or assistant principals, etc.), as in various other studies pertaining to the work of principals, were not included in this study. Principal responses were not cross-referenced with the opinions and views of others for this study. 2008 responses will be retrieved and compared only with the views of principals who participated in the 2003 survey.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms were defined as listed below for the review of literature and for understanding survey content and comparison.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) : “No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires determination of student, school, school district, and state progress in achieving proficiency goals through the use of a measure called Adequate Yearly Progress” (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003a, p.34).

Change: Refers to “a difference in the state or quality of something” (Evans, 1996, p.21).

Leadership: is defined as “an essential element of successful schools” (Porter, Goldring, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2006, p. 1). “The process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization” (Patterson, 1993, p. 3).

Low-performing schools: A school which has failed to meet expected growth standards and have significantly less than 50% of students scoring at or above Achievement Level III (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006).

Management: Refers to the concept of “applying influence to create a climate of commitment and openness to change” (Schatz & Schatz, 1986) and/or “to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 20). “The primary responsibility of principals is to manage the school operations” (Crow, Matthews, & McCleary., 1996).

No Child Left Behind Act: Also known as Public Law 107-110 or NCLB reauthorized in 2001, a number of federal programs developed to improve K-12 schools by increasing the accountability standards for states, school districts, and schools (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006).

Principal: A role in public schools which appeared as early as 1838 as referenced in the Common School Report of Cincinnati and then again in 1841 in Horace Mann’s 1842 report to the Massachusetts School Board, but did not become formally recognized and widely accepted until the latter part of the 19th century (English, 2005); leaders who direct organizational changes that build confidence and enable teachers, staff, students, and parents to seek new ways of doing things (McCall, 1994); term used interchangeably with “school leader” (Portin, Schneider, DeArnold, & Gundlach, 2003) and school executive (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006); “change masters” (McCall, 1994, p. viii).

Principals’ Executive Program (PEP): A formal effort established in 1984 by the North Carolina General Assembly to exclusively meet the professional development

needs of principals, to increase their commitment, to enlarge their knowledge, to spark their creativity, and to develop their leadership skills (McCall, 1994). PEP serves principals, assistant principals, central office executives, public charter school leaders and LEA superintendents with a variety of professional learning opportunities (Lewandowski, 2006).

Professional development: Refers to those processes that improve the job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes including training, coaching, practices and activities (Guskey & Sparks, 1991).

Public Schools of North Carolina: Refers to the joint work of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as described by McREL in the 2008 North Carolina School Executive: Principal Evaluation Process instrument (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008).

School executive: A term used interchangeably with “principal” for this study (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006).

School leader: A term used interchangeably with “principal” for this study (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This section of the study focused on the literature surrounding the concept of school leadership as embodied in the school principal. It included a review of prior studies and concepts considered to be closely related to the topic.

A comparative method was used to investigate the possible relationships and levels of significance between the 2003 and 2008 “State of the Principalship” survey findings. The schemata for this research were presented by providing an overview of the conceptual framework for this study, including research on change and that from the Wallace Foundation’s *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the Principalship* (2003), a study that aided in the conception this research. It also served as the primary study selected by the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) to guide the development of the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006).

Theoretical Perspective/ Conceptual Framework for the Study

The larger framework that informed the work of this study is shown in Figure 1. In 2002, the faculty of the Principals’ Executive Program sought to respond to and address the expectations of the long-range plan of The University of North Carolina Board of Governors while strategically seeking information regarding the delivery of professional development service to principals (A. Ware, August 25, 2008, personal communication). The assumptions and logic of prior research were “consistent with theories of change and the work of Michael Fullan” (C. Hitch, personal communication,

July 29, 2008) as well as “good instructional leadership as described by Blase and Blase” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008).

Dr. Anita Ware, former PEP assistant director, indicated in an interview on August 25, 2008 that

The work of Jo Blase and Joseph Blase was instrumental in the re-development of questions in 2003. We designed the questions to help determine answers to questions like (a) what seems to matter and (b) how comfortable and competent principals felt about certain aspects of the changing role of the principal from manager to instructional leader based on the research they presented (personal communication on August 25, 2008).

“In designing the 2003 survey, which is different from the 2002 survey, we [PEP faculty] intended on asking principals about specific skills they had, skills they needed and skills they were still in need of developing professionally” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). This is the reason that the theoretical framework for this 2008 comparative study embraced those same claims in order to have the appropriate basis for a valid comparison.

The framework in Figure 1 indicates that this study was impacted by the history of the principalship as well as the history of the Principals’ Executive Program, host for the survey. PEP archive data, historical PEP artifacts, interviews with former PEP faculty and data from the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey informed the background and historical foundation presented in this study. Additionally, the framework demonstrates that public and political perspectives as well as the newly adopted Standard for School Executives in North Carolina and salient research in the field informing 21st century school leadership, were important factors to be included in the study.

At the center of the framework are the main elements of the “State of the Principalship” survey—the core of this research. Central to the entire research effort are the four areas of “The State of the Principalship” survey which directly impacted the findings and drove categories of expectations for this study. They were (a) demographic patterns, (b) aspects of being a principal in North Carolina, (c) aspects of the principal’s job responsibilities relating to school improvement, and (d) aspects of professional development. Parameters for the questions in the survey were guided by these four areas.

On the outside of the center figure, the framework reveals that this study is grounded in elements of change (Fullan, 2001; Schlechty, 1997). To the right of the diagram is the box indicating “improved school outcomes and increased student achievement.” This represents the goal and expectation for all 21st Century school principals based on research in the field (Fullan, 2001; Marsh, 2000; Marzano, 2005) as well as addresses “the Principals’ Executive Program’s ultimate objective, which has always been the significant improvement of students’ understanding and performance” (Principals’ Executive Program, 1997, p.1). Regardless of rationales, expectations, responsibilities and duties for principals, school improvement and increased student achievement remained central to this study. The 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey was developed to not only gain insight into the delivery of service provided by the Principals’ Executive Program, but to help inform the field of educational leadership on the characteristics and patterns revealed by 21st century principals serving in that capacity in North Carolina. For, it is their perspectives (A.Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008 and D. Goldbeck, personal communication, August 20, 2008), that informed the work of PEP, sponsors of the survey. Thus, the conceptual

framework for this study (a) synthesized the concern surrounding the principalship from various school stakeholders and (b) embraced the literature on *change* as it served as an integral component for the development of the 2003 survey questions and an expectation for school leaders and the schools they lead (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2001; A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008).

Change and Politics for North Carolina Principals

Haycock (1998) explained that effective principals are the ones who set direction, solve problems, and facilitate change. Literature pertinent to “change” was important for this study because “The PEP faculty have always been concerned with remaining cutting-edge and forward-thinking in its delivery of service to principals as we prepare them to meet the demands and challenges of the times. Our purpose is clear” (C. Hitch, personal communication, June 15, 2008). As evidenced by the archive fact sheets from 1985 – 1997 and the PEP announcement pamphlets for courses (1995), “the purpose of PEP was to offer a leadership training course for public school principals who want to develop their managerial skills and refine their understanding of the fundamental systems and issues that challenge them on the job by:

1. Exploring current techniques in management as applied to public school operations;
2. Hone executive skills – that is, the personal skills necessary to be an exceptional effective administrator; and
3. Step outside day-to-day responsibilities and think creatively about the job of school management in an increasingly complex, uncertain, and changing time. (p. 1)

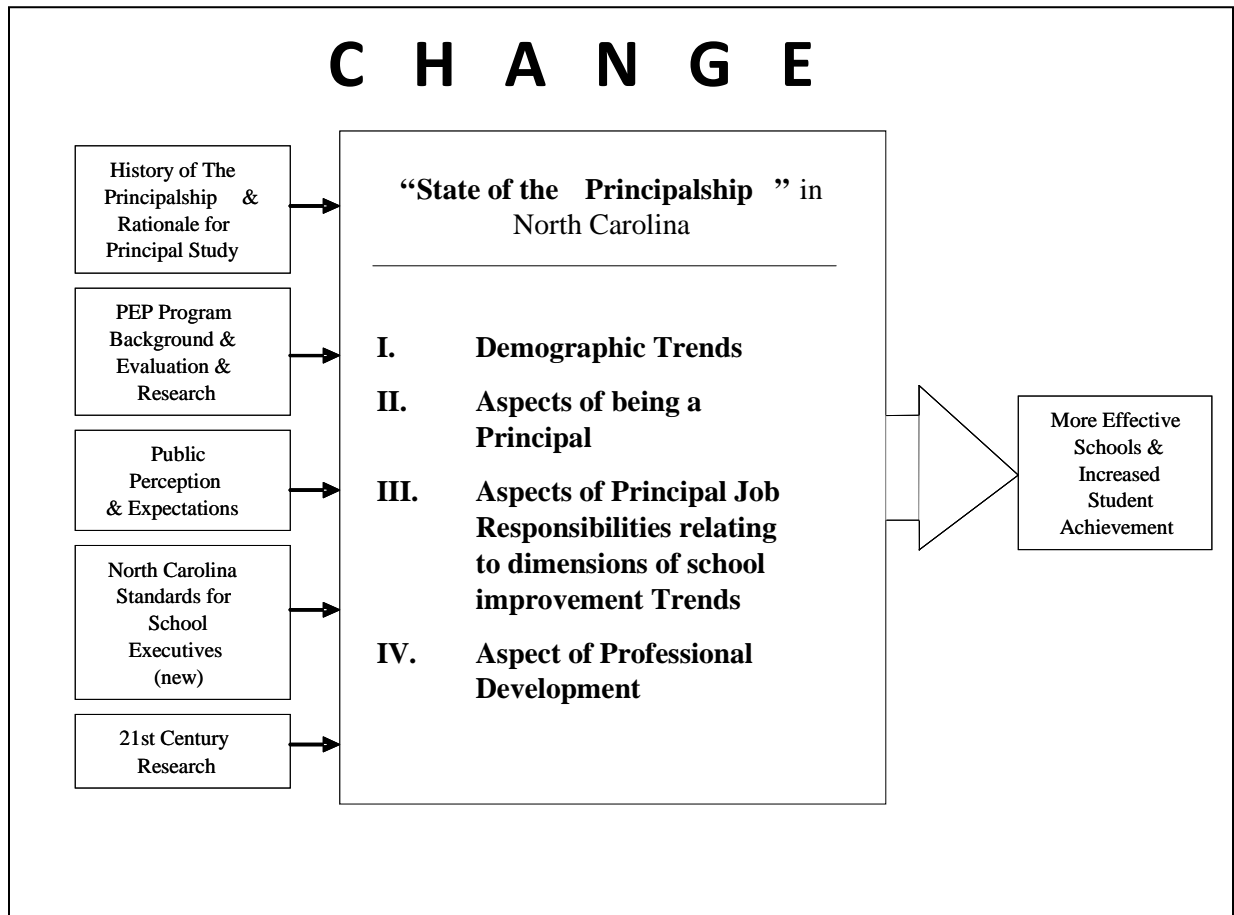


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for The State of the Principalship.

The PEP faculty reportedly still honors this purpose and utilized this foundation in the development of the original 2002 “State of the Principalship” survey and again, in the redevelopment and reconstruction of the questions used in the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey, (D. Goldbeck, personal communication, August 20, 2008), which was used for comparison in this study.

This section draws from the literature on school leadership and the impact that leaders have on school change. When one thinks of “change” in schools, the first image is often linked to that of the principal and the formal role of running the school; however, this section will also examine recent legal action, as well as the rationales behind public expectations and Standards for School Principals that have contributed to the role of the principalship in North Carolina.

Halliger and Leithwood (1996) suggested that since the 1960s, an evolving series of normative role configurations has been laid at the feet of principals: manager, street level bureaucrat, change agent, instructional leader and transformational leader. They concluded, while the response to “these new demands” has been mixed, practitioners must keep busy trying to understand the “nature of their changing professional roles and up-to-date in terms of the skills demanded in their rapidly changing organizations (p. 98). The following sections will examine how “change” has impacted the principalship nationally and in North Carolina. Further, it will address the importance of principals understanding the “change” that impacts the role of the principal (Portin, Schneider, DeArnold & Gundlach, 2003) as well as why the concern has heightened in North Carolina.

Change and Principal Leadership

The literature on educational change points to effective leadership as the key to successful schools (Fullan, 1991, 1993, 2001; Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). In keeping with the *Making Sense of Leading Schools* (2003) study, one of main studies for this research, leaders have the ability to empower others in order to bring about a major change in the

structure, characteristics, and function of a situation or an organization (Bennis & Nannus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Leithwood et al., 1994).

In adopting the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives, the North Carolina State Board of Education, in 2006 set forth a new vision of school leadership based on the research from the 2003 study entitled, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship*. Researchers dictated the need for a new type of school leader – an executive instead of an administrator; meaning a principal who can create effective school organizations that can learn and change quickly if they are to improve (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006). Thus, the new vision for school leadership in North Carolina is rooted in elements of “change.” In fact, the first section of the new Standards reads:

Public education’s changed mission dictates the need for a new type of school leader – an executive instead of an administrator. No longer are school leaders just maintaining the status quo by managing complex operations, but just like their colleagues in business, they must be able to create schools as organizations that can learn and change quickly if they are to improve performance. Schools need executives who are adept at creating systems for change and at building relationships with and across staff that not only tap into the collective knowledge and insight they possess but powerful relationship that also stir their passions for their work with children. One of these relationships the executive must create among staff, a common shared understanding for the purpose of work of the school, its values that direct its action, and commitment and ownership of a set of beliefs and goals that focus everyone’s decision making. The staff’s common understanding of the school’s identity empowers them to seek and build powerful alliances and partnerships with students, parents and community stakeholders in order to enhance their ability to produce increased student achievement. The successful work of the new executive will only be realized in the creation of a culture in which leadership is distributed and encouraged with teachers, which consists of open, honest communication, which is focused on the use of data, teamwork, research-based best practices, and which uses modern tools to drive ethical and principled, goal-oriented action. This culture of disciplined thought

and action is rooted in the ability of the relationships among all stakeholders to build a trusting, transparent environment that reduces all stakeholders' sense of vulnerability as they address the challenges of transformational change (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006, p. 1).

This describes the type of principal the North Carolina State Board of Education aspires to have lead its schools today. Therefore, prompting a reinvestigation of the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey and a comparison to identify characteristics, changes, trends, and patterns relevant for those aspiring to the principalship, making decisions about the principalship and living the principalship.

“Change-oriented leadership” (Yukl, 2002) is used to describe principals using robust, effective methods for getting the school and its members (staff, students, families community agents) to become more productive (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005). And, according to the *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship* (2003), the original study that aided in prompting this research, as well as the newly adopted North Carolina Standards for School Executives, that is the goal and standard for all principals in North Carolina today. The next section will describe political perspectives on the role and expectations for principals in North Carolina. Has this impacted principal behaviors and patterns since the 2003 administration of “The State of the Principalship” survey was last administered?

Political Perspective on Principal Leadership in North Carolina

Good Principals Are the Key to Successful Schools: Six Strategies to Prepare More Good Principals is an empirical study prepared by the Southern Regional Education Board (2003). It addressed the fact that for several decades of research, high quality principals make the difference. Unfortunately, however, it also suggests that while some

schools are lucky enough to have excellent principals; others do not. The study encourages policymakers, states, principal preparation programs and licensing policies to take “luck” and “hit or miss” leadership out of the equation (Southern Regional Education Board).

Not only are educators, parents and communities concerned with the state of the principalship across this nation because of the permeating belief that all schools should be high performing, led by principals who can lead them to success (Southern Regional Education Board, 2003) but so are the politics surrounding local to national campaign initiatives. The principalship has become more than just a role for educators who aspire to impact more than a solitary classroom environment but rather a complicated, plethora of tasks that professional development providers, schools of education and policy-makers seek to understand, particularly as expectations and demands of the role change. The “State of the Principalship” survey, originally created in part, in response to The University of North Carolina’s Board of Governor’s 2002-2007 long-range plan under section five: Strategic Direction, stated under goal three:

“b. Continue efforts to develop outstanding teacher and administrator preparation and development programs that include strong discipline content, pedagogy, and clinical training (i.e. integration of Arts and Sciences, accreditation of programs and assessments) to ensure high quality teachers, administrators, and other school personnel who can contribute to closing the achievement gap;

c. Expand our commitment to the development of comprehensive, high quality programs of continuing professional development of K-12 school personnel from their initial induction to retirement; and

e. Support and strengthen both research and public service programs in the Center for School Leadership Development” (p. 38).

Since the 2003 administration of the “State of the Principalship” survey, implications for principals in the state of North Carolina were given, politically and publicly in 2005. When North Carolina Superior Court Judge Howard Manning, who also ruled in the national 2002 Leandro case, studied and closely followed North Carolina’s school’s test performance, he posited that the main problem with North Carolina’s high school was leadership and more specifically, “sorry principals” (Manning, 2006).

Historical Perspectives for the “State of the Principalship” Study
History of the Principals’ Executive Program and “The State of the Principalship

This section of the review of literature describes the broad panoply of PEP, the host of the “State of the Principalship” survey since 2002, although a revised set of questions were developed for the 2003 administration (D. Goldbeck, August 20, 2008, personal communication) to “better reflect the roles and behaviors of principals at that time.” According to archived fact sheets, “The Principals’ Executive Program was authorized and funded by the 1984 session of the North Carolina General Assembly. It is a professional-level management course designed for public school principals who want to develop their managerial skills and refine their understanding of the fundamental systems and issues that challenge them on the job” (Principals’ Executive Program, fact sheet 1984-1987, p. 1).

Additional facts revealed that “The Principals’ Executive Program was developed as a response to current reports on educational improvement that emphasize the need for more training for middle managers in education – principals” (p. 1). According to early notes of Dr. Robert Phay, PEP’s founder, the purpose of PEP “is and has always been the significant improvement of students’ understanding and performance. The expectation is

that the participant's [principal] school will improve as a result of the administrator's participation in PEP" (p.1). This expectation served as a piece of the framework dictating the main goal for principal behaviors and expectations as it related to this study.

The original vision of PEP experienced contextual changes as modifications to services for principals were adjusted over time. "The ABCs of Public Education legislation was passed in 1994, and, in my opinion, that's the date that things began to change for PEP. As implications of the high-stakes testing program became apparent, everything had to be aligned with EOC/EOG testing. PEP was commanded, by the legislature and/or DPI, to prove that its curriculum had a direct effect on student achievement. We tried very hard to do so, but it was a fruitless task" (D. Powell, November 6, 2008, personal communication). According to Dr. Ken Jenkins, former director of PEP, "We, (the faculty and I) allowed it to die a quiet and natural death, to be replaced by all of the more targeted initiatives you see today" (October 29, 2008, personal communication).

Since state funds were allocated for PEP by the General Assembly, measurement for success is often required in an effort to justify the spending and need for services. "The State of the Principalship" survey, originally crafted in 2002 was developed by PEP faculty to investigate perspectives of North Carolina principals as it pertained to responsibilities associated with the role of the principal as well as to "identify what was interesting and important for the principalship and what was interesting and important to track over time for professional development planning purposes. The PEP faculty also hoped that over time, the information would be important for people to gauge" (A. Ware, August 25, 2008, personal communication). The survey was also developed in response

to The University of North Carolina Board of Governors long-range plan, 2002-2007 and eventually aided with the pertinent details for the Supply and Demand report for UNC-General Administration (Jenkins, K., personal communication, July 21, 2008). Due to personnel changes in PEP faculty, [meaning when Dr. Anita Ware departed], the State of the Principalship survey was no longer administered.

Historical Perspectives of the Principalship

The historical perspective of the principalship was critical to this study as it provided background information necessary for understanding the ever-changing role of the principal and the changes that helped shaped the nature of the questions utilized for this study. History can be a great teacher, motivator and influencer for current policies, practices, behaviors and trends. According to Ira E. Bogotch (2005), one of the co-authors of the *Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership: Advances in Theory, Research and Practice*, “As an academic discipline, history has traditionally been about the interpretation of known facts rather than a debate over the facts themselves” (p. 7).

The history of school leadership is largely based on three recognized scholarly works: *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Callahan, 1962), *The One Best System* (Tyack, 1974), and *The Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools* (Cuban, 1988). Many conclusions and judgments have been made about historical methods and the continuous pursuit for lending voice to events and their place in research and practice (Cuban). According to Bogotch (2005), “Although chronology helps us organize the historical facts, history is not governed solely by the order of events” (p. 9). Dr. Kathleen Brown, professor at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a chapter author of *The Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership: Advances in Theory,*

Research and Practice (2005), reported “Given the importance of school administration, the role of educational leadership in school improvement, and the preparation of education leaders, it is essential to understand the history, development and promise of the principalship” (Brown, 2005, p. 109). This is the reason that this study included historical and archival data in an effort to frame the interpretation of the 2003 results and the 2008 comparison.

