

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND THE RECRUITMENT OF FEMALE  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

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## ABSTRACT

HEATHER L. SEAWELL: Job Descriptions and the Recruitment of Female Assistant Principals  
(Under the direction of Dr. Catherine Marshall)

Nationwide school districts are facing challenges with filling administrative vacancies in public schools. Teachers are not willing to transition to administration and assume the increased responsibilities and demands placed upon school principals in today's high-stakes educational environment. Moreover, policies fail to address the shortage of women in educational leadership or deconstruct the gender issues related to recruitment. This mixed methods study employed critical choice theory and business recruitment models to investigate how hypothetical job descriptions impacted the recruitment of women into assistant principal positions. Previous empirical research and literature from business and educational sectors provided the framework for the design of this study.

Certified teachers from one rural school district in North Carolina volunteered for this investigation. All participants completed a demographic survey and a recruitment simulation to assess applicant attraction to hypothetical job descriptions based on the attributes of school management or collaborative leadership. Additionally, female teacher leaders participated in ethnographic interviews to further explore their perception of assistant principal job descriptions.

The major findings in this study indicated a teacher's age and years of teaching experience were the most significant factors that influenced a teacher's willingness to pursue

an assistant principal position. Further, the research denoted gender and the job attribute of collaborative leadership impacted the attraction to an assistant principal job description.

These findings revealed potential implications for future research in regards to hiring practices, recruitment policies, and future studies related to the assistant principal position.

With a limited resource of qualified personnel, school systems are encouraged to examine their guidelines and procedures for recruiting and hiring personnel and to develop and implement job descriptions that are appealing to applicants.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper with love to my daughters, River Anne and Isla Rayne. To each of you, remember to always believe in yourself and work hard to achieve your dreams.

Thank you for inspiring me to be my best.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Nationwide, school districts are facing challenges with filling administrative vacancies in public schools (Conrad & Rosser, 2007; Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001; Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Tracy & Weaver, 2000). The relentless demands of the profession have resulted in “fewer and fewer potential administrators pursuing positions in administration leadership” (Conrad and Rosser, 2007, p. 575; Hartley, 2009). Many incentive programs and recruiting practices have been designed and implemented in the hopes of finding quality candidates for the administrative vacancies in elementary, middle and high schools across the United States. Yet the demand for administrators continues to grow and school districts will be faced with the prospect of “few applicants, fewer of them who will be qualified, and more schools unable to find good leaders” (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001, p. 72).

Rural school districts encounter an even greater challenge of finding qualified school leaders. Quinn (2002) reports a larger shortage of qualified principal candidates in rural schools (52%), than suburban schools (45%), and urban schools (47%) (p. 25). One quarter of the nation's children attend rural or small-town schools, yet rural communities find it especially difficult to recruit educators (Beeson, 2001; Simmons, 2005; Versland; 2013). Applicant perceptions and misconceptions of rural school districts serve as challenges to attract educators. Simmons (2005) shares that lack of understanding rural life, isolation,

housing, salaries, and limited facilities and personnel can serve as obstacles to hiring; however, “a strong recruitment program can dispel myths and focus on the benefits of teaching and living in a rural area” (p. 49).

The limited number of school-based administrator candidates represents a change from the traditional career pathways for administrators. Historically, principals began a traditional career as teachers, earned an advanced degree, and then sought an administrative position (Guterman, 2007). Today, fewer teachers are willing to assume the increased responsibility and demands of being a school principal (Guterman, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Lovely, 2004; Cusick, 2003).

The traditional role of administration is changing and the skills required of 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders are also changing. School leadership is too demanding for a principal to tackle alone (Hartley, 2009). It is essential for principals to recognize the potential of the assistant principalship and redefine the role to allow for more collaboration and more significant involvement in instructional and curricular improvement (Glanz, 1994; Gorton, 1987, Hartley, 2009). Despite the urgent conditions requiring fresh leadership skills and ideas to improve student achievement, the role of assistant principals has remained relatively unchanged since its conception (Kelly, 1987).

The assistant principalship role, although often overlooked, is an essential training ground for future school leaders. Marshall and Hooley (2006) state, “The assistant principalship holds a critical position in education organizations for several reasons: First, it is a frequent entry-level position for administrative careers. Second, assistant principals maintain the norms and rules of the school culture” (p. 2). Despite numerous surveys, commissions and studies that have been used to steer agencies in their development of these

efforts, individuals are still reluctant to pursue careers as administrators. Women are even more averse to an administrative career and are significantly underrepresented as school principals and superintendents. A significantly higher percentage of women hold teaching positions, but a much smaller percentage of women serve as school administrators (Blount, 1998; Blount, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012a, 2012b; Marshall & Johnson, 2015). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012b) 76.3% of all public school teachers are women; yet, only 51.5% of principals are female. Marshall and Johnson (2015) examined historical trends of male dominance in administrative positions. Although women have recently gained a slight majority over men in the principalship, the superintendent position is still largely underrepresented by women. Marshall and Johnson (2015) emphasized “if the same rate of change that occurred from 1999 – 2011 remains constant, parity between women and men [superintendents] will not be achieved until, approximately, the year 2040” (p. 5).

#### Availability of Literature and Research

Much of the literature and research associated with the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals was generated in the late 1990s. Additionally, current research emphasizing how gender impact assistant principal job responsibilities is very limited. At this time, very few empirical studies have been conducted related to the recruitment of women into the assistant principalship. Research associated with school administration recruitment, hiring, and retention predominantly centers on higher-level positions such as school superintendents and school principals.

## Hiring Procedures

As school districts and policy makers look to address the growing administrator shortage, they need to consider initiatives for recruitment and/or carefully examine assistant principal job descriptions that may be restraining a potential field of candidates. Stromquist (1997) explains that one reason for the shortage of women in leadership roles is not because of their lack of interest; but due to men serving as “active gatekeepers” that limit women from being hired for high-level administrator positions. Marshall (2003) explains this misconception and the resulting positive impact:

Findings about women’s lack of motivation and experience in public relations, finance, and politics (and their superior experience in instructional leadership) were uncritically incorporated into well-intended programs to fix women’s deficiencies. Still, by helping identify the barriers that women experienced in considering and entering leadership, these studies and programs allowed a shift from the old psychological focus on individual characteristics to a focus on the organizational and professional culture. Guess what? That’s where the deficiency lay (p. 213).

## Job Descriptions: Roles and Responsibilities

The assistant principal’s role is frequently defined by the expectations of the cooperating principal. When hiring an assistant principal, school principals often look for certain characteristics to complement their own leadership style. The role of the assistant principal can also be defined by a school system generating and implementing a generic job description. The assigned duties of the assistant principal can impact students in either a negative or positive way, depending on the given assignments and authority to improve teaching and learning. The job description requires an assistant principal to spend a majority of his/her time focusing on school management, rather than working with others to prevent problems in the future.



## Policy Issues

Recruiting women administrators is gradually becoming a larger problem as the demands on the position continue to increase; however, this problem has opened a potential policy window to explore new policies to negate institutionalized inequalities related to race to support the recruitment and retention of female administrators. David, Weiner, and Arnot (1997) conclude that cultural shifts resulting from feminine analysis and perspective may be the vehicle for social and sexual change in society, “rather than specific policy moves and education reforms” (p. 104).

At the state level, policies fail to attract women to educational leadership positions or deconstruct the gender issues related to recruitment. With a limited resource of qualified personnel, school systems are also encouraged to provide well-written job descriptions that appeal to female applicants and examine their guidelines and procedures for recruiting and hiring personnel. Job descriptions are instrumental in recruiting and retaining quality employees of both genders (Bloomer, 2008; Gagnon, 2003; Froschheiser, 2007). Winter and Partenheimer (2002) explored questions related to: (a) applicant and recruitment decision-making; (b) the structure of the administrative position and its attractiveness to applicants; (c) possible male and females differences in their attraction to the position; and (d) comparisons of individuals enrolled in administrator certification courses and teachers not enrolled. Their findings determined there was no significant difference between male and female attraction to the position; however, they did determine middle school teachers were the most interested in the job as assistant principalship.