Demographic Characteristics of the Principalship

Demographic data informed the study as 2008 data are compared with 2003 data. A number of reviews of literature regarding the principal’s role have been completed over the last 25 years (Barth & Deal, 1982; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Greenfield, 1982; Marsh, 2000; Murphy, 1990; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Persell, Cookson & Lyon, 1982; Waters & Cameron, 2007; Waters et al., 2003; Yukl, 1982). Guidance for what school leaders should do has been the primary focus of the studies. But, who are the individuals charged with leading schools today? This study investigated why the field not only knows *why* certain practices are important but *how* to apply them skillfully. Further, it sought to investigate characteristics of the individuals serving as principals as well as the types of schools they lead in North Carolina. The researcher hoped the demographic data of the study helped identify significant characteristics and patterns in the principalship as it related to gender, race, age, the number of years principals have been at their school as well as the number of years principals have been in the position. Additionally, the demographic data may be useful to assist future researchers as they investigate and compare future findings.

Demography in Research

Demographic characteristics of individuals like age, gender, race, tenure, and education have long been considered important variables in research (Zedeck & Cascio, 1984). Recent investigations, for example, have examined the effects of individuals' demographic attributes on outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, turnover, selection, and leadership (Blau, 1985; Parsons & Linden, 1984; Steckler & Rosenthal, 1985). In a study conducted by Tsui and O'Reilly (1989), they state that "this stream of research has documented results indicating that often demographic variables are significantly associated with characteristic perceptions, attitudes, or work outcomes" (p. 402). These data are aligned with the questions presented in this study that sought to determine whether demographic trends impacting principals in North Carolina have in some significant way impacted their work when the 2003 original administration of the Principals' Executive Program's study entitled "The State of the Principalship" was compared to the 2008 re-administration. The following demographic profiles from the 2003 survey were used as the foundation for comparison with 2008 data (Principals' Executive Program, 2008):

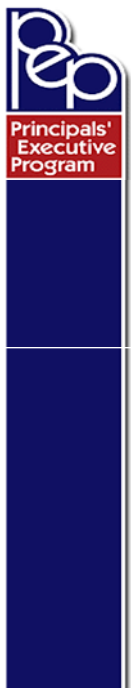


Demographic Profile of 2003 Respondents

- 48% work in districts with 26 or more schools
- 28% work in the West, 29% in the East & 43% in Central NC
- 47% work in Elementary Schools
- 22% work in Middle Schools
- 16% work in Traditional High Schools
- 2% work in Charter Schools
- 13% work in Primary Schools

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Figure 2. Demographic profile of 2003 respondents.



Principal Experience

- 25% have 5 years or less experience
- 25% have between 6 & 10 years experience
- 25% have between 11 & 25 years experience
- 25% have 20 or more years experience

© 2003, Principals' Executive Program

Figure 3. Principal experience.



Years At Current School

- 75% have 5 years or less
- 17% have between 6 & 10 years
- 7% have between 11 & 20 years
- 1% have more than 20 years

© 2003, Principals' Executive Program

Figure 4. Years at current school.

As in 2003, the study investigated demographic variables and their significance in the attitudes and work outcomes of principals today. According to Dr. Anita Ware, principal contact for the development of the 2002 and the 2003 “State of the Principalship” surveys, the idea came from Phi Delta Kappa’s “State of Public Schools” survey and the instrument was modeled after the Governor’s Teacher Working Conditions survey (August 25, 2008, personal communication). How principals, themselves, view their jobs and work situations was important (Lewandowski, 2004). In interviews with both, Dr. Ware (August 25, 2008, personal communication) and Dr. Goldbeck (August 20, 2008, personal communication), former PEP faculty members, principal perspectives as well as information about the principals themselves were extremely important for this particular study. Some of the questions that were re-

administered and compared asked survey participants to respond to the following questions:

1. The number of years you [the principal] have been at the school?
2. The number of years you [the principal] have been a principal?
3. The number of years you [the principal] have been at your current school?

Additional demographic questions under “Principal Data” asked for data regarding survey participants included (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race.

The next section will provide insight into the past, which will provide an empirical basis for the three remaining topics (in addition to demographic data) addressed in the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey: (a) aspects of being a principal, (b) aspects of principal job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement, and (c) aspects of professional development.

Aspects of Being a Principal

Understanding various aspects of being a principal is critical for aspiring school leaders as well as for those who make decisions that impact principals. According to Dr. Anita Ware, former PEP assistant director and point-person for the two original surveys, “The plan was to do this [survey] every year to track trends in the principalship that could be used to make programming decisions and be administrator advocates with the legislature” (e-mail correspondence, March 13, 2008). This section synthesizes literature surrounding the role of the principalship particularly as it relates to various conditions of the principalship in North Carolina. Further, it shares findings from the 2003 administration of “The State of the Principalship” survey.

Principal Leadership

The role of the school principal has evolved dramatically of the last decade (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Odden, 1995). Public demands for more effective schools have placed growing attention on the crucial role of school leaders—a professional group largely overlooked by the various educational reform movements of the past two decades (Davis et al., 2005). Empirical evidence in a report commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and produced by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute in conjunction with The Finance Project entitled *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* (Davis et al., 2005) suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning.

In the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey, results revealed that “Half [of the over 500 participants] said they do school-related work at night away from home two to three nights per week. Slightly more than one quarter put the number at four to five nights, and 2 percent said none” (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1). Further, data from the 2003 survey revealed that:

1. 35 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues,” while an overwhelming 65 percent of respondents disagreed;
2. 42 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “Teachers at our school do not collaborate as much as I think they should,” while 58 percent disagreed;
3. 43 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I spend too much time on student discipline,” while 57 percent disagreed;
4. 94 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I know how to help a weak teacher become a satisfactory teacher,” while 6 percent disagreed;

5. 91 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I know how to help a good teacher become an excellent teacher,” while only 9 percent disagreed;

6. 93 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I have access to legal advice when I need it,” while only 7 percent disagreed;

7. 57 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “I would be a better principal if I delegated more responsibilities,” while 43 percent disagreed;

8. 57 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “Your satisfaction that the state accountability system fairly evaluates your influence as a principal on student learning,” while 43 percent disagreed;

9. 58 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement, “The Praxis I and/or II have an impact on teacher recruitment”;

10. 50 percent agreed while 50 percent equally disagreed with the following statement, “The Praxis I and/or II are necessary to obtain high quality teachers. (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1)

This study reexamined these same areas by posing the same questions on the 2008 survey. It sought to highlight aspects of the principalship that impact school leadership today. The comparison of the two surveys accomplished the original intent of the “State of the Principalship” survey, which was “to track trends in the principalship” (A. Ware, e-mail communication, March 13, 2008). All public school North Carolina principals were invited to serve as the conduit of information as they were for the 2003 survey.

Leadership and Management

Leadership can mean many things. In our work, “leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization” (Patterson, 1993, p. 3). Many writers on leadership take considerable pain to distinguish between “leadership” and “management.” This study took such distinctions into consideration.

In 2002, Jossey-Bass publications presented the Jossey-Bass Reader entitled “Educational Leadership” for school leaders embarking, at that time, on the new 21st

century. It provided a strong theoretical and practical view of school leadership from the perspectives of many leading thinkers in organizational leadership from over a decade's worth of work. Although the compilation acknowledged the burgeoning attention to school leadership from a management perspective as well, it provided a much needed anthology, organized in one place, of the purported "best" literature on leadership (Fullan, 1999). In the chapter written by John W. Gardner, it was explained that the difference between the often interrelated terminology of *manager* and *leader*, "the word manager usually indicates that the individual so labeled holds a directive post in an organization, presiding over the processes by which the organization functions, allocating resources prudently, and making the best possible use of people" (p. 5). He went on to distinguish that leadership must not be confused with status, power nor authority, which is simply legitimized power.

Although it has become conventional to contrast leaders and managers, the approach taken in this compilation lumped leaders and managers together advocating that "even the most visionary leader is faced on occasion with decisions that every manager faces" (p.6). Further, the author distinguished the "leader/manager" from the general run of managers in six respects:

1. "They think longer term—beyond the day's crises, beyond the quarterly report, beyond the horizon.
2. In thinking about the unit they are heading, they grasp its relationship to larger realities – the larger organization, of which they are a part, conditions external to the organization, global trends.
3. They reach and influence constituents beyond their jurisdictions, beyond boundaries. Thomas Jefferson influenced people all over Europe. Gandhi influenced people all over the world. In an organization, leaders extend their reach across bureaucratic boundaries – often a distinct advantage in a world too complex and tumultuous to be handled "through channels." Leaders' capacity to

rise above jurisdictions may enable them to bind together the fragmented constituencies that must work together to solve a problem.

4. They put heavy emphasis on the intangibles of vision, values, and motivation and understand intuitively the nonrational and unconscious elements in leader-constituent interaction.

5. They have the political skill to cope with the conflicting requirements of multiple constituencies.

6. They think in terms of renewal. The routine manager tends to accept organizational structure and process as it exists. The leader or leader/manager seeks the revisions of process and structure required by ever-changing reality” (p. 6).

These distinctions are reflected in this study. No longer is the principal a “cookie cutter” position, but rather one that engulfs many facets, suitable for the diversity of the environment in which leaders must function. According to Dr. Debbie Goldbeck, retired PEP faculty member who assisted the faculty in revising the 2003 survey questions,

The principalship was so vast and tasks so varied regarding issues of leadership and management early in the millennium that some of us [PEP faculty] realized after the first administration of the survey that some of the questions were simply just not good questions. Also, due to the magnitude of change and transformation in the principalship, we changed questions to better reflect issues, roles and behaviors of principals in our quest to really learn what was going on out there so that we could be of assistance. (August 20, 2008, personal communication)

In the 2003 “State of the Principalship” administration, the following leadership and management perceptions from principals were revealed from the survey questions that address “How Principals Spend Their Time On the Job,” according to Dr. Ware: “Nearly 30 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues.” 52 percent disagreed, 13 percent strongly disagreed, and 6 percent strongly agreed” (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1). Additionally, in the PEP interview with Dr. Ware for the Leadership newsletter, it was reported that “Almost one third agreed with the statement, ‘I spend too much time on student discipline.’ 11 percent strongly agreed, 44 percent disagreed, and 13 percent strongly disagreed” (Lewandowski,

2004, p. 1). Comparatively, this study sought to investigate perceptions of principals 5 years later to determine the significance of any trends or patterns that may be informative for the field of educational administration, particularly as reform initiatives and expectations permeate the field of educational administration. The next section will address reform expectations and the implications for 21st century school leadership as it pertains to the role of the principal.

Aspects of Principal Job Responsibilities Relating to Dimensions of School Improvement *School Leadership*

Theoretically, the word “leadership” encompasses a variety of meanings. Those range from formal definitions that often frame responsibility and organizational expectations in a conceptual manner to definitions that offer awareness and strategy based on the experiences of others. Researchers have emphasized in one of the macro-level core findings that “leadership matters” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Durbin, 2004; Yukl, 2002). And, not only does it matter but that there is parallel evidence that indicates leadership is a central ingredient—and often a keystone element in school and district success as defined in terms of student achievement.

In the 1980s and 1990s, management researchers, scholars and consulting “gurus” published a plethora of books on leadership. A number of them claimed both James MacGregor Burns and Robert K. Greenleaf as intellectual antecedents. Others who emerged as “experts” include but are not limited to Warren Bennis, Burt Nanus, James Kouzes, Barry Posner and Joseph Rost. All have been integral in the development of the leadership theories and models that are prevalent in education today.

According to Fileto and Hoopes (1997), “Leadership is moving people to action and keeping that action moving. Leadership requires the understanding that motion means chaos, but that even chaos involves intrinsic patterns that administrators can use to create order” (p. 1). With 21st century expectations for schools, comes a great deal of change in unfamiliar territory for 21st century school leaders. Thus it is essential for principals to possess a certain level of skill whereby change is executed in a pattern that can be replicated to such a degree that the change will be filtered into the classroom (Fileto & Hoopes).

At the Gates’ High Tech High School in San Diego County, the founding principal, Larry Rosenstock, is reportedly a “virtuoso principal” who sparks enthusiasm among teachers and students alike (Greene & Symonds, 2006). Researchers, Greene & Symonds (2006) add, “Apart from an infusion of ideas and startup money, successful school reform usually requires this” (Fileto & Hoopes, p. 68).

“Never before has leadership in education been more critical for public school systems” (Fullan, 2000, p. xxi). More than ever, principals are expected to lead schools and everything about them.

In 2003, Elizabeth Hale and Hunter Moorman prepared a report with support from the Illinois Education Research Council for the Institute for Educational Leadership entitled, “*Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations.*” The report indicated that “Laser-like attention is being focused on one of the variables critical to effective education: leadership” (p. 1). Further, it provided a distillation of the national conversation about school leadership and principal preparation, two significant areas to be investigated in this study.

While the field of educational leadership is rich in research, it still fails to show a direct linkage between principal leadership and student performance. However, it is clear from the literature that principals greatly impact important variables related to achievement (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). In a task force study conducted by Reyes and Wagstaff (2003), researchers concluded that “the leadership ability and leadership values of the principal determine in large measure what transpires in a school; what transpires in a school either promotes, nourishes, or impedes and diminishes student academic success” (Hale & Moorman, p. 7). Research further suggests that, “Strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations” (Hale & Moorman, p. 7).

In 2005, Mark Safferstone examined organizational leadership from a historical perspective by tracing the theoretical evolution of the field; assessing the contributions of three important academic authors; presenting the viewpoints of more than a dozen major thinkers; surveying contemporary perspectives; and reviewing pertinent anthologies and reference works (Safferstone, 2005). Within this context, the synopsis of core literature suggested that “the need for leaders and leadership is a perennial subject that traces its beginnings to the Old Testament, ancient China, and sixteenth-century Italy” (Safferstone, 2007, p.1). However, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the concepts, principles, and practices associated with supervision, management, administration or leadership —terms often used interchangeably—were fundamentally undefined (Safferstone, 2007).

Reform Expectations for 21st Century School Leadership

Amidst national and global attention given to matters of obvious importance, schools in America are under intense scrutiny. The schooling of children is no new topic (Adler, 1977), but when U.S. students are compared to others globally, the gaps in performance now emphasize the relevance of school leadership. In turn, a kind of “survival” mode of principal leadership has emerged in the field of education which emphasizes the critical skills necessary in meeting the demands and challenges of being an effective 21st century principal.

The ideal principal in the 1980s was an instructional leader who focused on four key elements of reform according to Jerome Murphy, professor of the faculty of education at Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of the article, *Principal Instructional Leadership* in the *Advances in Educational Administration: Changing Perspectives on the School*, Vol. 1 in 1990. He stated:

First, principals, as instructional leaders, were supposed to be responsible for defining the mission of the school and setting school goals. The goals emphasized traditional student achievement which effective principals communicated to audiences both within and outside the school and allocated time at the school so that the vision could be attained. Second, instructional leaders were to manage education production function: coordinating the curriculum, promoting quality instruction, conducting clinical supervision and teacher evaluation / appraisal, aligning instructional materials with curriculum goals, allocating and protecting instructional time and monitoring student progress. Third, principals were to promote an academic learning climate by establishing positive high expectations and standards for student behavior and for traditionally-defined academic achievement, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for teachers and students. They were also supposed to promote and manage professional development efforts that often were isolated from instructional practice. Finally, principals were to develop a strong culture at the school that included a safe and orderly work environment, opportunities for meaningful student involvement, strong staff collaboration and cohesion, additional outside resources in support of the school goals, and stronger links between the home and the school. As it is

often turned out, the focus on culture was quite disconnected from the instructional process at the school.(Marsh, 2000, p. 126-127)

Further research revealed that the tendency during that era was to place the burden upon the principal; however, recent studies report that “school principals did not actually carry out this role, and conclude that the role may no longer be appropriate for contemporary schools” (p. 127). David Marsh, author of the chapter on “Educational Leadership for the 21st Century” in the Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership shares that “in synthesizing this research, Murphy (1994) points to dramatic changes in the work environment including an overwhelming scale and pace of change for school principals” (p. 127). They report that the job is much more difficult and that a new repertoire of skills that have changed is needed to function effectively. “The State of the Principalship” study, as it did in 2003, investigated the perceptions of practicing principals as it related to the skills they identified as necessary for leading schools today as well as how time is actually spent (A. Ware, August 25, 2008, personal communication). Murphy reported that this role “over-load” has led to stress for school administrators involved in fundamental change efforts and “led to a personal sense of loss for principals, a loss of control and a loss of professional identity” (pp. 24- 25).

In 1996, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Commission presented recommendations explaining that it was expected that “Current principals will build and refine the skills and knowledge required to lead and manage change” (p. 99). Furthermore, the other recommendations that specifically addressed “the principal” are as follows:

1. The principal will provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction and focus for student learning;

2. Selection of principals will be based on qualities of leadership rooted in established knowledge and skills that result in dedication to good instructional practice and learning;

3. The principal will foster an atmosphere that encourages teachers to take risks to meet the needs of students. (Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution, 1996, p.99)

While researchers who developed the report sought to address high school principals in particular, K-12 schools across America have aligned to the research. Within this context, researchers went on to add, “For the success of school reform, leadership must diffuse itself throughout the school community” (Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution, 1996, p. 98). The principal occupies the pivotal position, but the study reveals that one must draw on the strengths of teachers and others associated with the school. In short, the most productive 21st century school leader will need to possess skills of charisma and sound “people skills” in connecting all the “other leaders” to the vision and mission of the school. Effective school leaders will not only need to know how to lead but to manage while fostering an appropriate atmosphere for risk-taking in an instructionally sound environment. Hale and Moorman (2003) indicated in their study on *Preparing School Leaders: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovation*, that “There is a growing consensus that command and control leadership models do not and will not work in today’s high accountability school systems. Good leadership for schools is shared leadership. The old model of leadership with its strict separation of management and production is no longer effective” (p. 7). As Michael Fullan (2003) stated, “Leadership is to this decade what standards were to the 1990s” (p. 16) indicating its importance in keeping everything moving throughout the process of leading and reforming schools in the 21st century. Quality school leaders will also need to possess

characteristics of exceptional communication, negotiation and time management skills (Reese, 2004).

According to Southworth and Doughty (2006), three decades of school effectiveness and school improvement research across the world have shown that leadership matters. And, while more traditional trends and patterns of leadership have navigated schools to the current state, “21st century principals” are encouraged in the 2004 *Breaking Ranks II* report to refrain from interpreting the comprehensive changes called for as an opportunity for single-minded leadership. Instead, they are encouraged to charge forward and “pursue a more collaborative and shared leadership style” (Southworth & Doughty, p. 21).

According to Karen Dyer (2006), “few people go into educational administration striving to be anything less than competent” (p. 1). While the main ingredients of exemplary leadership are similar—desire, skill, and experience— these ingredients must be augmented by the belief that leadership is an evolving process, just like life itself (Dyer). Many essential skills, however, are needed for principals to be successful in managing and leading all the many demands required by the job. What are they and are principals fully aware of the issues that aid in the demand, such as time (or the lack therein), support (or the lack therein), preparation (or the lack therein) and accountability expectations and standards that have continuously shaped the state of the principalship. The 2003 and 2008 “State of the Principalship” surveys asked these questions.

While management was the key concept in education administration in the 1980s, according to Southworth and Doughty (2006), leadership is the preferred label but such a shift in emphasis implies a polarized mind-set. In truth, they add, “schools need both,

good leadership and good management skills” (p. 2). This supports the premise that 21st century principals engaged in school reform will need a plethora of skills to effectively manage and lead their schools.

Principals and School Achievement

The body of research pertinent to principal leadership suggests that strong principal leadership is an essential characteristic for strong schools and ultimately student success (Cohen, 1983; Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 1993; Greenfield, 1982; Halliger & Leithwood, 1996; Leithwood et al., 1994; Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008). In Cubberley’s (1916) highly influential textbook, *Public School Administration*, “As is the principal, so is the school,” (Brown, 2005, p.117).

From the NCLB legislation signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, including AYP measures for students and schools to the North Carolina ABCs (Accountability, Basics, Control) of public education accountability program, principals must intentionally concern themselves with school achievement in the 21st century like never before. While progress has been made towards increasing student and school achievement across the nation, the state of North Carolina realizes that its school leadership is a critical area of importance that demands more attention (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006). Therefore, there is a sense of urgency for strong school leadership to intentionally addresses and positively impact student achievement and ultimately, overall school success. This section discusses how and why principals, increasingly across the nation, are held accountable for that performance.