## The Role of Gender in School Administration

The long hours and never-ending tasks embedded in the job description for most assistant principals may also discourage qualified females from applying. For years, women have lived in a world where home and family has been defined as the women's place and the world of work and power has been seen as the men's place (Weis, 1997). As women continue to move into the workforce and into positions of leadership, many still maintain the internalized domestic identity that includes taking care of the children, taking care of the house, taking care of aging parents, and all the tasks associated with the home and the family (Loder, 2005). Rather than switching the role of domestic goddess for working women, many women are exhausting themselves trying to be both! Weis explains, "Rather than alter the nature of the gender interactions and division of labor within the home substantially, a double day was instituted in which labor in the home was simply added to hours spent in wage labor" (p.78).

## Statement of the Problem

In spite of the daily importance of this role, the assistant principal position and its potential for positive impact are often overlooked from the district perspective (Panyako & Rorie, 1987). School systems are rarely aware of how the roles and responsibilities written into generic assistant principal job descriptions may dissuade strong female candidates from applying for leadership positions. Assistant principal job descriptions may be perceived as unattractive jobs by potential leaders and discourage the most qualified candidates from applying, obtaining, and/or maintaining leadership positions. Recruiting the highest caliber of

candidates for the assistant principalship; however, is essential to ensure quality leaders in future principal and superintendent positions.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate how job descriptions impact recruitment of teachers into educational leadership positions. Little empirical research has been conducted related to assistant principal recruitment. Existing research has explored the attraction of job description based on the attributes of student discipline versus instructional leadership; however, additional research is needed related to other attributes that may make the assistant principal role more attractive to prospective teacher applicants (Partenheimer, 2002). The assistant principalship is the pathway to higher administrative position; however, many female teachers are not attracted to the position given the long hours, ambiguous role, and solitary aspects of the job.

The goal of this research study is examine how school districts could reframe the assistant principal job description to attract more female job candidates.

### Major Research Question

How do job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into positions as assistant principals?

### Research Questions

- How does gender (male, female) impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?

- How do the role, responsibilities, and job attributes (school management vs. collaborative leadership) outlined in an assistant principal job description impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How does current job assignment (elementary school, middle school, high school) impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How does teacher participation in leadership opportunities impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How do female teacher leaders perceive the roles and responsibilities outlined in assistant principal job descriptions?

## Definitions

### Assistant Principal

In this paper, the term assistant principal will refer to a school administrative position that works under the direction of a school principal and only performs administrative duties. An assistant principal will not have any responsibilities as a classroom teacher. An assistant principal may work in an elementary or secondary school with common tasks such as student discipline, parent conferences, and teacher supervision (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

### Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership involves administration, staff, students, parents, and the community working together towards a common vision to improve a school community. “The ultimate goal of collaborative leadership is to create democratic learning communities in which power is shared and there is a mutual belief in working together for the common good” (Kochan & Reed, 2005, p. 72).

## Competent

Competent refers to the knowledge, skills, and experiences an assistant principal must possess and master to be successful in an administrative position. “Real competencies” are skills that are actually performed by public school assistant principals on the job and “ideal competencies are skills that should be performed by assistant principals in order for them to be most effective (Norton & Kriekard, 1987, p. 29).

## Diversity

For the purposes of this paper diversity includes the characteristics of gender, race, age, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as diversity in professional and cultural experiences and leadership styles.

## Formal Job Description

For the purpose of this paper, a formal job description will refer to a published document provided by a school system or school principal. The job description may include aspects such as “a detailed breakdown of responsibilities, to whom the worker reports, ways to measure the person’s effectiveness, how the worker will spend his time, his authority within the organization, the competencies, background and experience required” (Frouschheiser, 2007, p. 14).