Recent research by the Midcontinent Research for Education and Learning – (McREL), has heightened awareness of this connection even more by empirically revealing at least to some degree, that there is a direct correlation between student achievement and principal leadership (Marzano et al., 2005). In a booklet entitled, *The Balanced Leadership Framework: Connecting Vision with Action* by Waters and Cameron (2003), they report that,

We found a statistically significant correlation between school level leadership and student achievement of .25, which translates to a one standard deviation increase in principal leadership behavior corresponding with a 10 percentile point difference in student achievement on a norm-referenced test. (p. 3)

In 2002, when the first “State of the Principalship” 20-item questionnaire designed primarily by PEP faculty under the guidance of assistant director, Dr. Anita Ware, was conducted by the Principals’ Executive Program, of the more than 400 principals in North Carolina (approximately 20% at that time), it was reported in a newsletter that “Respondents stated overwhelmingly that classroom visits and discussions with students are the aspects of the principalship that “energize” them most reliably” (Lewandowski, 2003, p. 4). In that same newsletter article, the interview with Dr. Ware further stated, “Educators like spending time with students” (Lewandowski, 2003, p.4). “A corollary to this result, Dr. Ware suggests, is that 96% of the respondents rated themselves “capable” (57%) or “extremely capable” (39%) as supervisors of instruction. Significantly, however, responses to another survey question—about how principals spend their time on the job—revealed that nearly half of the respondents devoted less than 20% of their workdays to curriculum issues (Lewandowski, 2003).

In 2003, the headings of the survey changed as did the quality of the questions designed to inquire about principals and their impact on school and student achievement. However, one significant finding related to principals and instruction in 2003 indicated that “Nearly 30 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues.” 52 percent disagreed, 13 percent strongly disagreed, and six percent strongly agreed” (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1). The 2008 questions regarding the principal and instruction will be verbatim and results will be compared to the 2003 data (not 2002 data) to determine how closely, if at all, principals feel as it relates to the perceptions presented in 2003. 2002 data are not available.

In 2005, the Stanford Educational Leadership study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation prompted a report entitled, “Developing Successful Principals.” They found that principals play a vital and multifaceted role in setting the direction for schools that are positive and productive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning environments for children, but existing knowledge on the best ways to develop these leaders is insufficient (Davis et al., 2005). Further, they suggested that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning (Davis et al.). Thus, the abilities of principals are central to the task of building strong schools that promote effectively powerful teaching and learning for all students. Nearly 30 years ago, the pioneers of “effective schools” research found certain leadership practices were critical to enhanced student achievement and school productivity (Waters et al., 2003).

In the first of four key findings in research conducted by The Wallace Foundation in 2005, researchers’ stated,

Growing consensus on the attributes of effective school principals shows that successful school leaders influence student achievement through two important pathways – the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational processes. Even with the growing body of evidence, additional research is necessary to determine the impact and relative importance of leadership in such key areas as curriculum, assessment, and adaptation to local contexts. (Davis et al., 2005, p. 5)

In the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives, Standard 2:

Instructional Leadership clearly acknowledges the importance of principals and school achievement and performance. Principals in this century are expected by all stakeholders to keep schools and students moving forward academically. Research suggests that academic time teaching and learning is the nexus in which student achievement materializes and grows (Denham & Lieberman, 1980; Fisher & Berliner, 1983; Seifert & Beck, 1984).

In an article entitled, “Effective School Leadership,” The Southern Regional Education Board (Reese, 2004) revealed three strategies used by leaders in schools that promoted an increase in student learning. They were:

1. Modeling learning, in which school leaders exhibit the behavior they want teachers to display;
2. Providing compelling reasons for others to learn by encouraging high expectations of students and high-level teaching for staff; and
3. Creating a coaching environment for continuous growth that is safe, positive and supportive. (p.1)

In a Vanderbilt University “Learning-Centered Leadership Study,” it was suggested that school leaders who remain focused on learning, work tirelessly with staff to ensure that the precious resources of time, quality teaching and student learning that

are maximized to their fullest potential are most effective (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, Porter, 2006).

Aspects of Professional Development for Principals

According to a study by Hallinger and Leithwood (1996), nearly every facet of the field of educational administration has been questioned; particularly that of training, policy, practice and research. They add that policy makers question the results being produced by educational [university] systems that prepare principals. The study went on to add that while there are things “we don’t know,” what we do know is that principal leadership rests at the center of the everything central to schools and their culture. The next section will address principal preparedness and professional development.

Principals and Professional Development

Principals play an integral role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare, train and develop highly qualified school leaders is sparse. Literature surrounding the professional development of principals is grounded in school administration research (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003). In order for PEP to remain true to its purpose in helping develop exceptional, effective administrators as mentioned earlier, “it was important for us [PEP faculty] to develop an annual measure of the life of principals by asking, “what it’s like being a principal in North Carolina?” and seeking to see whether that would change over time” (A. Ware, personal communication August 25, 2008). The 2008 “State of the Principalship” survey proposes to remain consistent with professional development questions asked in 2003 regarding principal’s preparation and personal professional development needs in order to impact teacher performance.

Historically, “Little had been written before 1900 on educational administration, and formal preparation programs for school administrators had not yet been developed” (Gregg, 1960, p. 20). By 1964, Culbertson (1963) claimed that “the subject matter of school administration [had] undergone radical changes (p. 39) and that training programs were employing “more encompassing and more rigorous types of content as bases for preparation” (Culbertson, 1964, p. 329). The predominant trend during the 1960s and 1970s was “the infusion of theoretical knowledge from the behavioral and social sciences – with related methodological perspectives” (Murphy, 1992, p. 51). This movement produced a view of school administration as “an applied science within which theory and research are directly and linearly linked to professional practice” (Sergiovanni, 1991, p.4). In 1984, Principals’ Executive Program was established by the North Carolina General Assembly to aid in the continued growth and development of school leaders, embracing both, theory and the phenomena of growth through professional practice. Further, it was established to assist university-based preparation programs that primarily focused on licensure and preparation “for” the principalship. PEP was exclusively charged with meeting the professional development needs of principals, to increase their commitment, to enlarge their knowledge, to spark their creativity, and to develop their leadership skills (McCall, 1994).

In 2003, Hale and Moorman reported, “Recent studies and reports have sharpened our knowledge about the state of the principalship, but the news that the systems that prepare our education leaders are in trouble comes as no surprise” (p. 2). The Preparing School Leaders: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations report revealed, “Back in 1987, the education administration profession self-identified key

trouble spots in Leaders For America's Schools, prepared by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)—sponsored blue ribbon panel, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. The report identified several problem areas including:

1. The lack of definition of good educational leadership;
2. An absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities;
3. The low number of minorities and females in the field;
4. A lack of systematic professional development;
5. The poor quality of candidates for preparation programs;
6. The irrelevance of preparation programs; programs devoid of sequence, modern content and clinical experiences;
7. The need for licensure systems that promote excellence; and
8. An absence of a national sense of cooperation in preparing school leaders. (p. 2)

In reviewing the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey, it addressed many of the aforementioned areas.

Research on principal preparation and development suggests that certain program features are essential for developing effective school leaders. The Wallace Foundation's *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* (2005) study suggests that effective principals need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Davis et al., 2005); indicating that these skills should be taught and learned at some juncture in a principals preparation or ongoing professional development experience. Further, the evidence indicates that effective school leadership and principal preparation programs be research-based, have curricular coherence, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and

mentors, and are structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and school (Davis et al.). Despite widespread agreement, empirical evidence for the impact of these features in preparing and sustaining effectiveness is sparse.

School leadership preparation is not new but according to M. Christine DeVita, former president of the Wallace Foundation, “More than ever, in today’s climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning” (Davis et al., 2005, p. i). School administration research suggests that the role of principal preparation and ongoing professional development are important in that process. The 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey was designed to investigate principal’s personal professional development needs as well as those designed to impact teaching and learning in schools. The 2008 survey investigated the same areas.

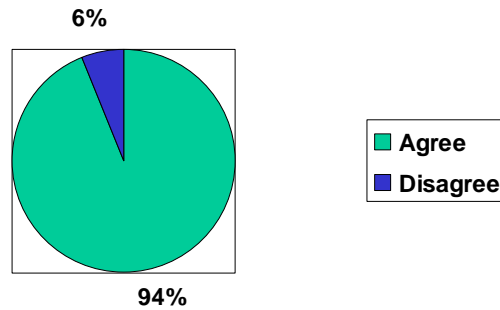
Professional Development for 21st Century Principals

In a 2001 study entitled “Professional Development Needs of Secondary School Principals of Collaborative-Based Service Delivery Models,” Regina M. Foley of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale examined principals’ self-perceptions of their professional development needs. Her research revealed that school leaders in collaborative-based approaches, reported that approximately 40% of the principals surveyed indicated a need for additional training in supporting teachers as well as in conflict resolution and in the development of school-community partnerships. Research from this study aligns with the newly adopted Standards for School Executives in North Carolina with emphasis on Standard 3: Cultural Leadership, Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership and Standard 7: Micropolitical Leadership. All three standards, according to researchers, are inter-related and deemed essential for effective school leaders (Portin et

al., 2003). They documented how important the staff was to the climate of the school and principals' ability to "work the system" (Portin, p. 21). This indicates a real need for 21st century school principals to not only hire well but to effectively develop themselves and teachers. Therefore, the acquisition of these three skills, particularly in North Carolina (as they are now being measured), is critically important.

According to a study conducted by Hale and Moorman (2003) on principal preparation, "Our nation is now confronted by a profound disconnect between preservice and in-service training, the current realities and demands of the job and the capacity of school leaders to be instructional leaders" (p. 7). In the Spring 2003, the PEP newsletter, *Leadership*, it is reported in an interview with Dr. Anita Ware, one of the former assistant directors of PEP, "In 2002, [when the original "State of the Principalship" survey was administered], "PEP was cited as the institution that provided respondents their "most valuable professional development experience," outpolling local school districts by a slight margin. More important, though, she notes, is that only a few respondents cited "Web-based learning," and not a single one listed "higher education institutions" as good sources of professional development. The fact that few respondents cited the internet is open to many interpretations, says Dr. Ware, "but the fact that the university providers don't show up in the survey at all is significant. The way the question was worded may explain this anomaly" (Lewandowski, 2003, p.4). The following slides depict the 2003 "State of the Principalship" findings regarding professional development for principals and their ability to influence teacher growth and development (Principals' Executive Program, 2008):

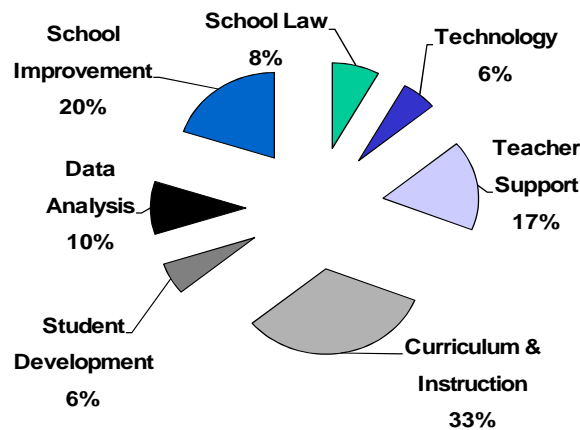
I know how to help a weak teacher become a satisfactory teacher



© 2003, Principals' Executive Program

Figure 5. State of the Principalship” findings.

Professional Development Needs



© 2003, Principals' Executive Program

Figure 6. Professional development needs.

In 2005, a study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and undertaken by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute in conjunction with The Finance Project, conducted a series of in-depth case analyses of eight highly developed pre-service and in-service program models in five states. The *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* was a major research effort that sought to answer the following questions: What are the essential elements of good leadership? How are successful leadership development programs designed? What program structures provide the best learning environments for effective principals? The study also tracked graduates into the schools they led in an effort to help different programs proliferating around the country gain a clearer picture of effective preparation and in-service training for effective school leaders. The goal was to help answer tough questions about principal preparedness and move from criticism to knowledge and effective solutions. The study provided rich data to support both, “knowledge” and “solutions” while it earnestly reported that every strategy may not be suitable for everyone; noting the drivers of various situations and environments.

There has been little research (Milstein, 1999) on leadership preparation programs generally and only modest attempts have been made to assess students’ perceptions of their coursework (Orr et al., 2004). This study sought to identify through the perspectives of principals themselves, the behaviors, and needs deemed important for principal leadership today. The next section will explain the research methods used for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter details the research methods and procedures, including purpose, rationale of design, role of the researcher, access, research questions, conceptual framework, site selection and participants, survey instrument, validity and reliability and the collection of data for the study. Further, it describes how this research study was conducted in 2003 and in 2008. This chapter will also share published 2003 results from The Principals' Executive Program.

Purpose and Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this study was to utilize data collected by PEP in 2003 from the “State of the Principalship” survey to compare with principal perceptions of their roles in 2008. These two surveys asked questions grouped around four main areas. They were demographic characteristics, aspects of being a principal, aspects of principal job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement and aspects of professional development for principals.

The results of the comparison of the two studies were expected to reveal significant shifts and patterns and add to the current body of research and literature for aspiring principals, professional development and university programs, and those seeking to hire principals to meet the demands for effectively leading schools in the 21st century. The 2003 results were described by Dr. Anita Ware, one of PEP's former assistant directors and the point-person for the development, distribution and analysis of the 2003 “State of the Principalship” survey, as “valuable not only to PEP—to help us design

professional development offerings targeted at the specific needs of our clients – but also to education researchers interested in leadership issues” (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 7). The 2008 study was designed to embrace that purpose and add to the literature available for the role of the principal in North Carolina.

There have been significant changes to principal expectations over the last century and in particular, how they will be measured in North Carolina, as a result (State Board of Education, 2006). In May 2008, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the New School Executive (principal) Standards, developed by McREL (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008). In light of those new Standards and the new evaluation instrument, this study will help highlight significant perspectives from principals in North Carolina regarding the role and responsibilities of the principal and all that entails for the 21st century.

Further, the rationale for this study was to add to the current body of literature on school administration as it pertains to the role of the principal by asking questions pertinent to important aspects of the job, professional development, school improvement and concerns proliferating around the role in North Carolina.

As was the case in 2003, according to Dr. Anita Ware, one of the assistant directors of PEP at that time,

The study will not only gauge and qualify our [PEPs] existence, but it will provide an annual measure for the life of principals by measuring (1) how much time is spent in the role; (2) what they can actually do; and (3) what they feel confident doing At that time [in 2003], we had the Governor’s Teacher Working Conditions survey and this survey idea actually came from Phi Delta Kappa’s *The State of Public Schools* survey. For our [PEP] own program development, we wondered how PEP stacked up against other professional development providers and opportunities as well as what its like being a principal in North Carolina and

would that change over time. (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008)

This study compared findings from 2003 with that of 2008 to answer questions related not only to the practices, and behaviors of principals but it sought to identify what change, if any, has significantly occurred since the 2003.

Role of the Researcher

As a faculty member at the Principals' Executive Program, the researcher was charged with overseeing the "The State of the Principalship" project by (a) working with faculty on modifications to the 2003 survey, (b) ensuring the technology department correlate their efforts with the Odum Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and (c) assigning the timeline to the electronic dissemination of the online survey that will be administered by *K12 Insight*, an online survey company in the educational division of ZARCA, an online software company under contract with PEP for online survey management. This distinction is important to the study because although the researcher is also a faculty member at PEP, the researcher was not involved in the collection of data. The Principals' Executive Program worked with their technology staff and database Software Company for the collection of data. The researcher was only permitted to use the data once it has been drawn from the *K12 Insight* software database and made available to PEP for use. The data was considered a secondary data set (Stewart & Kamins, 1993) for these purposes and for the data analysis of the "State of the Principalship" surveys.

To better inform the work of PEP, the PEP faculty modified the original 2003 "State of the Principalship" by adding a section entitled "Recent Issues" on the 2008

survey. Those particular data cannot be compared to the findings of 2003, but sought to inform the field of educational leadership; specifically that of educational administration with contemporary perspectives of principals today. The researcher conducted data analysis by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

To ascertain additional information pertinent to this study, the researcher reviewed PEP's archived data, historical PEP artifacts, conducted interviews with former PEP faculty and reviewed data from the 2003 "State of the Principalship" survey.

Access

The site for this study was unique in that it is not a physical location as normally expected in research studies. Instead, the site existed in the virtual world. In the fall of 2008, all North Carolina public school principals were invited to participate in the online survey by receiving an e-mail from the interim director of PEP, Dr. Nancy Farmer. *K12 Insight* software managed all aspects of the administration of the survey for the ascribed 3-week window. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction assisted PEP in ascertaining current e-mail addresses for all public elementary, middle, high and charter school principals in the state for the administration of the 2008 "State of the Principalship" survey, which was also the intended population for the 2003 administration of the survey.

2003 Survey Results

The 2003 survey was a quantitative study that compared perspectives, through an anonymous online survey of practicing public school principals in North Carolina. It was crafted and executed in an effort to gain primary insight into the behaviors and role of the principal as well as identify significant trends and patterns. The 2008 survey also

compared perspectives of all public school N.C. principals by posing questions in the same four areas presented in 2003: (a) demographic characteristics; (b) aspects of being a principal in North Carolina; (c) aspects of the principal's job responsibilities relating to school improvement; and (d) aspects of professional development. Four additional questions were added in 2008 to encompass recent issues that have affected the principalship since the 2003 administration of the survey. "More than 500 principals completed the online questionnaire in 2003 and how principals viewed their jobs and work situations, were revealing," stated Dr. Anita Ware in the Winter 2004 Leadership newsletter published by PEP (Lewandowski, 2004). Of the 1,136 principals in the PEP listserv in 2003, 508 principals actually responded for a response rate of 45%.

Further, it was reported that "one quarter each of principals who responded to the survey had 20 or more years on the job, 11 to 20 years on the job, 6 to 10 years on the job, and fewer than 6 years on the job" (Lewandowski, 2004). Dr. Ware further shared some of the following findings:

1. 75 percent have served as principal at their current school for five years or fewer, 17 percent for six to ten years, and 8 percent for more than eleven years;
2. 47 percent of principals who responded to the survey served in elementary schools, 22 percent in middle schools, 16 percent in traditional high schools, 2 percent in charter schools, and 13 percent in primary schools;
3. 38 principals (nine percent of the total) served in "other" types of schools, e.g., alternative, magnet, K-8, 7-12, etc. (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1)

Further analyzing the results, Dr. Ware shared the following highlights:

1. More than 65 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, "I am glad I became a principal." 29 percent agreed, 4 percent disagreed, and 2 percent strongly disagreed;
2. Asked to characterize their satisfaction that the state accountability system fairly evaluates their influence on student learning, 9 percent said they were satisfied and 48 percent said they were moderately satisfied, while 31

percent expressed dissatisfaction and 12 percent expressed extreme dissatisfaction;

3. 93 percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I understand what is expected under the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation and what is meant by Adequate Yearly Progress.” 7 percent disagreed;

4. Half said they do school-related work at night away from home two to three nights per week. Slightly more than one quarter put the number at four to five nights, and 2 percent said none;

5. Nearly 30 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues.” 52 percent disagreed, 13 percent strongly disagreed, and 6 percent strongly agreed;

6. Almost one third agreed with the statement, “I spend too much time on student discipline.” 11 percent strongly agreed, 44 percent disagreed, and 13 percent strongly disagreed. (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 1)

The 2003 survey revealed a significant difference of opinion among principals regarding the value of the Praxis tests, according to Ware in that same article. They were:

1. 50 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that the tests are necessary to obtain high quality teachers and 50 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed” (Lewandowski, 2004, p.7). Additional highlights include:

2. Asked to rank five strategies they believed would most likely address the shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship, 431 respondents cited, among their top three choices, coaching/mentoring assistant principals; 401 cited increasing the number of scholarships available to prospective administrators; 312 said people with masters degrees should be able to add principal licensure to their existing degrees; 240 said more universities should offer administrator-preparation programs; and 66 said candidates from other occupations should have the option of lateral entry into school administration;

3. Asked to rank their current professional development interests, 276 respondents selected, among top three choices, “Teachers”; 275 selected “School Improvement”; 251 selected “Curriculum & Instruction”; 179 selected “Data Analysis”; and 116 selected “Technology.” (Lewandowski, 2004, p. 7)

The researcher anticipated that comparing the 2003 data with the 2008 data would further give meaning to the raw numbers and provide specificity for demographic data for principals, principal views on the role regarding executed behaviors, use of time, preparation, instructional leadership and professional development. Further, this study elaborated upon and continued the research outlined in the long-range plan of The

University of North Carolina, as well as provide a snapshot of important characteristics and patterns that appear significant when questions and statements regarding the principalship are raised from the comparison.

Major and Guiding Research Questions

The underlying, exploratory hypotheses guiding this study was that principals' behaviors and practices as agents of school leadership are important to school and student outcomes. Amid mounting responsibilities, accountability and reform expectations, the researcher assumed that the way principals use their time impacts teacher development, personal professional development and overall school improvement (including student achievement).

The researcher investigated issues pertaining to how time is spent, preparation for the principalship, professional development, principal priorities, district leadership and recent issues as drawn from two surveys administered in 2003 and 2008 by PEP. To examine these issues, the major research question was "How have the roles of the principal and the perceptions of principals in North Carolina changed from 2003 to 2008 as judged by the "State of the Principalship" surveys?" Within this major research question, four guiding questions emerged to serve as integral components of the study:

Research Questions

1. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics cited by respondents?

2. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences on aspects of being a principal in North

Carolina?

3. Based on a comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in aspects of the principal's job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement?

4. Based on comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in the aspects of professional development?

Conceptual Framework

The larger framework that informed the work of this study on characteristics of the principalship is contained in Figure 1. This framework shaped the inquiry of the study. The surveys were designed to learn about principal perspectives in four main areas: (a) demographic characteristics, (b) aspects of being a principal, (c) aspects of principal job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement, and (d) aspects of professional development (Lewandowski, 2003). These areas informed the study by shaping the inquiry into and investigation of principals' views regarding principal needs, competence, capabilities, understandings and job responsibilities (Lewandowski, 2004; A.Ware, August 25, 2008, personal communication). These areas served as a border and the parameter for questions, research and interviews related to the study. The four components of the survey shaped the interpretation as well as the lens through which the 2008 data were analyzed and compared to the 2003 data.

The framework indicated that this study was affected by five main areas: (a) the history of the principalship as well as the history of the Principals' Executive Program; (b) the continued need for principal research and program evaluation; (c) politics and law in North Carolina; (d) perceptions of the general public including, but not limited to

educational stakeholders; and (e) the newly adopted Standard for School Executives in North Carolina and salient research in the field informing 21st century school leadership—namely, that of the principalship. The background of the “State of the Principalship” survey revealed this study was grounded in elements of change and embraced the changes in the role of the principal; particularly due to the 2001 federal NCLB legislation and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey (A. Ware, August 25, 2008, personal communication).

According to Dr. Ken Jenkins, former PEP director and committee member on the ad hoc committee that made recommendations for the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives, “in addition to general public perception, the 2003 State of the Principalship results served as one of the rationales behind the new Standards for School Executives in North Carolina (K. Jenkins, August 27, 2008, personal communication). Improved school outcomes and increased student achievement represent the goal and expectation for all 21st century school principals based on research in the field (Fullan, 2001; Marsh, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005) as well as addresses “the Principals’ Executive Program’s ultimate objective, which has always been the significant improvement of students’ understanding and performance” (PEP, 1997, p. 1). Regardless of rationales, expectations, responsibilities and duties for principals, school improvement and increased student achievement remain central to this study. Further prompting the significance of continued work on principal trends and behaviors and this “State of the Principalship” study in particular is recent 21st century research. Some indicators in the body of 21st century educational administration research reveals that there is a correlation between student achievement and school leadership (Marzano & McNulty, 2005).

“Leadership is critical in creating the conditions where teachers want to work and students want to learn,” according to Scott Emerick in a PEP newsletter interview regarding the 2006 N.C. Governor’s Teacher Working Conditions survey results (Lewandowski, 2006). Thus, the framework for this study addressed the five indicators impacting the current “State of the Principalship” in North Carolina that were measured by the following four domains: demographic characteristics, aspects of being a principal, school improvement trends, and professional development; all areas of concern as principals meet the demands of increasing student achievement and effectively leading schools (see Figure 1).

Site Selection and Participants

The sampling frame for this research study consisted of perspectives from all public school principals in the state of North Carolina.

In 2003. PEP attempted to contact all principals in North Carolina in 2003 by utilizing e-mail addresses in the PEP listserv and by forwarding a request to superintendents for them to forward the survey to principals in their district. As noted, this process of working through the superintendent’s office rather than contacting all principals directly, could have contributed to low response rates in the 2003 administration of “The State of the Principalship.” Five hundred eight principals responded out of nearly 2,000 principals in the state at that time.

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors’ long-range plan (2002-2007), indicated under the sixth section that “i. Improve the ability of the Office of the President to collect, process, and analyze university-wide data for accountability and

assessment using new tools such as the balanced scorecard to improve administrative efficiencies” (p. 40).

In 2008. All public school North Carolina principals were invited to participate in the 2008 “State of the Principalship” survey electronically by PEP in the fall of 2008. Data was a secondary data set drawn from the online survey software and used for comparison with findings from the 2003 administration. PEP hosted the survey as they did in 2003 and provided the researcher with data after they were collected via the Web. The researcher, although an employee of the host organization, had no access to the internal workings (including e-mail addresses) during this process. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided updated e-mail addresses of all public school principals in North Carolina to PEP, which forwarded all e-mail addresses to the *K12 Insight* software company for the management of online distribution and collection of data. Data were not collected at PEP. Data and respondents will remain anonymous to all Principal Executive Program faculty and there will be no way internal for PEP to connect respondents to their responses.

Procedures typically executed for electronic evaluation surveys were followed by the *K12 Insight* software division of ZARCA, the online survey company that administered the survey and collected the data for PEP. The process was as follows: The PEP director’s name was used as the “sender” of the survey via the Internet, as is the practice for all PEP surveys and is consistent with how the survey reached participants in 2003. All public school principals in North Carolina were invited to participate in the survey that should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

PEP updated online survey capabilities in response by using *K12 Insight* software rather than the software that was used in 2003. PEP also sought new partnerships with NCDPI, and ultimately new measures to ascertain e-mail addresses for all public school principals in North Carolina rather than simply utilizing e-mail addresses for only those who requested to be in the PEP database or participate in a PEP program, as was the practice in the past. “The Principals’ Executive Program has worked hard to improve all response rates for PEP surveys by moving to online surveys” (D. Pederson, personal communication, August 26, 2008). According to a historical database search conducted by Jeff Bell, PEP program manager, PEP began using a listserv August 1, 2002 (Principals’ Executive Program, 2008).

Survey Instrument

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1986), questionnaires and interviews are used extensively in educational research to collect information that is not directly observable. These data-collection methods typically inquire about the experiences, motivations, attitudes, feelings and accomplishments of individuals. Questionnaires have two advantages over interviews for collecting research data. First, the cost of sampling individuals over a wide geographic area is lower. Second, time required for collecting data is typically less. The term *survey*, which is used in this research study, is frequently used to describe research that involves questionnaires or interviews.

The survey used for this study was developed by PEP faculty in 2003 (see Appendix A) and in 2008 (see Appendix B). The survey is called “The State of the Principalship.” Under the direction of Robert Phay, the first director of PEP, PEP has used surveys to inform its work in an effort to better serve school leaders and inform

policy makers (Lewandowski, 1997). Surveys and questionnaires have been used to capture the views and opinions of principals in every [PEP] program (Principals' Executive Program, 1997) for years.

In 2003. Under the leadership of Dr. Ken Jenkins, the PEP faculty reviewed the 2002 "State of the Principalship" participant feedback, investigated salient features of the principalship and constructed new survey items, with the assistance of practicing principals, in an effort to make the 2003 "State of the Principalship" survey better reflect issues, roles and behaviors of principals at that time (D. Goldbeck, personal communication, August 20, 2008; A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008).. "The survey, in part, was designed to investigate the nature of the principalship at that time by seeking information from practicing principals regarding behaviors and practices of the role," according to third PEP director, Brad Sneed (personal communication, June 20, 2008). "We continued the research in an effort to help PEP remain cutting edge and contemporary in its delivery of service to principals in this state" (B. Sneed, personal communication, June 20, 2008). According to Dr. Ware, however, "the plan was to send the survey [State of the Principalship] every year but that did not happen" (personal communication, August 25, 2008). "With all the program changes, when Anita left, I really don't think there was anyone on faculty available to pick it up" (D. Goldbeck, personal communication, August 20, 2008). So, the survey has not been administered since 2003 due to personnel changes. In 2007, "The State of the Principalship" survey was revived with an expectation of being sent to all principals in North Carolina in the fall of 2008. The intention was for the feedback to be used to inform PEP in its efforts to provide quality professional development and as feedback

and empirical information for principals, aspiring principals, policy-makers, universities and local school systems seeking to hire principals.

Dillman, Tortora, and Bowker (1998) were concerned about the principles of what they called “respondent-friendly” Web survey designs. They described respondent-friendly designs to mean, “the construction of Web questionnaires in a manner that increases the likelihood that sampled individuals will respond to the survey request, and that they will do so accurately, by answering each question in the manner intended by the surveyor” (p. 9). The researcher received assistance from the Odom Institute at The University of North Carolina to aid in making the 2003 Web survey more “respondent-friendly” (Dillman, Tortora, & Bowker).

The survey instrument, constructed and employed during 2003, was designed to elicit the professional perspectives and views of practicing principals in the state of North Carolina as reported by Dr. Anita Ware, former PEP assistant director who led the development of questions with PEP faculty as well as the execution of the survey and PEP faculty who also participated in revising 2003 questions for re-administration, (e-mail communication, August 18, 2008). “The idea came from Phi Delta Kappa’s *State of Public Schools* report. So, we [PEP] thought that for a variety of reasons, it would be important to provide an annual compilation of results in both, 2002 and 2003 as a measure for the life of principals and programs in PEP” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). According to Dr. Daryll Powell, retired PEP faculty, “it was her baby.” In a telephone interview, Dr. Ware informed the researcher that “The questions were designed to be relevant for what is interesting and important for the principalship and what is interesting and important to track over time” (personal

communication, August 25, 2008). “In addition to gauging and qualifying our [PEPs] existence, we developed questions designed to measure (a) how much time is spent in the role, (b) what principals actually did, and (c) what they felt confident in doing” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). “There was so much around change at that time,” stated Dr. Debbie Goldbeck, retired PEP faculty (personal communication, August 20, 2008). “I recall the *Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner (2002) and *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2001) by Michael Fullan as some of the work that guided the faculty discussions in revisiting and revising the 2003 questions to better reflect issues, roles and behaviors of principals at that time” (D. Goldbeck, personal communication, August 20, 2008).

Dr. Ware indicated that “the greater influence for the development of the survey was the work of Jo and Joseph Blase (1998) as they emphasized what really seems to matter in terms of promoting teaching and learning in schools. So, our intent was to also investigate how competent principals felt about instruction and how well informed they felt about all the accountability that was hitting them hard at that time. Some of the questions we felt were important for principals [to answer] included, “Were they well informed and were they prepared to inform others so that the school could move forward, especially in light of the change in accountability at that time?” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). The four sections of the survey addressed these areas in addition to posing questions pertinent to professional development preparation and needs.

In 2008. To better inform the work of PEP in 2008 and to continue gauging the work of principals and their time in a contemporary manner, the PEP faculty modified the

2003 “State of the Principalship” by adding a section entitled “Recent Issues” on the 2008 survey. The purpose was to gain insight into the impact of some of the emerging educational issues that have arisen since the 2003 survey administration and to limit the number of PEP surveys needing to be sent during the 2008-2009 school year. Those particular data were not compared to the findings of 2003, but rather, provided baseline empirical data designed to inform the field of educational administration with perspectives of principals today. Those data could also be compared in future studies if the “recent issues” component of the survey remains intact and relevant as expected.

“The State of the Principalship” survey was delivered via the Internet in an electronic online survey format. A consent letter for the study (see Appendix C) was embedded in the initial survey and sent to principals. Once the surveys are completed and data are submitted to the Principals’ Executive Program, host of the survey, using *K12 Insight* software, an online tool for collecting data, survey results will be placed in a compatible database for comparison with 2003 data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is the software of choice for this study’s data comparison.

Validity and Reliability

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), there are four criteria commonly used to judge whether a test is of sufficient quality to use in educational research. They are objectivity, standard conditions of administration and scoring, standards for interpretation and fairness. The survey selected for this study met all criteria that had previously been used, in the same format, with the same group of respondents as the target population – school principals (although the individuals themselves may have changed) since the 2003

administration. The 2008 survey was sent to principals the same time of year (fall), by the same host organization, PEP.

The “State of the Principalship” survey was selected for comparison because in 2003 it served as an instrument designed to inform and ultimately improve the in-service work of the Principals Executive Program while simultaneously ascertaining information on characteristics and patterns of the principalship from principals themselves. The intent was to establish practitioner-based research that could be used to inform state education leaders, schools, and districts.

Since 2003, North Carolina has experienced a great deal of change as it relates to school and school leader expectations. Thus, the same survey with an addition, inclusive of some of the more recent educational issues, was sent in 2008. The survey has not been re-administered since the 2003 administration due to personnel changes. For the 2008 survey, the instrument was modified by adding a section at the end entitled “Recent Issues” designed to ask about educational issues that have driven many of the new and heightened expectations for principals since the original administration in 2003. They include questions about the Federal NCLB, AYP, community support and local support. The modified survey is expected to be re-administered in September 2008. The 2008 instrument is designed to do the same.

This re-administration was valid in not only informing the work of PEP, but for serving as a catalyst for future research on the principalship, particularly as it relates to the principalship in North Carolina.

Concerning validity, “Support for causal claims about the effects of principal’s behaviors have been generated largely from cross-sectional studies using survey, case-

study, ethnographic and preexperimental research designs” (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, p. 314). The “State of the Principalship” is a valid instrument measuring what its design was intended to measure. The instrument is reliable in that it has been used before. Findings were shared with various publics in both, 2002 and in 2003 as PEP sought to “justify its existence, measure its programs and identify areas for improving the delivery of professional development service” (A. Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). The 2008 instrument was designed to do the same.

Data Collection

In 2003. The Principals’ Executive Program’s (PEP) surveyed a convenience sample by utilizing the PEP listserv (database) and North Carolina superintendent e-mail addresses in 2003 for contacting participants (principals only) for the online “State of the Principalship” survey (A.Ware, personal communication, August 25, 2008). The PEP listserv consists of elementary, middle, high and public charter principals in North Carolina, who have at some point in their career, participated in a PEP-sponsored professional development program and/or requested to be included in the listserv by phone, e-mail, or written correspondence. In 2003, the PEP listserv consisted of 1,136 principal names (PEP, 2008) out of nearly 2,000 principals in the state of North Carolina at that time. Five hundred eight surveys were returned and collected electronically through the use of *SmartASK.com*, an online survey company utilized by PEP at that time (D. Pederson, personal communication, August 26, 2008).

In 2008. There were 1,763 principal names populated in the PEP database in 2008 (PEP, 2008) but due to various limitations, the 2008 re-administration of the “State of the Principalship” survey was not distributed in the same manner. The intent, however, of

contacting and ultimately surveying all North Carolina public school principals remained central to the collection of data for the study. Some of the concerns proliferating around the use of the PEP listserv, as was the case for the 2003 administration of the survey, included the following: (a) a culmination of e-mail addresses representing all principals who have attended a PEP program since August 1, 2002, when PEP began using an electronic database for general communication (J. Bell, personal communication, September 11, 2008), suggesting the potential for outdated e-mail addresses; (b) e-mail addresses for principals who left the school they were leading in 2003 when the last “State of the Principalship” survey was administered; (c) principals who have retired or left the state and neglected to notify PEP; and (d) new N.C. principals who have never participated in a PEP program nor have requested to be in the PEP database are omitted by default.

In PEP’s quest to survey perspectives from all public school principals in the state of North Carolina, the faculty determined there were too many concerns surrounding the use of the current PEP listserv; particularly since another measure for reaching all principals was available. The main concern was that the PEP listserv was simply not accurate enough for the study in the opinion of the faculty. Therefore, in an attempt to reach all principals in the state more effectively and to utilize contemporary e-mail addresses, PEP contacted the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for assistance in securing up-to-date, accurate e-mail addresses for every North Carolina principal. In 2008, over 2,300 principals in the NCDPI database were invited to complete the “State of the Principalship” survey that was designed to elicit their

professional perspectives on the most salient principal-leadership behaviors, and characteristics deemed important for K-12 school leadership in the 21st century.

Data for the 2008 survey were collected and compiled by using the *K12 Insight* survey software, an online survey software department in the educational software division of ZARCA, an online survey company currently under contract with the Principals' Executive Program. PEP shared the data with the researcher after data were collected over a prescribed 3-week period. The online data collection company, *K12 Insight*, was responsible for the following:

1. Electronic administration of the survey once PEP forwarded the survey and e-mail addresses from NCDPI, the agency housing the most accurate list of e-mail addresses for principals in the state (D. Pederson, personal communication, August 26, 2008);
2. Collected and housed data in a secure location and forward raw survey responses to PEP electronically for analysis;
3. Created graphs and charts of raw data, if needed;
4. Assisted survey participants with online problems, difficulties, etc.;
5. Assisted with data involving open-ended responses by identifying key words or phrases identified as important for the study;
6. Maintained anonymity of survey participants;
7. Continued sending electronic reminders to participants who do not respond.
8. Reminders were sent every 7 days.

A secondary data analysis was appropriate for this study as the researcher was not involved in collecting the data in any way (as was the case for the collection of data in 2003). Data for this study was collected in a single (three-week) phase.

Data Analysis

Data were provided to the researcher by the Principals' Executive Program. Once all data were collected, they were imported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Odum Institute so that both the 2003 and 2008 data sets existed in the same database for comparison and analysis. Data could not be transformed for comparison until they resided in the same database.

For this study, raw data that was used was collected by PEP. "The term secondary information is used frequently to refer to both secondary data (the raw data obtained in various studies) and secondary sources (the published summaries of these data)" (p. 2). According to Stewart and Kamins (1993), secondary research experts, "Secondary research differs from primary research in that the collection of the information is not the responsibility of the analyst. In secondary research, the analyst enters the picture after the data collection effort is over" (p. 3).

Categorical variables were compared using cross-tabulation for the study. Cross-tabulations were used for all questions using Likert scales in the study. For consistency, the researcher analyzed those data by treating all questions (except open-ended questions and "Recent Issues" questions) as categorical items and use Pearson's chi square cross-tabulation for comparisons. Open-ended questions were compared first, by using the *K12 Insight* software for 2008 data; then, manually by comparing key words and phrases

between the 2 years, 2003 and 2008. Significance was determined by the frequency of those words and phrases. The Odum Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill assisted the researcher with analyzing data electronically between the 2 years through the use of SPSS software.

CHAPTER 4: PROCEDURES AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the findings of a comparison of the 2003 and 2008 administrations of the State of the North Carolina Principalship survey sponsored by PEP to determine if there had been significant patterns and changes regarding the role of the principal over the five-year time span.

It was anticipated that if the comparison study identified statistically significant patterns, that the findings would contribute to the current body of principal research and literature for aspiring principals, professional development providers, university preparation programs, and those seeking to hire principals to meet the demands for effectively leading schools in North Carolina. A comparative method was selected to investigate the possible relationships and levels of significance between the 2003 and 2008 “State of the Principalship” survey findings.

In this chapter, the sample demographics and the results of each research question are described. A breakdown of participant responses is provided for each survey group (2003 vs. 2008), with comparisons made between the two groups. Frequencies and percentages are used to describe categorical data, and means and standard deviations employed to describe continuous data. Cross-tabulations were used to investigate the relationships between the survey groups for categorical variables, and independent samples *t* tests were used to investigate the relationships between the survey groups for

continuous variables. Section I describes the samples to be analyzed. In Section 2, the statistical analysis is performed. Conclusions are presented at the end of the chapter.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (*SPSS*) - *Version 16.0* was used for coding and analysis of the data. Faculty at the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute and consultants of Research Consultation Professionals, LLC, also assisted with the compilation and analyses of data.

Section 1

Descriptive Data

The initial step in analyzing the data involved a review of the descriptive statistics for each variable. Using the SPSS software system, frequency charts were created for each response to the Web survey for both years (2003 and 2008). Tables 2-11 display the frequencies of responses from respondents.

The data analyses consist of basic descriptive statistics, along with χ^2 Pearson chi squares (cross-tabulations) comparing the 2003 and 2008 survey groups. Only one question (time allotment) was appropriate for *t*-tests in comparing the 2003 and 2008 survey groups. In 2003, the survey was sent electronically utilizing the PEP listserv. In 2008, all data were collected by *K12 Insight*, the educational software division of ZARCA, an online survey company. Participants did not have to address each survey item in order to respond to the instrument. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to note that there was at least some missing data for nearly every question. As such, the frequency totals vary by question; however, the percentages are valid percentages (i.e., percentages based on the total number of responses for that question).

The survey questions used for this study were developed by the PEP faculty in 2002 and re-developed in 2003 (see Appendix A). The same survey was re-administered in 2008 (see Appendix B) with additional questions pertinent to demography of participants and PEP's program development. Both surveys were delivered as Web-based surveys. The size of the stratified random sample served to compensate for the lower response rates that are typical of Web surveys. In 2003, data were collected using *SmartAsk* software and compiled using the Microsoft Excel database. In 2008, *K12 Insight* collected the data for PEP and the researcher used SPSS 16.0 as the software to transfer and merge both years for coding and reporting. Table 1 demonstrates the four guiding research questions for this comparative study, including statistical procedures utilized to research answers from participants.

Demographics

In this section, the researcher describes the sample in terms of the demographic information collected from survey participants. Statistical cross-tabulations were used to compare demographic data for school and respondent characteristics across survey groups. These are shown in Table 2.

Questions on both surveys asked respondents to provide information related to personal characteristics and school identification. The 2008 survey added four additional questions relating to personal participant characteristics. Five hundred seven (44%) participants completed the survey in 2003, and 651 (56%) completed the survey in 2008. This provided the researcher with data from a range of geographic areas, school sizes and types from across the state of North Carolina. Boundaries for geographic areas were not defined in this survey. Hence, survey participants self-reported and may have consciously

or unconsciously distorted boundaries of the geographic location of the school. A recommendation for addressing this is provided under the section entitled “Recommendations for Future Studies.”