## Informal Job Description

An informal job description in this paper will describe all aspects of a job not included in a formal job description. According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), an assistant principal job description is often vague and inconsistent. In addition to the responsibilities written into the formal job description, assistant principals must also complete additional tasks as needed throughout a school day or school year. These additional job responsibilities

are often inconsistent, time consuming, and not well-defined. The expectations of the informal job description can be difficult to document and measure during a job performance review.

#### Professional Socialization

Professional socialization refers to “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavioral orientations” required to understand and successfully perform the role (Marshall & Greenfield, 1987, p. 37, see also Cantwell, 1993).

#### Recruitment

In this paper, “recruitment includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (Barber, 1998, p. 44).

#### School Management

School management refers to “maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements.” Managers often exhibit leadership skills; however, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change (Cuban, 1988, p. 193, see also Bush, 2008; Weller & Weller, 2002). For this research, school management refers to daily school operations such as student discipline, school building maintenance, supervision of staff, etc. School management is not working collaboratively with the school community toward a common vision.

#### Supportive Policies

Supportive policies are “comprehensive statements of decision, principle, or increase of action” that sustain and assist employees in demanding job roles (Webb & Norton, 2009).

## Teacher Leader

Teacher leaders are classroom teachers who assume leadership roles in addition to their instructional responsibilities. Teacher leaders take initiative to “influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287, see also Fullan, 1994). School leaders often serve in roles such as school leadership team member, new teacher mentor, professional development provider, department chair, etc.

## Traditional Assistant Principal Job Description

A traditional assistant principal job description is a written document that assigns general and vague managerial responsibilities to the position. Aspects pertaining to collaborative leadership, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership are rarely included.

## Transformational Leader

In this paper, a transformational leader is one who has an explicit vision to transform a school and possesses the leadership skills to promote positive change (Johnson, 2008). Particularly, a transformational leader engages others in such a way that “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader

A 21<sup>st</sup> century leader is a leader who understands, models, and supports instructional systems related to 21st century standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, professional development and learning environments to ensure mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media skills (P21 Framework Definitions, n.d.).

## Limitations

For the purpose of this study, the hypothetical job description has been simplified to emphasize the job attributes of school management and collaborative leadership. Assistant principal job descriptions typically contain a wide variety of job attributes that may be influential in an applicant considering the assistant principal position. These other attributes are not addressed in this study. The participants in this study consist of teachers working in one rural school district in one state. Participants from other geographic areas may rate the job described in the hypothetical job description differently depending on the expectations and norms for assistant principals where they work. Given this is a recruitment simulation; the participants may have never considered applying for an assistant principal position prior to the research exercise. Participant responses may differ based on their personal professional goals for the future.

## Significance of Study

This study examines how assistant principal job descriptions can be reformed to attract future educational leaders. The guiding hypotheses focused on how study participants reacted to hypothetical assistant principal job descriptions using gender, leadership role, and school level as independent variables. Hopefully, these guiding hypotheses will allow the researcher to make recommendations to policy makers and district level school administrators on ways to redesign the job descriptions of assistant principal to make the job more attractive to all candidates, regardless of gender.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to examine research related to how assistant principal job descriptions and supportive policies may have an impact on the individuals seeking entry-level school administrator jobs. Much of the literature and research associated with the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals was generated in the late 1980s and 1990s. Overall, most research related to school administration and recruitment, hiring, and retention predominantly focuses on higher-level positions such as school superintendents and school principals. Assistant principals are often unacknowledged in research studies and findings. In this review of the research, an attempt was made to use the most current research related to assistant principals when possible; however, when specific information was unavailable, the research was expanded to include earlier research and research about the principalship and school administrators in general.