Table 1

Research Questions and Statistical Procedures

Research question	Statistical procedure
Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in:	
1. Demographic characteristics cited by respondents?	Pearson chi square (cross-tabulations)
2. Aspects of being a principal in North Carolina?	Pearson chi square (cross-tabulations); independent samples <i>t</i> test
3. Aspects of the principal’s job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement	Pearson chi square (cross-tabulations)
4. Aspects of professional development?	Pearson chi square (cross-tabulations)

Of the 2003 participants, 102 (29.0%) were from the East (in general, eastern North Carolina typically represents counties east of Interstate-85), 151 (42.9%) were from the Central (typically, central North Carolina represents counties near the areas of Raleigh / Durham, Piedmont/Triad and Charlotte / Mecklenburg), and 99 (28.1%) were from the West (in general, western North Carolina represents counties located west of Interstate-85). Of the 2008 participants, 213 principals (32.9%) were from the East, 262

(40.5%) were from the Central, and 172 (26.6%) were from the West. In 2003, Sixty-six (18.8%) principal respondents were from small districts (10 schools or less), 117 (33.2%) were from average districts (11-25 schools), 99 (28.1%) were from large districts (26-45 schools), and 70 (19.9%) were from extra large districts (46+ schools). In 2008, eighty principal respondents (12.3%) were from small districts (less than 10 schools), 169 (26.0%) were from average districts (11-25 schools), 162 (24.9%) were from large districts (26-45 schools), and 240 (36.9%) were from extra-large districts (46+ schools). Significance will be discussed in Section 2.

Table 2 also reports descriptive statistics for respondent principal's current school level for 2003 and 2008, for which significance was determined and school designation, for the 2008 sample only. Of the 2003 participants, 58 (11.5%) represented primary level schools, 223 (44.2%) represented elementary schools, 101 (20.0%) represented middle schools, 71 (14.1%) represented traditional high schools, and 7 (1.4%) represented "other" types of school classifications (including, but not limited to, mixed grade spans, charter, junior high schools and alternative schools). Of the 2008 participants, 26 (4.0%) represented primary level schools, 333 (51.3%) represented elementary schools, 126 (19.4%) represented middle schools, 93 (14.3%) represented traditional high schools, and 71 (10.9%) represented all "other" schools. Significance will be discussed in Section 2.

Table 2

School Demographic Characteristics

Demographic	Survey year	
	2003	2008
	<i>n</i> = 507	<i>n</i> = 651
School region		
East	102 (29.0%)	213 (32.9%)
Central	151 (42.9%)	262 (40.5%)
West	99 (28.1%)	172 (26.6%)
District size		
Small (< 10 schools)	66 (18.8%)	80 (12.3%)*
Average (11-25 schools)	117 (33.2%)	169 (26.0%)
Large (26-45 schools)	99 (28.1%)	162 (24.9%)
Extra Large (46+ schools)	70 (19.9%)	240 (36.9%)
School level		
Primary	58 (11.5%)	26 (4.0%)*
Elementary	223 (44.2%)	333 (51.3%)
Middle	101 (20.0%)	126 (19.4%)
Traditional high	71 (14.1%)	93 (14.3%)
All other	7 (1.4%)	71 (10.9%)
School designation		
Low-performing	ND	94 (14.6%)
Average-performing	ND	301 (46.6%)
High-performing	ND	251 (38.9%)

Note. ND indicates no data available; * indicates significant χ^2 at the .05 level.

Demographic characteristics of participants are presented in Table 3. Gender, age and race were added to the survey in 2008; thus, data are not available for 2003 participants, and no chi squares could be run for those variables. Of the 2008 participants, 278 (43.0%) males completed the survey, whereas 368 (57.0%) females completed the survey. Three (0.5%) were under the age of 30, 141 (21.7%) were 30-39 years of age, 215 (33.1%) were 40-49 years of age, 260 (40.1%) were between the ages of 50 and 59, and 30 (4.6%) were 60+ years of age. Percentages for race in 2008 reveal that 128 (20.1%) were African American, 498 (78.2%) were Caucasian, 10 (1.6%) were Native American, 1 (0.2%) was Latino, and none was Asian American.

Table 3 also displays the years of experience as a school administrator and years of experience at the current school. Of the 2003 participants, 144 (28.9%) had 5 years of experience or less, 151 (30.3%) had 6-10 years of experience, 150 (30.1%) had 11-20 years of experience, and 54 (10.8%) had 21-30 years of experience as a school administrator. Of the 2008 participants, 164 (25.2%) had 5 or less years of experience, 256 (39.4%) had 6-10 years of experience, 166 (25.5%) had 11-20 years of experience and 64 (9.8%) had 21-30 years of experience as a school administrator.

Regarding years as the principal at one's current school, in 2003, the following was reported: 373 (75.2%) principals had been at the current school 5 or fewer years, 85 (17.1%) had been there between 6 and 10 years, 35 (7.1%) had been there between 11 and 20 years, and 3 (0.6%) had been at their current school 21-30 years.

Table 3
Sample Demographic Characteristics

Demographic	Survey year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Gender		
Male	ND	278 (43.0%)
Female	ND	368 (57.0%)
Age		
Under 30	ND	3 (0.5%)
30-39	ND	141 (21.7%)
40-49	ND	215 (33.1%)
50-59	ND	260 (40.1%)
60+	ND	30 (4.6%)
Race		
African American	ND	128 (20.1%)
Asian American	ND	0 (0.0%)
Caucasian	ND	498 (78.2%)
Latino	ND	1 (0.2%)
Native American	ND	10 (1.6%)
Years Experience as School Administrator		
5 or less	144 (28.9%)	164 (25.2%)*
6-10	151 (30.3%)	256 (39.4%)
11-20	150 (30.1%)	166 (25.5%)
21-30	54 (10.8%)	64 (9.8%)
Years as Principal at Current School		
5 or less	373 (75.2%)	509 (78.2%)*
6-10	85 (17.1%)	118 (18.1%)
11-20	35 (7.1%)	20 (3.1%)
21-30	3 (0.6%)	4 (0.6%)

Note. ND indicates no data available; * indicates significant χ^2 at the .05 level.

Of participants in 2008, 509 (78.2%) principals reported being at their current school 5 or fewer years, 118 (18.1%) reported being there 6-10 years, 20 (3.1%)

reported being there 11-20 years, and 4 (0.6%) reported being there 21-30 years. Section 2 details differences.

Section 2

Findings for the Study's Major and Guiding Research Questions

In this section, the researcher describes the results of the findings pertinent to the study's research questions. The major research question for this study is "How have the role of the principal and the perceptions of principals in North Carolina changed from 2003 to 2008 as judged by "The State of the Principalship" survey?" The researcher investigated issues pertaining to how time is spent, preparation for the principalship, professional development, principal priorities, district leadership and recent issues. From this major research question, four guiding questions emerged and served as integral components of the study. The results of the findings pertinent to each research question will be presented and described in this section. The results of the statistics used to analyze the data associated with each research question is also presented and described.

Research Question 1. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics cited by respondents?

Survey participants were asked questions designed to describe personal characteristics as well as school demographics. Refer to Tables 2 and 3 for descriptives. Pearson chi square tests for independence revealed no relationship between survey groups and their school region, $\chi^2(2) = 1.64$, $p > .05$. However, chi square tests for independence revealed significant differences between the survey groups by year and

district size, $\chi^2(3) = 33.03$, $p < .05$, and school level, $\chi^2(5) = 119.8$, $p < .05$. Fewer participants than expected in 2003 (1.4%), reported working in “other” types of schools. In contrast, in 2008, more participants (10.9%) than expected reported “other” types of schools. This 9% increase includes the state’s new early college and middle college high school programs.

Participants were also asked about their level of preparation for various aspects of their principalship. See Table 4 for descriptive statistics. Chi square tests for independence revealed no relationship between survey groups and coursework preparation, $\chi^2(3) = 2.98$, $p > .05$, with fairly equal numbers of participants in each group across years indicating poor, moderate, acceptable and above average coursework preparation. The vast majority of participants in both groups indicated that their preparation was “acceptable” or “above average.” Chi square tests for independence revealed no relationship between survey groups for either assistant principalship preparation, $\chi^2(3) = 5.63$, $p > .05$, or legal issues preparation, $\chi^2(3) = .935$, $p > .05$. The majority of respondents in both groups rated their preparation in both areas as “above average.”

Chi square tests for independence revealed significant differences between the survey groups in the number of nights worked away from home weekly, $\chi^2(4) = 288.5$, $p < .05$. From the cross-tabs output, more participants than expected in 2003 reported working a moderate number of nights away from home weekly (as opposed to none or a lot). In contrast, in 2008, the responses were more extreme.

Table 4

Principals' Preparation for Principalship and Current Practices

Variable	Survey year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Coursework preparation		
Poor	9 (1.8)	7 (1.1)
Moderate	54 (10.9)	80 (12.3)
Acceptable	237 (47.7)	329 (50.5)
Above Average	197 (39.6)	235 (36.1)
Assistant principalship preparation		
Poor	16 (3.4)	21 (3.3)
Moderate	48 (10.2)	49 (7.7)
Acceptable	140 (29.8)	228 (36.0)
Above Average	266 (56.6)	336 (53.0)
Legal issues preparation		
Poor	17 (3.4)	24 (3.7)
Moderate	132 (26.6)	162 (24.9)
Acceptable	250 (50.3)	333 (51.2)
Above Average	98 (19.7)	131 (20.2)
Nights worked away from home weekly		
None	8 (1.6)	104 (16.0)*
One	104 (21.1)	221 (34.1)
2-3	249 (50.4)	237 (36.5)
4-5	133 (26.9)	87 (13.4)

Note. * indicates significant χ^2 at the .05 level

In 2008, a 13% increase was reported as 221 (34.1%) of principals reported working away from home one night per week than respondents 104 (21.1%) in 2003. While nearly half the principals, 249 (50.4%) reported working 2-3 nights per week in 2003, 237 (36.5%) principals reported the same. Only 8 (1.6%) respondents reported “none” in 2003 when asked, “Nights on average that you work on school-related matters away from home each week,” while in 2008, this percentage increased to 104 (16.0%) principal respondents reporting on the same.

Research Question 2. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences on aspects of being a principal in North Carolina?

Chi square tests for independence were run for various survey items relating to aspects of being a principal. See Table 5 for descriptives. No relationship was revealed between survey group and questions including: “I am glad I became a principal,” $\chi^2(3) = .523$, $p > .05$, “Teachers do not collaborate as much as they should,” $\chi^2(3) = 2.04$, $p > .05$, “I know how to help a weak teacher become a satisfactory teacher,” $\chi^2(3) = 3.65$, $p > .05$, “Teachers want me to make most of the important decisions in our school,” $\chi^2(3) = 3.07$, $p > .05$, “I would be a better principal if I delegated more responsibilities,” $\chi^2(3) = 1.76$, $p > .05$, and “I have access to legal advice when I need it,” $\chi^2(3) = 1.90$, $p > .05$.

Findings from both years indicate that most respondents “Strongly agree” when asked if they are glad they became a principal. Of respondents in 2003, 210 (42.3%) principals disagreed while 179 (36.0) agreed that teachers do not collaborate as much as they should while in 2008, 254 (39.0%) disagreed but 256 (39.3%) agreed. Therefore, in 2003, 58% of respondents disagreed with that statement while 42% agreed and in 2008,

53.7% disagreed while 46.2% agreed, similarly. In both, 2003 and 2008, respondents reported that “Teachers want me to make most of the important decisions in our school.” In 2003, 326 (66.1%) principals and in 2008, 457 (70.4%) principals “agreed” and “strongly agreed” with that statement. 234 (47.3%) principals in 2003 and 316 (48.7%) principals “agreed” they would be better principals if they delegated more. In terms of legal advice, most principals (90%+ both years) “agreed” and “strongly agreed” they had access to legal advice when they needed it. See Table 5 for descriptive statistics.

For variables relating to aspects of being a principal, there were significant differences between the comparative survey groups with respect to the following survey items: “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues,” “I spend too much time on student discipline” and “I understand what is expected under the NCLB legislation and what is meant by Adequate Yearly Progress. Chi square tests for independence revealed there were significant differences between the survey group and the reported responses to “I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues, $\chi^2(3) = 16.49$, $p < .05$, “I spend too much time on student discipline,” $\chi^2(3) = 18.18$, $p < .05$, and “I understand what is expected under the NCLB legislation and what is meant by Adequate yearly Progress, $\chi^2(3) = 27.63$, $p < .05$. The majority of respondents, 275 (55.6%) simply “agreed” with this statement in 2003 while the majority of principals, 366 (56.3%) “strongly agreed” in 2008.

Table 5

Aspects of Being a Principal

Variable	Survey year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Glad became principal		
Strongly Disagree	10 (2.0)	17 (2.6)
Disagree	19 (3.8)	23 (3.5)
Agree	143 (28.8)	190 (29.2)
Strongly Agree	324 (65.3)	421 (64.7)
Spend majority of time on instructional issues		
Strongly Disagree	65 (13.2)	52 (8.0)*
Disagree	255 (51.6)	302 (46.4)
Agree	145 (29.4)	252 (38.7)
Strongly Agree	29 (5.9)	45 (6.9)
Teachers do not collaborate as much as they should		
Strongly Disagree	78 (15.7)	96 (14.7)
Disagree	210 (42.3)	254 (39.0)
Agree	179 (36.0)	256 (39.3)
Strongly Agree	30 (6.0)	45 (6.9)
Spend too much time on student discipline		
Strongly Disagree	63 (12.7)	72 (11.1)*
Disagree	222 (44.8)	351 (54.0)
Agree	156 (31.5)	194 (29.8)
Strongly Agree	54 (10.9)	33 (5.1)
Know how to help weak teacher become satisfactory		
Strongly Disagree	1 (0.2)	5 (0.8)
Disagree	28 (5.7)	32 (4.9)
Agree	312 (63.4)	436 (67.0)
Strongly Agree	151 (30.7)	178 (27.3)

Table 5 (*continued*)

Variable	Survey year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Know how to help good teacher become excellent		
Strongly Disagree	3 (0.6)	2 (0.3)
Disagree	38 (7.7)	57 (8.8)
Agree	276 (55.6)	387 (59.4)
Strongly Agree	179 (36.1)	205 (31.5)
Teachers want me to make most important decisions in school		
Strongly Disagree	17 (3.4)	24 (3.7)
Disagree	150 (30.4)	168 (25.9)
Agree	245 (49.7)	337 (51.9)
Strongly Agree	81 (16.4)	120 (18.5)
Would be better principal if delegated more		
Strongly disagree	22 (4.4)	20 (3.1)
Disagree	194 (39.2)	249 (38.4)
Agree	234 (47.3)	316 (48.7)
Strongly agree	45 (9.1)	64 (9.9)
Understand expectations under NCLB/know what AYP means		
Strongly disagree	3 (0.6)	8 (1.2)*
Disagree	38 (7.7)	15 (2.3)
Agree	276 (55.6)	261 (40.2)
Strongly agree	179 (36.1)	366 (56.3)
Have access to legal advice when needed		
Strongly disagree	6 (1.2)	9 (1.4)
Disagree	32 (6.4)	31 (4.8)
Agree	237 (47.7)	304 (46.8)
Strongly agree	222 (44.7)	306 (47.1)

Note. * indicates significant χ^2 at the .05 level

Regarding principals spending the majority of their time on instructional issues, in 2003, the majority of principals - 255 (51.6%) reported that they “disagreed” with the

statement while in 2008, the majority of principals, 302 (46.4%) reported the same. Nearly half, 297 (45.6%) of respondents “agreed or “strongly agreed” in 2008, while only 174 (35.3%) reported the same in 2003. Only 179 (36.1%) principals reported “strongly agree” when asked about expectations under NCLB and AYP in 2003, while over half, 366 (56.3%) principals reported “strongly agree” in 2008.

Survey participants were asked to list their top two priorities as a principal (after safety). Using qualitative coding methods (Creswell, 2005), the researcher identified salient patterns for classifying and coding information. Twelve categories emerged from the survey groups. The number of survey responses does not represent the number of principals who responded to question 15. Rather, categorized responses were calculated. Some participants provided general comments in two different areas, while others emphasized similar areas of importance for both priorities. Some survey participants provided only one priority while others opted to report more than two but no more than three. All open-ended comments were categorized and codes were assigned. Codes and frequencies of comments are presented in Table 6.

A few differences between the years were reported in the number of times a particular area may have been listed. Improving teacher performance was mentioned nine times in 2003, but 110 times in 2008. Recruiting and retaining good teachers over doubled in responses from 37 in 2003 to 89 in 2008.

Table 6

Table 6 Q. We Know as a Principal Your Most Important Job is to Keep the People in Your Building Safe. After Safety, List Your Top Two Priorities as Principal

Code	Category	Survey year	
		2003 <i>n</i> = 758	2008 <i>n</i> = 1042
1.	Student learning/academic achievement/ Student growth/ academic success for all students	<i>n</i> = 109(2)	<i>n</i> = 208(2)
2.	Curriculum and instruction, improving the teaching and instructional program	<i>n</i> = 473(1)	<i>n</i> = 346(1)
3.	Personnel	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 12
4.	Improve communication, community (public relations/parents issues)	<i>n</i> = 24(5)	<i>n</i> = 66
5.	Technology	<i>n</i> = 0	<i>n</i> = 7
6.	Recruiting and retaining good teachers	<i>n</i> = 37(4)	<i>n</i> = 89(4)
7.	Finances	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 18
8.	Empowering teacher leaders to lead and grow	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 52
9.	Improving teacher performance /providing quality professional development	<i>n</i> = 9	<i>n</i> = 110(3)
10.	Discipline	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 16
11.	Managerial issues	<i>n</i> = 8	<i>n</i> = 35
12.	Improving school climate, PLCs, cultural leadership collaboration and building relationships	<i>n</i> = 46(3)	<i>n</i> = 83(5)

Note. Rank order of categorized responses is in parenthesis.

Independent samples t tests were used to analyze the percentages assigned by principals regarding time on the job. T tests revealed a few significant differences between the 2003 and 2008 survey groups with respect to how principals perceive to spend their time. Three areas reveal a level of significance at $<.05$ difference. They were Management Routine, Instructional Leadership, and “Other” areas. Specifically, 2003 respondents spent more time ($M = 26.44$, $SD = 14.23$) in Management Routine activities than did 2008 respondents ($M = 21.39$, $SD = 12.04$), $t(847.30) = 6.10$, $p < .05$; spent less time ($M = 25.51$, $SD = 14.45$) in Instructional Leadership activities than did 2008 respondents ($M = 29.83$, $SD = 15.97$), $t(1007.18) = -4.62$, $p < .05$; and spent more time ($M = 9.17$, $SD = 8.47$) on other activities than did 2008 respondents ($M = 6.13$, $SD = 6.13$), $t(146.84) = 3.33$, $p < .05$. See Table 7 for a summary of these results.

Research Question 3. Based on a comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to the 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in aspects of the principal’s job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement?

The district’s role in school improvement is important to principal leadership. Therefore, in 2003, the PEP faculty included in the “State of the Principalship” survey, a rating scale for principals to indicate satisfaction with their school district’s role regarding aspects of their job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement. See Table 8 for a summary of these analyses.

Table 7

Independent Samples T-Test Results for Percentage of Time Spent Weekly by Survey Group

<i>Dependent variable/group</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Management routine</i>				
2003 Principals	26.44	14.23	6.10	<.001*
2008 Principals	21.39	12.04	(847)	
<i>Personnel</i>				
2003 Principals	12.36	7.86	1.18	.24
2008 Principals	11.78	7.93	(943)	
<i>Crisis management</i>				
2003 Principals	6.26	6.07	-1.46	.14
2008 Principals	6.86	6.51	(904)	
<i>Instructional leadership</i>				
2003 Principals	25.51	14.45	-4.62	<.001*
2008 Principals	29.83	15.97	(1007)	
<i>Student issues</i>				
2003 Principals	18.88	11.83	1.93	.05
2008 Principals	17.52	10.99	(894)	
<i>Community activities</i>				
2003 Principals	6.62	4.40	-0.88	.38
2008 Principals	6.87	4.67	(910)	
<i>Legal issues</i>				
2003 Principals	4.70	3.43	-0.76	.45
2008 Principals	4.87	3.57	(871)	
<i>Other</i>				
2003 Principals	9.17	8.47	3.33	<.001*
2008 Principals	6.13	6.13	(147)	

Note. * denotes significant *t* value. Numbers under *t* ratio are degrees of freedom. In all cases, equal variance is not assumed.

Chi square tests for independence revealed significant differences between survey groups with respect to two of the seven survey items: “My Central office / district provides meaningful professional development for principals to be effective,” $\chi^2(3) = 11.61$, $p < .05$ and “My central office / district leadership could communicate the quality of teaching and learning at my school,” $\chi^2(3) = 16.76$, $p < .05$. In 2008, more principals (72%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their central office / district leadership provided meaningful professional development for principals to be effective, compared to 63% of principals in 2003. Of respondents in 2003, 78% of principals “agreed” and “strongly agreed” with the statement, “My central office could communicate the quality of teaching and learning at my school,” whereas only 67.3% of principals in 2008 responded positively to this statement. Chi square tests for independence revealed no relationship between survey groups and remaining five survey questions pertinent to a principal’s satisfaction with his/her district’s role in school improvement. For both 2003 and 2008 survey groups, most principals (i.e., more than 50%) reported that they either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statements.

Research Question 4. Based on comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in the aspects of professional development?

Respondents were asked what their most valuable professional development experience has been. See Table 9 for the ranked reported data for professional development interests for both 2003 and 2008.

Table 8

Principals' Satisfaction with District's Role in School Improvement

Variable	Survey Year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Central office provides data in useful format to make instructional decisions		
Strongly disagree	20 (4.3)	19 (2.9)
Disagree	43 (9.3)	79 (12.2)
Agree	227 (49.3)	320 (49.4)
Strongly agree	170 (37.0)	230 (35.5)
Central office communicates expectations regarding teaching strategies		
Strongly disagree	18 (3.9)	22 (3.4)
Disagree	69 (15.0)	96 (14.8)
Agree	248 (53.9)	364 (56.1)
Strongly agree	125 (27.2)	167 (25.7)
Central office provides professional development likely to improve teaching/learning		
Strongly disagree	21 (4.6)	24 (3.7)
Disagree	67 (14.5)	82 (12.6)
Agree	230 (49.9)	374 (57.6)
Strongly agree	143 (31.0)	169 (26.0)
Central office provides meaningful support for new teachers		
Strongly disagree	20 (4.3)	20 (3.1)
Disagree	70 (15.2)	96 (14.8)
Agree	236 (51.3)	349 (53.9)
Strongly agree	134 (29.1)	183 (28.2)
Central office provides meaningful professional development for principals to be effective		
Strongly disagree	45 (9.8)	39 (6.0)*
Disagree	125 (27.2)	142 (29.1)
Agree	209 (45.5)	332 (51.2)
Strongly agree	80 (17.4)	135 (20.8)

Table 8 (*continued*)

Variable	Survey year	
	2003 <i>n</i> = 507	2008 <i>n</i> = 651
Primary role of central office is to improve teaching/learning		
Strongly disagree	29 (6.3)	31 (4.8)
Disagree	79 (17.1)	116 (17.9)
Agree	224 (48.6)	337 (52.1)
Strongly agree	129 (28.0)	163 (25.2)
Central office could communicate quality of teaching/learning at my school		
Strongly disagree	20 (4.5)	32 (5.0)*
Disagree	79 (17.6)	179 (27.7)
Agree	265 (59.0)	342 (52.9)
Strongly agree	85 (18.9)	93 (14.4)

Note. * denotes significant χ^2 value at the .05 level

For the 2003 survey group, the most frequent response was the Principals' Executive Program, with 251 principals reporting this as their most valuable professional development experience. In rank order, the next most popular professional development response was the local school district (*n* = 202), followed by the college or university experience (*n* = 91), then, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) (*n* = 79) and an equal number of responses for Independent Study (*n* = 68) and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) (*n* = 68). Less popular responses in rank order included one's District Leadership Academy (*n* = 49), North Carolina Association of Secondary Administrators (NCASA) (*n* = 28), Tar Heel Principals (*n* = 11), Web-learning (*n* = 5), and North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE; *n* = 4).

Table 9

Most Valuable Professional Development Experiences by Survey Group

Experience	<i>n</i>	Percent of Respondents
2003 Principals		
PEP	251	(49.5)
Local School District	202	(39.8)
College/University	91	(17.9)
DPI	79	(15.5)
Independent Study	68	(13.4)
ASCD	68	(13.4)
District Leadership Academy	49	(9.6)
NCASA	28	(5.5)
Tar Heel Principals	11	(2.1)
Web-Learning	5	(0.9)
NCAE	4	(0.7)
2008 Principals		
PEP	341	(52.3)
Local School District	283	(43.4)
ACSD	138	(21.1)
College/University	117	(17.9)
District Leadership Academy	104	(15.9)
DPI	92	(14.1)
Independent Study	73	(11.2)
NCASA	39	(5.9)
Web-Learning	18	(2.7)
NCAE	14	(2.1)
Tar Heel Principals	10	(1.5)

Note. * indicates rank order of categorized responses

For the 2008 survey group, the most frequent response was PEP, with 341 respondents choosing this as their most valuable professional development experience. Other popular responses included local school district ($n = 283$), ASCD ($n = 138$), college or university ($n = 117$), and District Leadership Academy ($n = 104$). Less common responses included the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) ($n = 92$),

Independent study ($n = 73$), North Carolina Association of Secondary Administrators (NCASA) ($n = 39$), Web-learning ($n = 18$), North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) ($n = 14$), and Tar Heel Principals ($n = 10$)

Respondents were asked to rank their most valuable professional development experience as a principal. Responses were weighted and ranked in order of importance. For both survey groups, participants reported Curriculum and Instruction as their most pressing professional development interest, and School Law as their least important interest. See Table 10 for the ranked order of interests for both survey groups, 2003 and 2008. Results indicate the order is nearly identical for both years.

At the end of the survey, an open-ended question was provided for participants to share additional perceptions regarding the principalship. The question asked: “Is there anything else you wish to share about the principalship?” The researcher utilized a qualitative research method (Creswell, 2005) to analyze the data by identifying salient patterns for classifying and coding information. Nine categories emerged from the survey groups, although not all survey participants provided a comment. All open-ended comments were categorized into 10 categories (including “no comment” and no responses in general) and codes were assigned. Codes and frequencies of comments are presented in Table 11. While the researcher is not suggesting that the open-ended data are generalizable, they are representative of the data set.

Table 10

Principals' Ranked Professional Development Interests

2003 Principals

Curriculum and instruction

School improvement

Leadership and support

Data analysis

Student development

Technology

School law

2008 Principals

Curriculum and instruction

School improvement

Data analysis

Leadership and support

Student development

Technology

School law

Table 11 data indicate that the majority of principals in 2003 commented in some way that the principalship was great and/or rewarding while overwhelmingly more principals in 2008 reported that the principalship was complex, including descriptors such as stressful, overwhelming, challenging and demanding.

Table 11

Q. Is there anything else you wish to share about the principalship?

Code	Category	Survey year	
		2003 <i>n</i> = 153	2008 <i>n</i> = 184
1.	The principalship is a great/rewarding job	<i>n</i> = 30(1)	<i>n</i> = 22(2)
2.	The principalship is complex (stressful, overwhelming, challenging, and demanding)	<i>n</i> = 28(2)	<i>n</i> = 66(1)
3.	The principalship has money and salary issues	<i>n</i> = 19(5)	<i>n</i> = 22(2)
4.	The principalship spends too much time on issues besides instruction (e-mails, meetings, and paperwork)	<i>n</i> = 20(4)	<i>n</i> = 20(4)
5.	The principalship is BOTH great and challenging	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 17(5)
6.	The principalship needs attention given to National Certification	<i>n</i> = 3	<i>n</i> = 3
7.	The principalship needs to look at the preparation, professional development, and the Recruitment and Retention of principals	<i>n</i> = 11	<i>n</i> = 21(3)
8.	The principalship needs to look at issues of accountability and principal assessment	<i>n</i> = 6	<i>n</i> = 8
9.	The principalship needs to look at the relationship with Central Office, DPI, and the Superintendents.	<i>n</i> = 21(3)	<i>n</i> = 5
10.	No response	<i>n</i> = 354	<i>n</i> = 467

Note. Rank order of categorized responses is in parenthesis.

A similar number of principals in both years (20 people in both participant groups) commented in some way about how too much time is spent on issues besides instruction (e-mails, meetings and paperwork). More principals in 2003 recommended looking at the relationship with Central Office, DPI and superintendents, while only five respondents in 2008 opted to comment. See Table 11 for a comparison of the categories between the two years.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results and analysis of data from the 2003 and 2008 administrations of the “State of the Principalship” surveys. 1,159 principals participated in this study between the two years (507 in 2003 and 651 in 2008). Descriptive statistics including the responses, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to statistically analyze the data. Samples *t* tests were used to analyze the question pertinent to time allotments. Data were organized according to the major constructs of the survey by utilizing each research question as a lens through which to analyze findings: Demographics, Aspects of Being a Principal, District Role in School Improvement and Professional Development. Qualitative coding methods, whereby verbatim responses were categorized into thematic categories, were used to analyze open-ended information provided by respondents both years. The following chapter will provide conclusions and possible implications based on the study. Despite minimal statistical significance when comparing responses between the two years, the researcher found several areas deserving of further discussion and possible future research. Chapter 5 discusses major findings, implications, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter interprets the results and discusses the implications for this quantitative study. The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals in North Carolina reported statistically significant differences on survey responses when comparing the 2003 and 2008 “State of the Principalship” survey items. The intention was for the feedback to be used to inform PEP in its efforts to provide quality professional development and as feedback and empirical information for principals, aspiring principals, policy makers, universities and local school systems. For each question, conclusions are drawn based on study results. Implications for Practice are drawn from the data and evidence of how to advance knowledge regarding the perceptions of principals in North Carolina is provided. Relevant limitations of this study are described and the chapter concludes with recommendations for PEP and future research.

Summary of Purpose

Figure 1 (p. 16) is the framework that shaped the inquiry of the study. The surveys were designed by PEP to learn about principal perspectives in four main areas: (1) Demographic characteristics; (2) Aspects of being a principal; (3) Aspects of principal job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement; and (4) Aspects of professional development (Lewandowski, 2003). See Appendices A and B for the surveys used in the study. Based on findings from the study, the researcher sought to examine the major research question: “How have the roles of the principal and the perceptions of principals in North Carolina changed from 2003 to 2008 as judged by the “State of the Principalship” surveys?” The four questions that guided the study were:

Research Questions

1. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in demographic characteristics cited by respondents?

2. Based on a comparison of respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences on aspects of being a principal in North Carolina?

3. Based on a comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in aspects of the principal's job responsibilities relating to dimensions of school improvement?

4. Based on comparison of the respondents on the 2003 to 2008 PEP survey, are there statistically significant differences in the aspects of professional development?

Participant responses to survey questions in these areas represent a snapshot of principal perceptions about components of the principalship in North Carolina related to personal and school characteristics of principals today, what principals actually do, how time is spent on the job, and professional development needs. It is the hope of the researcher that these results will be used by educators, superintendents hiring and evaluating principals, future administrators and professional development providers concerned with the ever-changing role of the principal in the 21st century, to ensure schools and students are improved in North Carolina. Procedures used to ascertain data are now described.

Summary of Procedures

“The State of the Principalship” survey was delivered via the Internet in an electronic online survey format in 2003 and 2008. In 2003, the survey instrument was sent to principals using the PEP listserv. 1,763 principals were invited to participate. 507 (28.6%) principals actually participated. The Microsoft Excel database was used to compile data (Ware, A., personal communication, August 25, 2008). In 2008, PEP invited 2,339 principals to participate in the survey electronically, using the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction database. 2,233 survey invitations were successfully delivered. After multiple follow-up e-mail reminders, 651 (29.2%) principals participated. A consent letter for the study (see Appendix C) was embedded in the initial survey and data were submitted to *K12 Insight*, an online data collection company under contract with PEP. 2008 survey results were placed in a compatible database for comparison with 2003 data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (*SPSS*), *Version 16.0*, was the software of choice for this study’s statistical data analysis and comparison. Guiding research questions were addressed through Pearson chi square (cross-tabulation) statistics and independent Samples *t*-test for the questions asking respondents to indicate how time is spent weekly (percentages). The researcher analyzed the open-ended responses qualitatively (Creswell, 2005), by pulling out common themes from the verbatim responses and then categorizing each response into one of the nine thematic categories that emerged.

Summary of Major Findings

This section discusses the findings reported in Chapter 4 as they relate to each of the four research questions that served as guides for this study.

Research Question 1: Demographic Data and Patterns

Demographic characteristics of individuals such as age, gender, race, tenure, and education have long been considered important variables in research (Zedeck & Cascio, 1984). Analyses pertinent to demography in this study revealed that the sample size slightly increased in 2008 ($n = 651$) from 2003 ($n = 507$). Demographic characteristics of respondents revealed a significant difference between the two samples in district size, years of experience as a school administrator, years at the current school and in school level. Whereas many principals in 2003 ($n = 117$) were from average size districts (meaning 11-25 schools), the most frequent response by respondents in 2008 ($n = 240$) were from extra-large districts (meaning 46+ schools). These findings suggest that school districts have increased numbers of schools since 2003, possibly in an effort to meet the growing demands of North Carolina. In a recent news article, it was reported that “Despite the economic downturn, North Carolina’s population jumped 2% from July 2007 to July 2008, making it the fourth-fastest growing state in the country, according to the U.S. Census Bureau” (News and Observer, December 22, 2008, p. 1). This growth generates a concern regarding the ability of superintendents and school districts to “keep up” as they seek to not only hire well but to effectively develop principals as suggested by Davis et al. (2005), authors of *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals*.

Principals with the most years of experience (21-30 years of experience) were the least represented in both 2003 (10.8%) and 2008 (9.8%). However, respondent principals with the most years of experience responded as well overall from 2003 to 2008. This response may suggest that the workforce is actually more populated by younger, less

experienced principals and that there is possibly a need for efforts to be focused on retaining seasoned principals while recruiting individuals that are willing to stay in the role of the principalship. In 2003, the majority of respondents represented almost equally the mid-career job tenure range: 6-10 years of experience (30.3%) and 11-20 years of experience (30.1%) while the majority of respondents in 2008 (39.4%) reported they had 6-10 years of experience, again indicating a clear shift to less experienced principals serving as principals in North Carolina over the past five years.

Over half of the principals from both survey years reported they were primary or elementary school principals, while a small percentage of respondents reported that they represented “other” types of schools. It is important to note that in addition to an increase in alternative schools in 2008, the verbatim data describing “other” school levels suggested support for new approaches to teaching and learning as the mention of early college and middle college schools were reported for the first time in 2008. *Table 2* provides the descriptive terms used for comparison. Significance was reported here. Moreover, findings support and align with the breakdown of schools made available on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2008) Web site. It indicates that 1,786 (72.8%) of North Carolina schools in 2007 – 2008 represented the elementary level (Grades PK – 8), 460 (18.8%) represented the secondary level (Grades 9-12), 108 (4.4%) represented combined schools and 98 (4.0%) represent Charter schools for a total of 2,452 schools. Survey patterns presented suggest the possible need for PEPs attention to be given to areas of school leadership based on specific school level rather than solely on years in the profession.

This study indicated there was no significance difference between the groups in terms of their preparation for the principalship over the five year span. Eighty percent or more in both groups indicated acceptable or above average preparation, at least to some extent, with university coursework designed to prepare one for the principalship, and with assistant principal experiences in school districts. This finding indicates that leaders in these systems have helped principals perceive that their experiences were appropriate in some way. Principal respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their coursework preparation and assistant principal preparation were at least acceptable, if not above average both years. Further, it suggests that principals serving today believe they were prepared for school leadership at least to some extent.

Statistical significance was revealed in the number of nights principals reported to work away from home weekly. Surprisingly, principals in 2008 reported that they worked away from home fewer nights per week than principals in 2003. The modal response in both groups was 2-3 nights away per week. The researcher believes more in-depth research is probably needed to determine whether this finding is related to the fact that the majority of respondents represented primary or elementary levels both years and whether this could have impacted the data based on the number of responsibilities secondary principals have in comparison to those for elementary principals. This may be of particular importance since the majority of respondents for both years represented elementary levels. SPSS, Version 16.0 frequency reports provided evidence for statistical analyses. Tables 2, 3 and 4 report the findings used for comparison.

Research Question 2: Aspects of Being a Principal

From the analysis conducted in this study, few differences between the groups in terms of *Aspects of Being a Principal* were revealed. Table 5 indicates that the majority of principals in both groups (94%+) were glad they became a principal, and felt they could help teachers improve (90%+). Using chi square statistics to determine statistical significance, the researcher discovered only three of the 10 areas statistically significant in the *Aspects of Being a Principal* section. More principals in 2008 agreed that they spent the majority of their time on instructional issues while more principals in 2003 disagreed. Statistically, a decrease in time being spent on student discipline was reported by 2008 participants. Respondents in both years, 2003 (58.0%) and 2008 (65.1%), however, reported that they do not spend the majority of their time on student discipline. This finding supports some research that suggests “More than ever, in today’s climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning” (Davis et al., 2005, p. i). These data may reflect a shift as principals may have committed themselves to an increased focus on issues of instruction rather than allowing themselves to be overly burdened with student discipline. The final area of significance reported on *Aspects of Being a Principal* revealed the large majority of principals in both, 2003 (91.7%) and 2008 (96.5%) understand expectations under the federal NCLB legislation and the concept of AYP. See Table 5 for evidence and support.

Table 6 addresses one of two open-ended questions compared for the study. Qualitative methods (Creswell, 2005) were used to categorize the top two reported priorities after school safety listed by survey participants. When the researcher compared the number of times a category was listed, comments pertinent to areas of curriculum,

instruction, improving teaching and improving the instructional program were ranked as the top priority for both years. This finding directly aligns with how principals reported their use of time in 2008 for “areas of instruction” (see Table 7). Areas relating to student learning, academic achievement, student growth and academic success for all students were the next most frequently reported areas for both survey years supporting research on effective schools and the practices that were critical to enhanced student achievement and school productivity (see Waters et al., 2003). Further, the researcher feels strongly that these findings also support educational leadership research conducted by The Wallace Foundation that stated:

Growing consensus on the attributes of effective school principals shows that successful school leaders influence student achievement through two important pathways – the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational processes. Even with the growing body of evidence, additional research is necessary to determine the impact and relative importance of leadership in such key areas as curriculum, assessment, and adaptation to local contexts. (Davis et al., 2005, p. 5)

In 2006, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction adopted the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Standard 2: Instructional Leadership clearly acknowledges the importance of principals and school achievement and performance. Principals in this century are expected by all stakeholders to keep schools and students moving forward academically. Research suggests that academic time teaching and learning is the nexus in which student achievement materializes and grows (see Denham & Lieberman, 1980; Fisher & Berliner, 1983; Seifert & Beck, 1984).

Table 7 reveals significance for time allotment percentages as reported by principals in 2003 and 2008. Independent samples *t* tests were run for the time allotment question that requested participants represent how they spend their time weekly by

assigning percentages to the following categories: management routine, personnel, crisis management, instructional leadership, student issues, community activities, legal issues and other. Table 7 reflects that statistical significance was determined for three areas: Management Routine, Instructional Leadership, and “Other” areas. The fact that principals in 2003 spent more time in areas of management; whereas principals in 2008 reported they spent more time on issues pertinent to instructional leadership is indicative of a shift of effort and energy that has transpired over time as a possible response to demands surrounding issues of accountability noted by the increased understanding of AYP and the NCLB legislation.

Although there are a few differences in the data reported for 2003 and 2008 regarding how principals spent their time, research pertinent to principal leadership is clear that areas of instruction, teaching and learning, and student achievement should be priorities for school leaders today (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006). Principal respondents strongly suggest both Management Routine and Instructional Leadership are the most time consuming functions of principals in both sets of responses, supporting literature surrounding principals as instructional leaders.

Research Question 3: Aspects of the Principals Job Related to Dimensions of School Improvement

A significant body of research regarding principal leadership suggests that vigorous principal leadership is an essential characteristic for strong schools and ultimately student success (see Cohen, 1983; Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 1993; Halliger & Leithwood, 1996; Greenfield, 1982; Leithwood et al, 1994; Leithwood et al., 2004;

Marzano et al., 2005; Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008). Survey questions in this area asked participants to rate their satisfaction with the district's role in school improvement. When comparing 2003 and 2008 data using chi square statistics, only two of the seven areas revealed significance: "My central office provides meaningful professional development for principals to be effective" and "My central office could communicate the quality of teaching and learning at my school." More principals in 2008 (72%) agreed that central office provided meaningful professional development for principals in a quest to help them become effective; while only 62% agreed in 2003. These data support *The Preparing School Leaders: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations* report published in 1987. This report self-identified key trouble spots in *Leaders for America's Schools (UCEA)*. Two main problem areas identified were an absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities, and a lack of systematic professional development. This study indicated a possible need for professional development providers like PEP and the university system to partner to ensure collaboration and a systematic delivery of information. Based on responses of principals in this study, the researcher suggests a partnership aimed at focusing on pre-service courses at the university level (before becoming a principal) and in-service training at PEP (once named a principal), could help streamline important features and systematically ensure all principals (new and developing) are effectively trained for the role. This collaboration would help ensure that principals are properly exposed to information deemed important for taking the helm, but that continued growth and development would also appropriately scaffold throughout the span of a principal's career while working in districts.