Quality school leadership is essential to improving student achievement and school success (Clark and Clark, 1996). Focusing on the assistant principalship, an examination of how job descriptions and policies fail to attract women into the profession will be provided. In this literature review the following topics will be discussed in relation to known research: (1) assistant principal job descriptions and policies governing assistant principals; (2) assistant principal hiring procedures; and, in turn, (3) transformation of the job description

and policies related to the assistant principal, (4) assistant principal recruitment research. Appendix A defines concepts and terminology discussed throughout the paper.

#### Part I: The Assistant Principal Job Description and Policies Governing Assistant Principals

“I never realized the hardest part of my job would be trying to explain it to others”  
(Moore, 2009, para. 2).

Assistant principal job descriptions are instrumental in recruiting assistant principals to administrative positions and training for future leadership positions (Cunningham, 2005).

“The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) describes the role of assistant principals as aiding the principal in the overall administration of the school” (The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008, p. 9). This description is an overt simplification of an extremely complex administrative position.

#### Localization of Job Description

The role of the assistant principal is further defined by state departments of public instruction and local school systems who implement their own version of a generic formal job description (see Appendix H and I for examples of state and district job descriptions). Despite the written formal state or school district job description, the role of the assistant principal is almost always determined by the principal (Kelly, 1987; Marshall, 1993). The cooperating principal finalizes the expectations outlined in the job description. A formal job description may include duties such as student registration and scheduling, upholding school disciplinary policies, communicating with stakeholders, and inventorying supplies (see Appendix H and I for examples of job expectations). In special cases, these managerial tasks may also be expanded to include aspects of instructional leadership such as designing staff

development, observing teachers, and selecting curriculum materials (Kelly, 1987). Written job descriptions are often limited in the full scope of responsibilities assigned to an assistant principal and not all assistant principals receive a formal job description. The failure to properly allocate tasks in writing can lead to job dissatisfaction and be a risk factor in premature departure (Kruger, van Eck, & Vermulen, 2005).

A truer depiction of the job description of the assistant principal is often perceived as “everything the principal doesn’t want to do” (Marshall, 1993; Lane, 1984). This overarching expectation is stated in the formal job description as, “Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the supervisor.” These undefined “other duties and responsibilities” are representative of the informal and often non-communicated aspects of the job description (see Appendix H and I).

#### Ambiguous Job Description

The assistant principal job description is very ambiguous and is extremely varied depending on the school district and supervising principal. The most effective job descriptions are those that are clearly defined, with clearly stated expectations. Marshall (1993) quotes a veteran assistant principal, “The best thing the principal does for an assistant is to define the job and let him do it without petty interference” (p. 16).

Clear job descriptions are necessary in an effective administrative structure (Lane, 1984). Job descriptions remove uncertainty related to delegation of responsibilities from a supervisor and establish authority to complete tasks. In addition, job descriptions serve other roles in an organization. They are used to advertise vacant positions, establish hierarchy, and set standards for performance expectations. When job descriptions fail to clearly convey the

expectations for the position, the organizational structure of the school system is compromised. It is difficult for individuals to understand their role in the organization and to seek ways to meet and exceed expectations. Ambiguous job descriptions hinder professional growth and limit individual's chances for promotion (Gorton, 1987).

#### Job Descriptions: Preparing for the Future?

Kelly (1987) argues “one of the great enduring myths of education is that the position of assistant principal is a proper and useful training ground for the principalship” (p. 13). The reason for this is the role has remained essentially unchanged since the position was created (Kelly, 1987). A limiting job description for an assistant principal would not be a good “preparatory experience” for the principalship (Lane, 1984; Lovely, 2004). Restricted job descriptions require an assistant principal to spend a majority of his/her time focusing on a singular type of problem, rather than working with others to understand the complex nature of issues so that problems may be prevented in the future. The ability to solve multifaceted problems in innovative ways is a highly sought skill for 21<sup>st</sup> century principals. With a paradigm shift, the assigned duties of the assistant principal could potentially serve to prepare the individual for future administrative job advancement.

If the assistant principalship is to serve as a/the pathway to the principalship, the expectations, opportunities, and experiences of the position must be expanded and well-defined (Lovely, 2004). The traditional role of the assistant principal fails to fit the needs of today's assistant principal. The modern assistant principal must be versed on all aspects of school management, curriculum design and implementation, and assessment of the educational needs of students (Panyako & Rorie, 1987). Increased leadership demands

require a new breed of assistant principals. Metaphorically, “The modern assistant principal must first be thought of as a principal and only secondarily as a deputy to the principal” (Panyako & Rorie, 1987, p. 7). Panyako and Rorie (1987) explain, the “dynamic assistant principal” must earn the privileges and responsibilities associated with the new role, direct his or her own professional development, and ultimately aspire to the principalship (p. 7). Currently, the enormous responsibility associated with the assistant principalship and the expectations it holds for future job advancement makes finding superior candidates especially difficult.

#### Not the Job for Me

Administrators often begin their career as teachers. Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Ross, and Chung (2003) found that 99 percent of public school principals have had teaching experience (p. 24). But what makes teachers decide to become assistant principals? Movement of teachers into school administration has been largely ignored by research until recently (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Ross, & Chung, 2003). Research does indicate teachers find moving into an administrative role extremely challenging (Gates et al., 2003). These challenges are classified as (1) understanding and operating in a more complex environment, (2) dealing with people, and (3) relinquishing the specialty [role as teacher]” (Dewhirst, 1991). In addition to the barriers Dewhirst notes, there are a host of negative perceptions regarding the responsibilities administrators must assume.

## Even More Reasons Not to Apply

The tremendous demands of the assistant job are widely reported and those within schools are aware of the hard work involved. Consider the following remarks detailing the long hours required of a school administrative position:

- "People forget they are there from 7 in the morning to 7 at night," said Thomas Shivetts, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals. (McKay, 1999).
- School administrators are expected to attend school board meetings, spend weekend and evening hours at athletic events, show up at plays and dances, go to PTA meetings, and, because of a substitute teacher shortage, occasionally help in the classroom (*NAESP Fact Sheet on the Principal Shortage*, n.d.).
- School administrators work longer days, work nights, work weekends, and work year-round (*NAESP Fact Sheet on the Principal Shortage*, n.d.).
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that "Many education administrators work more than 40 hours a week, including some nights and weekends during which they oversee school activities" (*NAESP Fact Sheet on the Principal Shortage*, n.d.).

The long work hours are one aspect deterring individuals from applying. To add to this, Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001) cite the following reasons limiting potential candidates from applying:

- Too little pay: There is little pay difference between administrators and experienced teachers. The pay scale does not reflect the increased responsibilities and demanding work schedule.

- Costly and irrelevant requirements: An advanced degree is extremely expensive and the coursework may not be relevant to the skills needed to supervise a school.
- Too many pressures: School administrators are evaluated on standards related to student achievement, community involvement, and fulfillment of legislative requirements.
- Too many hats to wear: School administrators must serve as building managers as well as instructional leaders.
- Not enough time: School administrators are assigned a tremendous amount of responsibilities and may be unable to complete them due to the fragmented nature of their work day.
- Too little authority: School administrators are ultimately responsible for everything that occurs within the school building, yet are still accountable to central office and school boards (p. 73).

In addition to the time demands of the assistant principal role, society in general expects the job description of an assistant principal be limited compared to the role of the school principal. The school principal is charged with making major decisions related to students and school employees and receives higher pay and respect for the difficult role assigned to him/her. However, society does not grant similar respect for the role assistant principals play within the school. The cultural assumption regarding the narrow responsibilities assigned to assistant principals may prohibit students, parents, or staff members from believing an assistant principal can assist them in solving problems or starting new initiatives. The perception by parents and students alike is the assistant principal is the

disciplinarian in a school, rather than an influential person able to make significant decisions or get things done (Glanz, 1994).