Today, local district leadership plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of principals who are effective in the areas of teaching and learning. In a recent study, Hale and Moorman (2003) reported that “Strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations” (p.7). The researcher believes these data support the perspective that principals cannot lead and improve schools alone. Without district level collaboration and support, principals, and ultimately the schools they lead, are likely to flounder if not fail. The final open-ended question on the survey was optional both years, but presented additional data to support findings regarding the perceptions of principals in a variety of areas. The main perceptions reported between the two years included issues such as the identification of how complex the job is and how those in roles of district leadership need to look at the preparation for principals as well as the professional development, recruitment and retention of principals (see Table 11).

Survey data indicated that most principals in 2008 reported similar percentages in 2003 regarding central office support, guidance, knowledge and the ability to assist principals with improving their schools across the state. *Table 8* provides descriptive data indicating that few differences between groups on aspects of satisfaction with the district’s role in school improvement existed. Fewer principals in 2008 agreed that the district could communicate the quality of teaching and learning at school, suggesting less support for this notion over the past five years. More principals in 2008 agreed that the district provided meaningful professional development activities for principals to be effective, suggesting an improvement over the last five years on the local district level.

Research Question 4: Professional Development

Analyses within this study revealed a large majority of principals from both surveys (nearly half each year) had similar professional development experiences and needs. Using chi square statistics and computing frequencies, the researcher has drawn several tentative conclusions. Some of the literature pertinent to principal leadership and preparation indicates that principals play an integral role in setting the direction for successful schools. However, existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare, train and develop highly qualified school leaders is sparse (Halliger & Leithwood, 1996; Milstein, 1999). Table 9 indicates that among survey respondents, PEP is still the most valuable professional development experience for principals in North Carolina in 2008 ($n = 341$), as was the case in 2003 ($n = 251$). In a close second, the local school district was still reported as valuable in 2008 as it was in 2003. This finding supports the respondent principal's perceptions regarding the role of the central office and aspects of the principalship related to school improvement. However, respondent principals in 2008 reported that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) experience was more valuable than the college / university experience. In 2003, the college / university experience was ranked third. These data support a study conducted by Hale and Moorman (2003) on principal preparation, "Our nation is now confronted by a profound disconnect between pre-service and in-service training, the current realities and demands of the job and the capacity of school leaders to be instructional leaders" (p. 7). When principals were asked to rank their professional development interests, both survey respondents had similar professional development interests. Principals in both, 2003 and 2008 reported that Curriculum and Instruction was the major area of interest and School Improvement closely followed. In 2003, principals reported that interest in Data Analysis

preceded Leadership and Support; while in 2008, principals reported that Data Analysis was more important than Leadership and Support. Interest in Student Development, followed and Technology and School Law were least popular in the same order for both years. Table 10 provides development interests in ranked order from the researcher calculating the frequencies of responses. A similar pattern emerged from the survey's seven areas of interest that indicated practicing principals over time have not changed their views on professional development when comparing results from 2003 with those from 2008.

The only areas that inverted between the two years are Leadership and Support (which ranked third in 2003 but fourth in 2008) and Data Analysis (which ranked fourth in 2003 and third in 2008). Several generalizations about the perceptions of respondent principals can be drawn from the results of this section. For instance, despite the many variables confronting principals, they overwhelmingly in both years (2003 and 2008) were glad they became a principal and still seemed to keep Instructional Leadership (meaning Curriculum and Instruction and School Improvement) at the forefront. These key findings from the comparison of survey results both years could potentially assist current research pertinent to school leadership, particularly in North Carolina. The data could help university personnel and professional development providers target the reported needs of principals and make them priorities in the delivery of pre-service and in-service programs. Since principal respondents indicated Curriculum and Instruction was the consistent priority for professional development between both years, the researcher believes it would be an important area to weave in both pre-service and in-service programs, alike. All other ranked areas could be addressed in both deliveries of

service but on an awareness level in pre-service programs and in a more in-depth manner for in-service professional development programs to ensure principals continue to grow and refine skills throughout the span of one's career as a principal.

While only a few areas of significance were revealed by re-administering the "State of the Principalship" survey, more principals took time to respond in 2008 than did those in 2003, possibly indicating an increased level of concern and/or interest in the profession, although the reasons may differ for their increased concern.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study have important implications for educators and educational agencies in North Carolina. It would be prudent for North Carolina policy makers and universities to pay close attention to the demography of respondents and their schools, particularly as attention in the area of principal recruitment and retention are addressed. The theoretical framework for this study was created to better understand how the "State of the Principalship" survey, the core of this research, impacted elements of change (Fullan, 2001; Schlechy, 1997) as well as improved school outcomes and increased student achievement. Such results represent the goal and policy expectation for all 21st century school principals based on research in the field (Fullan, 2001; Marsh, 2000; Marzano, 2005). It also addresses "The Principals' Executive Program's ultimate objectives which are to improve student's understanding and performance as well as to provide effective professional development and gain insight into the delivery of service for North Carolina's school leaders" (PEP, 1997, p. 1). Although the "State of the Principalship" survey served as the conduit for information for PEP, findings clearly have implications for practice for universities (particularly Schools of Education),

superintendents and their local districts, and for North Carolina policy makers. Further, the findings have implications for current principals in the field and for those aspiring to the principalship as well.

Universities (Schools of Education)

The preparation of principals, in large part, rests on the shoulders of colleges and universities with Master's level programs designed to help license individuals seeking principal certification in North Carolina. While those aspiring to the principalship must engage in coursework and an internship experience, in some way, it is the foundational work of the university that is trusted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and employers (often local boards and superintendents) when certification and hiring decisions are considered. Therefore, implications for universities could be to ensure principals are not only be introduced to the realities of the job but provided opportunities to experience authentic challenges, knowledge, solutions and demands during coursework preparation so that the acquisition of skills essential for the job are acquired (see Table 4). "The State of the Principalship" clearly indicated that principals in North Carolina have increased their perspective on the significant role universities play in the life of a principal (see Table 9). They also indicated that practical skills of the Management Routine, Student Learning and realities of day-to-day operations are nearly as important as what is learned about Instructional Leadership (see Tables 6 & 7). These findings were consistent with the research on effective schools that addresses the need for strong school leaders. The literature suggests that "Strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations" (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p.7)

It is important to note that educators new to the principalship, enter that line of work, often only with the university experience to rely upon. Therefore, it is critical that multifaceted, realistic approaches and experiences are embedded into the curriculum so that awareness of the overwhelming attributes of the role is not surprising to new school leaders. Due to the significant five percentage point difference in both areas, the researcher suggests the university curriculum incorporate strategies to help new school leaders prepare to effectively manage schools just as much as they are taught to lead instructionally. This supports school leadership research that prompted this study, on which the seven new North Carolina Standards for School Executives were based (Portin et al., 2003). However, it is also suggested the inclusion of issues on *Personnel, Crisis Management, Student Issues, Community Activities, and Legal Issues* in an effort to expose new principals to a breadth of knowledge, rather than a depth of knowledge for what is referred to as “pre-service” professional development in this chapter.

Superintendents and Local Districts

The task of hiring principals to lead schools is often a function of a superintendent (with assistance from the local district) and ultimately the local school board. After preparation for the principalship at the university level or a preparation program from which a candidate graduates, it is critical superintendents and their districts seek to match an individual with an administrative position. This process can “make or break” a school and quite frankly, a principal as well. Therefore, it is important to note that principals chosen to lead schools today must be prepared for the challenges indicated by survey participants. Principal respondents in the “State of the Principalship” study suggests that the principal must be willing to work 2-4 nights per week, able to help good teachers

become excellent ones and weak teachers become good ones. Findings from this study clearly add to the body of literature that encourages principals to focus on the processes of teaching and learning and facilitating a strong partnership (Blasé & Blase, 1998) with the district in an effort to improve his/her school. Further, the “State of the Principalship” findings support existing research that suggests policy makers, states, principal preparation programs and licensing agencies work to take “luck” and “hit or miss” leadership out of the equation as not all schools are fortunate or even lucky enough to have excellent principals (Southern Regional Education Board, 2003). Districts should embrace this notion and seek to take principals where they are and provide realistic opportunities for growth based on the individual needs of principals in the district while affording opportunities for collaboration and networking with other principals.

At the same time, it is important to note that principal’s feel over-worked and under paid (see Table 11). School district leaders cannot afford to overlook these perceptions, particularly in light of the fact that many seasoned, veteran principals could retire (based on years in the profession) (see Table 3). Such a situation would create a new cadre of inexperienced principals leading more schools. This possibility makes it important that supportive, encouraging working conditions for principals are encouraged as they may assist with the recruitment as well as the retention of good school leaders. Overall survey results indicate that Central Office / district leadership have taken a more active role in school improvement over the last 5 years (see Table 7). However, principal satisfaction with existing information provided to them in a useful format and overall meaningful professional development to build capacity to lead, still needs attention. Superintendents and local districts can no longer afford to hire principals and leave them

to “sink or swim.” They must be intimately involved in the growth and development of new principals, improvement of schools, and in creating supportive, collaborative environments for principals who report to be doing more and more in the complex role of their jobs.

North Carolina Policy Makers

Those in charge of setting policy and legislation designed to govern the principalship need to be keenly aware of how principals feel about the daunting task of performing their roles. The findings of this study indicate a pervasive feeling that the role of the 21st century principal in North Carolina is too all-encompassing, with not enough time or financial compensation. Additionally, findings suggest an increase in time being spent on improving teacher performance and providing quality professional development for teachers (see Table 6). These areas directly impact the school’s instructional program, suggesting the need for more in depth conversations designed to find solutions to the findings surrounding school and student achievement, particularly if policy makers in North Carolina are going to be proactive about addressing issues pertinent to the retention of principals.

In adopting the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives, the North Carolina State Board of Education, in 2006, set forth a new vision of school leadership based on the research from the 2003 study entitled, *Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship*. Researchers recommended the need for a new type of school leader supporting the literature on educational change as the key to successful schools (see Fullan, 1991, 1993, 2001; Hargraves, Earl, Moore & Manning, 2001; Leithwood et al., 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). The comparison of the 2003 and 2008

administrations of “The State of the Principalship” survey indicates a moderate change in perspective by principals between the two years, while the majority of responses indicated similar views and perspectives between the two years, particularly as it pertained to “Aspects of Being a Principal.” It is important policy makers take time to address the concerns and priorities reported by principal respondents because school administration research dating back to 1916 already suggested, “As is the principal, so is the school” (Brown, 2005, p. 117). Therefore, attention given to how principals feel about their time, compensation, and elements of the job would be a worthwhile endeavor. Although it appears principal respondents alternated their first and second priorities between the two years, both still proliferate around the importance of the instructional program, student achievement and various areas that fall into those categories. In 2008, principal respondents also reported the importance of time to improve teacher performance and provide opportunities, money and ideas for teachers to engage in quality professional development. It appears that principals in 2008 have moved away from the importance of building collaborative environments in comparison to the level of importance placed on Professional Learning Communities and climate issues in 2003. However, policy makers could assist by paying attention to reported priorities and find the time, personnel, resources, and/or money to fairly compensate principals charged with leading schools. Further, this researcher believes policymakers should make time for conversations with principals and take their views in account regarding solutions and ideas for addressing anomalies and patterns that emerged from the study, especially those surrounding accountability, recruitment and money for professional development needs

as well as support for professional development providers deemed important by survey respondents.

Principals' Executive Program

Table 11 has prompted the researcher to conclude that the principalship in 2008 was more complex than in 2003. Further, respondent principals reported that attention needs to be given to their preparation and to professional development growth opportunities. *Table 10* ranks the interest of respondents indicating the same findings that support the need for growth in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, School Improvement, Leadership and Support and Data Analysis, as the top four choices. The North Carolina General assembly originally established the Principals' Executive Program to support the professional growth and development for school leaders across North Carolina in 1984 as described in chapter 2. In its 25 year history, PEP's research resulting from the comparison of the "State of the Principalship" survey indicates that respondent principals over the five year span still rank the Principals' Executive Program as their most valuable professional development experience (see Table 9).

As such, PEP should be keenly aware of survey results presenting areas of need, wants and desires of principals today. Survey results should be compared with other research in the field and drive some of the changes, additions, deletions and considerations for programming needs as PEP seeks to improve its delivery of in-service and the rationale(s) supporting the design of its curriculum. In this study, the researcher discovered that issues pertinent to curriculum, instruction, improving the instructional program and student learning were of greatest concern to respondent principals participating in this study (see Table 6). While the researcher cannot generalize from the

sample, findings have several potential implications for PEP, the host professional development provider. Findings from principal respondents suggest that PEP's programs should continue with heavy emphasis on best practices for leadership and management, alike, as it has in the past. Second, greater emphasis may be placed on the collaboration with universities and a streamlined partnership that could be established to help ensure principals are provided appropriate preparation for their roles at every level based on a variety of demographic patterns driving conversations (school level, school designations, years of experience, etc.). The researcher suggests leaders in this partnership foster discussions and provide opportunities for principal growth and development based on patterns reported in this study (i.e. areas of curriculum, instruction, and improving the overall instructional program at the school.)

The second most highly ranked area both years was that of student learning, achievement and student growth indicating PEP's need to keep principals engaged in cutting-edge practices for making certain students in North Carolina schools are not only taught well, but put in academic situations whereby all pupils can grow, develop and experience some measure of success academically. From this study, the researcher also recommends the PEP faculty explore ways to help principals address other important priorities identified specifically in 2008. These areas were communication, recruiting and retaining good teachers, managerial issues, empowering teacher leaders, professional learning communities, improving teacher performance and providing quality professional development for teachers. These areas could be "stand alone" offerings similar to mini-conferences, mini-courses, institutes and seminars or they could be embedded in the existing residential core programs. Regardless, the researcher feels these findings greatly

impact the role of PEP in preparing effective school leaders today. It is important that PEP leadership consider incorporating these reported areas of priority for principals. They are not only realistic, but represent important expectations for principals who intend on leading schools today. Knowledge in the areas of school leadership preparation and continued professional development, specifically in the areas of leadership and management alike, has also been advanced by the findings in this study.

Recommendations for the Principals' Executive Program

This study was rooted in elements of change as indicated on the theoretical framework presented in chapter 1 (p. 13). Since PEP's mission is to remain contemporary in its delivery of service, while helping school leaders improve the conditions of their schools, survey results should be beneficial in assisting the PEP faculty with making adjustments and changes pertinent to updating programs and short-term institutes, as well as various decisions impacting *what* and *how* school leaders should grow professionally. The researcher suggests that PEP (in its efforts to effectively prepare current principals, as well as those aspiring to the principalship), review all comparative findings, especially areas of significance that have changed or shifted over the five year span, but cautiously refrain from discounting all other patterns as they could be used to support rationales for continuing some of the current practices, designs and instructional delivery methods.

There has been little research on leadership preparation programs (Milstein, 1999) generally and only modest attempts have been made to assess students' perceptions of their coursework (Orr et al., 2004). This study sought to identify, through the perspectives of principals themselves, the behaviors, and needs deemed important for principal leadership today in North Carolina. Although one-third of the respondents

reported significant changes in principals attitudes and perceptions when comparing 2003 and 2008 responses does not mean other areas were not important, particularly as PEP seeks to design and deliver contemporary, effective professional development in future programs. The researcher further believes that respondent results that have remained similar over the five year span are just as important, because they represent continuing needs and perceptions.

There is little disagreement that principal effectiveness is pivotal to the success of a school, its teachers and students. However, there does not seem to be enough attention given to how principals feel about their own preparation and sustained growth when compared to the monumental tasks for which they are held accountable and expected to execute daily. Research from this study supports the literature that indicates without proper preparation and/or opportunities for principals to continue growing and learning, effective strategies of school leadership, the job may continue being overwhelming, stressful and challenging.

This study also produced a few areas where significant differences emerged and should be heeded. While issues pertinent to instructional leadership were reportedly most important to principals, it is clearly evident from the data that there has been no lessening of all of the remaining duties principals are still expected to handle. The fact that more detailed data were retrieved from the open ended questions in 2003 and 2008 is indicative of the importance for providing principals with the opportunity to be heard and to share their beliefs, sentiments and concerns. While this study is quantitative, qualitative analysis of the two open-ended questions provided support, justification and explanation for many of the quantitative findings in my opinion. In fact, the researcher identified one

significant quote that seemed to illustrate sentiments of respondents and capture the essence of many of the comments that principals provided both years, although the quote was provided anonymously in 2008. It read,

We are being asked to do more and more with less and less. There are so many hours in a day, resources are tight and the old adage, ‘The principal will figure it out’ is no longer going to be a viable alternative. We need tools and resources to do our jobs well.

These data suggest that PEP should be certain to include professional development sessions inclusive of the realities of the job in its future venues. Principals reportedly need to know not only what to do, but how to manage and lead everything simultaneously. This researcher recommends the incorporation of networking opportunities in its residential programs with aspiring and current principals in an effort to provide insight and solutions to the realistic demands and responsibilities of the principalship today.

Limitations for PEP to Consider

This section describes the major limitations of the study that the researcher recommends PEP take into account, if it is afforded the opportunity to continue its service to school leaders by the North Carolina General Assembly in the future. (Note: PEP is currently in the “nonrecurring” status of the N.C. General Assembly budget meaning PEP may cease to exist after June 30, 2009 if it is not returned to “recurring” status before that time). There were several limitations that could jeopardize the internal or external validity of this study and other limitations that could be addressed to increase response rates and principal interest across the state. In addition to those presented in Chapter 1 (page 8), the researcher recommends PEP address the following issues:

1. The demographics of the study were limited to principals who had access to technology, as the survey was only sent electronically, via the Web, both years. Dillman et al. (1998) were concerned about the principles of what they called “respondent-friendly” Web survey designs. They described “respondent-friendly” designs to mean, “The construction of Web questionnaires in a manner that increases the likelihood that sampled individuals will respond to the survey request, and that they will do so accurately, by answering each question in a manner intended by the surveyor” (p. 9). While the data retrieved for this study were not generalizable, they were representative of the data sets of North Carolina principals by participant choice from 2003 and 2008.

2. The limited space for responding to open-ended questions may have posed an issue for some respondents who wanted to elaborate. It was reported in a few e-mails to PEP that this contributed to at least some of the “no comments” received to the final an open-ended question, possibly skewing data.

3. In 2003, PEP electronically invited principals to take the survey by using the PEP listserv of all previous and current PEP participants. In 2008, 2,339 principals were invited to participate in the study by utilizing the NC DPI database of school principals in a quest to increase the number of respondents. According to the *K12 Insight* report, only 2, 233 electronic deliveries were actually made, meaning over 106 principals in North Carolina were not even contacted to participate. The DPI database was in the process of being updated during the administration of this survey. Some of the reasons supporting the need to update the principal database yearly include principal retirements, district changes in e-mail addresses, late principal appointments to schools and principal resignations/non-renewals. It is suggested that the “State of the Principalship” survey be

administered after October 15th each year to ensure the statewide database for principal electronic contact information is updated and accurate.

4. Most responses were reported from the Central region of the state. Survey guidelines were not clear on statewide boundaries and regional lines. Regional assumptions as reported may not be reflective of accurate locations. Therefore, it is recommended that the survey host provide clarity for regions in future administrations of the survey.

5. Search for new ways to increase the number of participants to reflect a better representation of principals across the state, in different size districts, and in different types of schools. In the future, PEP may consider not only inviting principals based on an existing e-mail list, but by linking the survey to our Web site and allowing principals who may not have appropriate technology or time at work the opportunity to take the survey anywhere, and at any time. Keeping the survey window open for a longer period of time may also help awareness of the survey spread across the state; therefore, allowing more time for principals to learn of the opportunity to participate

6. This researcher and the PEP faculty were concerned with the quality of the survey (i.e., acronyms, verbiage and the four different Likert scales). Improvement in consistency and clarity may assist with accuracy of responses as well as number of respondents. PEP received a couple of e-mails requesting that some of the acronyms of agencies be clarified. It is important, however, that PEP refrains from tampering with actual survey questions in an effort to maintain the validity and reliability of the instrument.

7. Respondents “self-selected” to participate in the study by completing the survey; therefore, possibly skewing data. In that we do not know how many respondents were former participants in PEP programs, there may have been bias in responses.

The next section will provide recommendations for future research designed to seek information that could be used to add to the bodies of literature on instructional leadership, professional development and online surveys in the field of educational leadership.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are based on findings from this study. In some cases, the findings are similar to other types of studies and literature pertinent to principal leadership in the 21st century.

1. Since research on the best ways to prepare, train and develop highly qualified school leaders is sparse (see Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996), further research should be conducted on principal views regarding leadership behaviors, needs and interests in an effort to equip them with essential skills, resources, and tools for the many aspects of the job today. PEP set forth to examine principal views on the state or conditions of the principalship, as it is being executed today in an effort to provide information designed to better prepare principals for the realities of the job.

2. PEP needs to determine a standard of consistency for inviting principals to take the survey. Principals in the Principals’ Executive Program’s listserv were contacted in 2003. Whereby, PEP utilized the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction e-mail database for inviting principals to participate in 2008. A consistent way to contact and invite principals to participate in the survey is recommended for future administrations.

3. Future research should be conducted to determine how professional development providers can assist struggling principals with the critical areas of instructional leadership and management. It is also recommended that future studies seek to clarify “other” areas where time is spent in an effort to include all areas of importance as principals are trained in pre-service and in-service professional development programs. Leaders of the Principals’ Executive Program, local school districts, and university preparation programs should consider exploring future research that will help find ways to ensure accurate information and training are provided in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, Management and Student Achievement, in addition to the plethora of “other” areas that were reported as consistently important over time.

4. A study should be conducted to identify when certain skills should be taught to principals: either at the university level (pre-service) when being trained to become a principal versus after becoming a principal (in-service), and gaining more insight into the school, community and district. Further, this researcher recommends the new Standards for School Executives be used as a guide for determining boundaries for the delivery of instruction and acquisition of skills, especially since the North Carolina State Board of Education has determined that those Standards will be employed as the guidelines for the evaluation for school leaders in North Carolina.

5. Future research should be designed and conducted to answer to “why” principals felt and reported findings the way they did both years, particularly on: (1) Aspects of Being a Principal and (2) District Role in School Improvement, based on findings from “The State of the Principalship” study. The researcher also recommends seeking more in-depth information surrounding the top two priorities after safety. The

researcher believes a “why” follow-up question would provide valuable information. While some statistically significant findings emerged, a study like this that sought to investigate feeling, sentiments, conditions and the “state of affairs in the principalship” could be designed in such a manner that survey participants could optionally elaborate on just about anything reported. While this will be challenging for the survey host or researcher, it may add compelling reasons to support the changes that might be necessary for future program and policy development. It was suggested in the open-ended portion of the survey, that the survey allow more options on the Likert scale because of the brevity of responses without an opportunity for explanation. This could be a consideration for future studies that seek principal views on the profession and their needs.

6. Future research should be conducted to ask more specific questions pertinent to the principal’s actual role in the school improvement process. While this survey posed questions more pertinent to the support of one’s Central Office, and the impact that it may have on school improvement, future studies could ask more direct questions that may better describe exactly what principals need to know how to actually do as it relates to school improvement. The survey could ask principals to directly address how they determine areas that need improvement, as well as how they go about prioritizing the list. The researcher recommends the actual role of the principal in the process of school improvement be addressed. A more in depth study should be conducted to determine if principal perceptions match the reality of how they actually handle situations that are presented. The researcher believes a few more “how” questions will lend the opportunity

for principal's views to be more fully explained as professional development providers not only learn of the issues but seek ways to address them.

7. In the future, the researcher recommends a more consistent re-administration the "State of the Principalship" survey yearly (as originally intended in 2002). This will allow researchers to more closely monitor changes over time. Also, gender, age and race were added to the 2008 survey with hopes that those categories would remain for future surveys and analyses. Conclusions about those demographic characteristics may help researchers draw connections between years of experience and issues proliferating around gender, age and race for the state as principals resign, are hired and moved to lead different schools in various communities. The relationships between years of experience and school achievement could not be determined because there were no survey questions either year that were specifically designed to correlate the demographic characteristics of principals and their schools with other aspects of principal leadership. However, future studies could investigate these areas. Further, school designations were not included on the 2003 survey and were only used as points for baseline data in 2008.

8. For similar studies in the future, the researcher believes it will be important to disaggregate responses by school level in order to aid in the appropriate delivery of instruction. This will give professional development providers important information that could assist with designing and delivering school level specific topics that will meet the individual needs of principal's by school level.

9. A final future recommendation is to follow-up the survey with actual on-site "shadow" studies in the area of "time." This will consist of the actual identification and monitoring of how principals truly spend their time (not just their opinion). These data

will contribute to where emphasis should be placed regarding the “time” element for training purposes. It is also recommended this occur by school level in an effort to provide meaningful feedback to those charged with designing professional development programs and sessions designed to meet the realistic needs of principals today.

In summary, the researcher for this study believes that while the administration of the Principals’ Executive Program’s surveys were neither perfect matches to all aspects of the principal’s job, nor directly applicable to all agencies which prepare and employ principals, or to policy makers responsible for improving the quality of site leadership in North Carolina, the data produced by them is and will remain a valuable and continuing source of information about significant aspects of principal leadership in the state. It is hoped that more surveys will become an important practice for framing studies in the future.

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APPENDIX A: 2003 SURVEY ON THE STATE OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP



2003 Survey on the State of the Principalsip

Instructions:

This instrument is designed to ensure *anonymity* for all respondents. We are interested *only* in getting a snapshot of what it's like to be a principal in North Carolina, and whether that snapshot varies across different regions of our state and by the size of a school district. This survey contains 34 items that will take approximately five minutes or less to complete. Press "Submit" when finished. This survey is best viewed using the web browser Internet Explorer.

Region:	Select region ▼	District Size:	Please select your district's size... ▼	
Demographic Trends				
1. Years of experience as a school administrator	5 or less <input type="checkbox"/>	6-10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	21-30 <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Years as a principal at current school	5 or less <input type="checkbox"/>	6-10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	21-30 <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Identify your school level:	Primary ▼ If you chose other, please specify: <input type="text"/>			
4. Characterize your coursework preparation for the principalsip	Poor Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Above Average Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Characterize your assistant principalsip experience as a preparation for the principalsip	Poor Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>	Above Average Preparation <input type="checkbox"/>

6. Characterize your preparation to deal with legal issues	Poor Preparation <input type="radio"/>	Moderate Preparation <input type="radio"/>	Acceptable Preparation <input type="radio"/>	Above Average Preparation <input type="radio"/>
7. Nights on average that you work on school-related matters away from home each week	none <input type="radio"/>	1 <input type="radio"/>	2-3 <input type="radio"/>	4-5 <input type="radio"/>
8. Your satisfaction that the state accountability system fairly evaluates your influence as a principal on student learning	Extremely Dissatisfied <input type="radio"/>	Dissatisfied <input type="radio"/>	Moderately Satisfied <input type="radio"/>	Satisfied <input type="radio"/>
9. Does the Praxis I and/or II have an impact on teacher recruitment	Strongly Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Agree <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/>
10. Do you feel that the Praxis I and/or II is necessary to obtain high quality teachers	Strongly Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Disagree <input type="radio"/>	Agree <input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/>
11. Which of the following do you think is most likely to address the shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship? (Rank order, 1 is your top choice.) <div> <input type="text" value="Select..."/> <input type="radio"/> Increase number of universities preparing candidates </div> <div> <input type="text" value="Select..."/> <input type="radio"/> Increase number of scholarships offered to pursue school administration </div> <div> <input type="text" value="Select..."/> <input type="radio"/> Allow people with masters degrees to add on principal licensure to their existing degree </div> <div> <input type="text" value="Select..."/> <input type="radio"/> Allow lateral entry principals to come from other lines of leadership work </div> <div> <input type="text" value="Select..."/> <input type="radio"/> Actively coach/mentor assistant principals to transition them into the principalship </div>				
Being a Principal				
Rate the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. I am glad I became a principal	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

13. I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Teachers at our school do not collaborate as much as I think they should	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
15. I spend too much time on student discipline	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
16. I know how to help a weak teacher become a satisfactory teacher	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
17. I know how to help a good teacher become an excellent teacher	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Teachers want me to make most of the important decisions in our school	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
19. I would be a better principal if I delegated more responsibilities	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
20. I understand what is expected under the No Child Left Behind legislation and what is meant by Adequate Yearly Progress	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
21. I have access to legal advice when I need it	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
22. We know as a principal your most important job is to keep the people in your building safe. After safety, list your top two priorities as principal. <input type="text"/>				

23. We are interested in understanding better how principals across the state spend their time on the job. Please represent a typical week using percentages to indicate how much time is spent performing tasks in the following categories (should equal 100):

Management Routine <input type="text"/> %	Personnel Issues <input type="text"/> %	Crisis Management <input type="text"/> %
Instructional Leadership <input type="text"/> %	Student Issues <input type="text"/> %	Community Activities <input type="text"/> %
Legal Issues <input type="text"/> %	Other <input type="text"/> %	Please specify <input type="text"/>

District Role in School Improvement

Rate your satisfaction with:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. My central office/district leadership provides data to me in a useful format to make instructional decisions	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
25. My central office/district leadership communicates expectations as it relates to teaching strategies	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
26. My central office/district leadership provides professional development for my teachers that is likely to improve teaching and learning	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
27. My central office/district leadership provides meaningful support for new teachers in my building	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

28. My central office/ district leadership provides meaningful professional development for principals to build their capacity to be effective	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
29. The primary role of my central office/ district leadership is to improve teaching and learning in our schools	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
30. My central office/ district leadership could communicate the quality of teaching and learning at my school	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

Professional Development

31. Please rank your current professional development interests as a principal (Rank order, 1 is your most pressing professional development interest).

<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>
School Law	Technology Leadership	Teacher Leadership & Support
<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>
Curriculum & Instruction	Student Development	Data Analysis
<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	<input type="text" value="Select..."/>	Other <input type="text"/>
School Improvement	If you choose other, please specify above.	

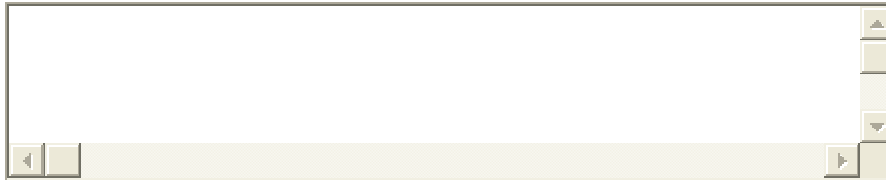
32. What programs and/or services could PEP offer NC principals to help them become more effective administrators?

33. Your most valuable professional development experience is provided by (Check top two)

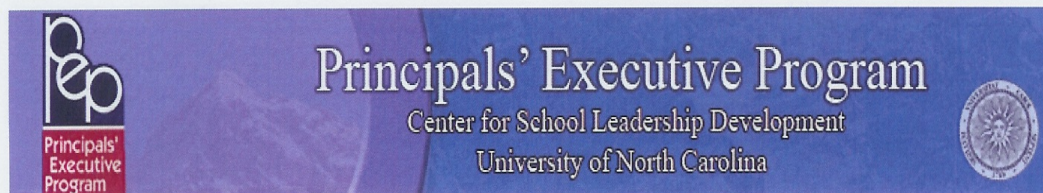
choices):

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My School District | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Public Instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> NCASA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College or University | <input type="checkbox"/> District Leadership Academy | <input type="checkbox"/> Principals' Executive Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web-based Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Study | <input type="checkbox"/> ASCD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NCAE | <input type="checkbox"/> Tar Heel Principals | |

34. Is there anything else you wish to share about the principalship?



APPENDIX B: 2008 SURVEY ON THE STATE OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP



Thank you for taking time to complete the readministration of "The State of the Principalship" sponsored by the Principals' Executive Program. Your results will assist PEP in determining principals' needs, trends, and patterns. Alisa McLean, PEP program Director, will also use the results in a comparative manner for her dissertation. Alisa is a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Instructions:

This instrument is designed to ensure *anonymity* for all respondents. We are interested *only* in getting a snapshot of what it's like to be a principal in North Carolina, and whether that snapshot varies across different regions of our state and by the size of a school district. This survey will take approximately ten minutes or less to complete. Press "Submit" when finished.

Page No 1

Demographic Trends

1. Region:

- ☐ East
- ☐ Central
- ☐ West

2. District Size:

- ☐ Small (10 schools or less)
- ☐ Average (11-25 schools)
- ☐ Large (26-45 schools)
- ☐ X-Large (46 schools or more)

3. Years of experience as a school administrator:

- ☐ 5 or less
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30

4. Years as a principal at current school:

- ☐ 5 or less
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30

5. Identify your school level:

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Middle
- ☐ Junior High
- ☐ Traditional High
- ☐ Charter
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Page No 3

6. Characterize your coursework preparation for the principalship:

- ☐ Poor Preparation ☐ Moderate Preparation ☐ Acceptable Preparation ☐ Above Average Preparation

7. Characterize your assistant principalship experience as a preparation for the principalship:

- ☐ Poor Preparation ☐ Moderate Preparation ☐ Acceptable Preparation ☐ Above Average Preparation

8. Characterize your preparation to deal with legal issues:

- ☐ Poor Preparation ☐ Moderate Preparation ☐ Acceptable Preparation ☐ Above Average Preparation

9. Nights on average that you work on school-related matters away from home each week:

☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6-7

10. Your satisfaction that the state accountability system fairly evaluates your influence as a principal on student learning:

☐ Extremely Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Moderately Satisfied ☐ Satisfied

11. Does the Praxis I and/or II have an impact on teacher recruitment:

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

12. Do you feel that the Praxis I and/or II is necessary to obtain high quality teachers:

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

13. Which of the following do you think is most likely to address the shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship? (rank order, 1 is your top choice)

Increase number of universities preparing candidates	-Please Rank-
Increase number of scholarships offered to pursue school administration	-Please Rank-
Allow people with masters degrees to add on principal licensure to their existing degree	-Please Rank-
Allow lateral entry principals to come from other lines of leadership work	-Please Rank-
Actively coach/mentor assistant principals to transition them into the principalship	-Please Rank-

Page No 5

Being a Principal

Please rate the following:

	14. Please rate the following:			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) I am glad I became a principal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) I spend the majority of my time on instructional issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) Teachers at our school do not collaborate as much as I think they should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) I spend too much time on student discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) I know how to help a weak teacher become a satisfactory teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) I know how to help a good teacher become an excellent teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(g) Teachers want me to make most of the important decisions in our school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(h) I would be a better principal if I delegated more responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(i) I understand what is expected under the No Child Left Behind legislation and what is meant by Adequate Yearly Progress

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(j) I have access to legal advice when I need it

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. We know as a principal your most important job is to keep the people in your building safe. After safety, list your top two priorities as principal.

16. We are interested in understanding better how principals across the state spend their time on the job. Please represent a typical week using percentages to indicate how much time is spent performing tasks in the following categories (should equal 100):

Community Activities

Crisis Management

Instructional Leadership

Legal Issues

Management Routine

Personnel Issues

Student Issues

Other

Page No 6

District Role in School Improvement

Please rate your satisfaction with:

17. Please rate your satisfaction with:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

(a) My central office/district leadership provides data to me in a useful format to make instructional decisions

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(b) My central office/district leadership communicates expectations as it relates to teaching strategies

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(c) My central office/district leadership provides professional development for my teachers that is likely to improve teaching and learning

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(d) My central office/district leadership provides meaningful support for new teachers in my building

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(e) My central office/district leadership provides meaningful professional development for principals to build their capacity to

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

- be effective
- (f) The primary role of my central office/district leadership is to improve teaching and learning in our schools
- (g) My central office/district leadership communicates the quality of teaching and learning at my school

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Professional Development

18. Please rank your current professional development interests as a principal (rank order, 1 is your most pressing professional development interest).

Curriculum & Instruction	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
Data Analysis	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
School Improvement	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
School Law	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
Student Development	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
Teacher Leadership & Support	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
Technology Leadership	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>
Other	<input type="text" value="-Please Rank-"/>

19. If you indicated "other" in question 18 please specify below:

20. What programs and/or services could PEP offer NC principals to help them become more effective administrators?

21. Your most valuable professional development experience is provided by (check top two choices):

- ☐ ASCD
- ☐ College or University
- ☐ Department of Public Instruction
- ☐ District Leadership Academy
- ☐ Independent Study
- ☐ My School District
- ☐ NCAE
- ☐ NCASA
- ☐ Principals' Executive Program

25. Please provide a rationale for your response(s) to the above question (#24).

26. In which of the following areas do you need additional support to lead your school more effectively? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Budgeting
- ☐ Conflict Management/Resolution
- ☐ Creating Positive Learning Environments
- ☐ Data-Driven Decision-Making
- ☐ Legal Issues
- ☐ Professional Learning Communities
- ☐ School Improvement Planning
- ☐ School Scheduling
- ☐ Staffing (hiring, etc)
- ☐ Student Assessment
- ☐ Teacher Evaluation
- ☐ Teacher Remediation/Coaching
- ☐ Working With Parents and the Community
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Page No 10

Principal Data:

27. Age:

- ☐ Under 30
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ Over 60

28. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

necessary?

29. Race:

- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other (please specify)

30. So we can understand responses of principals in different situations, please identify the status of the school you currently lead:

- ☐ Low-performing
- ☐ Average-performing
- ☐ High-performing

31. Which of the following topics would be of interest to you for a short-term (1-4 day) PEP institute: (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Cultural Diversity
- ☐ Data-Driven Decision Making Using EVAAS
- ☐ Instructional Leadership (e.g. PEP's SAIL program featuring classroom walkthroughs)
- ☐ Middle/High School Scheduling
- ☐ Professional Learning Communities
- ☐ School Finance (Resource Management)
- ☐ Serving Exceptional Children
- ☐ Teacher Recruitment and Retention
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE PROGRAM



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*****THIS IS A TEST INVITATION. ACTUAL SURVEY WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT URL*****
*****THIS IS A TEST INVITATION. ACTUAL SURVEY WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT URL*****
*****THIS IS A TEST INVITATION. ACTUAL SURVEY WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT URL*****

NC Principals,

To gather accurate data about the state of the principalship in North Carolina, the Principals' Executive Program (PEP) is asking all principals to complete a brief online survey.

The survey takes about 5-10 minutes, is anonymous, and should be completed by Tuesday, September 30, 2008. PEP will use the findings to improve its own in-service programs and to provide state education leaders with important information about how principals influence teacher development and student learning. PEP will publish survey results after they are compiled early in the spring.

You may access the 2008 State of the Principalship survey by clicking on the link below.

In order to participate, you may either:

1. [Click on this link](#)

or

2. Copy-paste the entire following link between quote marks (NOT including the quote marks) in a web browser
" <http://research.zarca.com/k/QsRWVQsQUVsXQXXVTPYsQ> "

or

3. Click on the following URL and enter the login information provided below:
<http://research.zarca.com/static/K12SurveyKey.aspx>
Key: QsRWVQsQUVsXQXXVTPYsQ

Thank you for your participation. Please contact Alisa McLean, Program Director,
(amclean@northcarolina.edu or 919-962-7165) with questions or concerns.

Regards,

Nancy Farmer

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This email is sent on behalf of the person/organization whose name appears in the FROM field by *K12 Insight*. If you have any questions about the email, please contact the sender by replying to this email.

If you prefer not to receive future reminders about this survey, please [click here](#).

If you prefer not to receive future surveys from the organization behind this survey, please [click here](#).

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL

A paper copy of the approval memo and any relevant documents are being mailed today.

To: Alisa McLean
Educational Leadership
16 Haycox Court, Durham, NC 27713

From: Behavioral IRB

Authorized signature on behalf of IRB

Approval Date: 10/22/2008

Expiration Date of Approval: 10/21/2009

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)

Submission Type: Initial

Expedited Category: 5.Existing or nonresearch data

Study #: 08-1786

Study Title: "A Comparative Study of the State of the Principalship in North Carolina from the Principals' Executive Program Surveys of 2003 and 2008"

This submission has been approved by the above IRB for the period indicated. It has been determined that the risk involved in this research is no more than minimal.

Study Description:

Purpose: To use two survey datasets provided by the Principals Executive Program (PEP) to seek to understand the factors that influence principal roles as agents of school leadership; particularly those that address behaviors and practices in the following four domains: demographic, principal roles and responsibilities, school improvement and professional development.

Participants: Data from all public school principals in North Carolina.

Procedures (methods): 2008 data will be compared with 2003 data. The 2003 data are already available. The Principals' Executive Program (PEP), will share the 2008 deidentified data with the researcher after they are collected in Fall 2008. The researcher will analyze the data to look for salient trends and patterns between the two years.

Regulatory and other findings:

This research meets criteria for a waiver of consent entirely according to 45 CFR 46.116(d).

Investigator's Responsibilities:

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to submit for renewal and obtain approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without IRB approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in automatic termination of the approval for this study on the expiration date.

When applicable, enclosed are stamped copies of approved consent documents and other recruitment materials. You must copy the stamped consent forms for use with subjects unless you have approval to do otherwise.

You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented (use the modification form at ohre.unc.edu/forms). Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB using the adverse event form at the same Web site.

Researchers are reminded that additional approvals may be needed from relevant "gatekeepers" to access subjects (e.g., principals, facility directors, healthcare system).

This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Good luck with your interesting research, Alisa!

Lawrence B. Rosenfeld, Ph.D.
Office of Human Research Ethics
Co-Chair, Behavioral Institutional Review Board

CB# 7097, Medical School, Bldg 52
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7097
aa-irb-chair@unc.edu
phone 919-966-3113; fax 919-966-7879

CC: Fenwick English, School of Education
Kesha Tysor (School of Education), Non-IRB Review Contact

IRB Informational Message—please do not use email REPLY to this address