#### Summary of Research Related to Assistant Principal Job Description

The assistant principal job description is essential to ensuring qualified administrators who provide leadership in schools. Research shows that assistant principal job descriptions are poorly communicated and perpetually inconsistent. Job descriptions of assistant principals need to not only take into account the daily routines and requirements of the position, but must also examine the hidden roles and expectations of the role. These unwritten responsibilities and outside influences are often as important as the day-to-day tasks of discipline and supervision of staff. To make it even more complicated, job descriptions are also influenced by the traditions and expectations society places on the assistant principalship. These societal pressures have an impact on the individuals being recruited and promoted in school administrator positions. The role is difficult to define, expectations are general and vague, and the awesome responsibilities attributed to the role deter individuals from pursuing administrative careers. To remedy this, supervising principals are the key to restructuring the assistant principalship and promoting best practices to ensure the absolute best candidates are hired into the profession (Gorton, 1997).

#### Part II: Examining Hiring Practices for Assistant Principals

After examining the expansive duties and responsibilities assigned to the assistant principalship, especially the ones deemed undesirable by the principal, it is understandable why so few educators choose to apply for the position of assistant principal. The shortage of



administrators is gradually becoming a larger problem in the United States, drawing the attention of school boards and state legislatures (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). Embracing initiatives to promote change and/or carefully examine hiring practices that may be restraining a potential field of candidates can have a dramatic impact on the hiring process.

### Current Practice

Selecting ideal school leaders is pivotal to the success of schools (Schlueter and Walker, 2008). Prior to leading a school building, school leaders are expected to obtain certification demonstrating their competency for the position. Gates et al., (2003) emphasizes, “Certification requirements and human resource practices seem to pose substantial barriers (both formal and informal) to entry into school administration, particularly for those who are not teachers” (p. 38). Many states require certification to hold an assistant principal position. Policy makers have begun to examine whether state-level certification requirements are deterring people from becoming school administrators. Gates, et. al. (2003) reports,

Forty-nine of 50 states require a special certification for administrative positions in public schools...twenty-eight others [states] have specific credentials for different positions, such as principal and superintendent. A master’s degree, often from a state-approved program in educational administration, is required for certification in all but a handful of states. All but nine states require those seeking an administrative credential to have experience in primary or secondary education – up to five years for principals and seven years for superintendents. Other common certification requirements include completion of specific course content, a teacher certificate, and a passing grade on national or state examinations (p. 31).

The cost and time attributed to advanced certification may limit the pool of assistant principal applicants. Certification requirements for administrators may pose a barrier to teachers due to

the costs of certification-based education and the time commitment required. Despite this, there is little evidence that there is a shortage of individuals possessing an administrative degree in the teaching position. Rather, many teachers choose to obtain certification and then not transfer into administration. Moreover, candidates interested in school administration from other fields of study find certification requirements to be more burdensome (Bates et al, 2003). Individuals with professional leadership experience in other fields (such as military or business) find it difficult to pursue certification and obtain leadership positions in education (Ediger, 2008). Efforts to attract educator leaders from the business sector have resulted in the creation of leadership academies such as The Broad Superintendents Academy that places participants into “full-time high-level managerial positions in school districts, CMOs, and federal/state departments of education” (“THE BROAD REPORT”, n.d.). The Broad Academy seeks to increase the number of potential administrator candidates by not requiring participants to have educational experience before entering the program.

Current superficial hiring practices may also impede female candidates from advancing in school leadership. “Employment is often based on personal superficial characteristics of applicants rather than the ability to perform the job (Braun, Williems, Brown, & Green, 1987). Perceived boundaries such as “discrimination in hiring” deter many candidates from pursuing top-level administrative positions (Conrad & Rosser, 2007). School districts also struggle with whether to hire from within the school or from outside institutions (Simplicio, J. S. C., 2007).

Recruiting and selecting school leaders is one of the most important tasks required of school districts. Following federal legislation, state legislation and local school board policy is required to ensure fair and equitable hiring practices that protect the rights of all applicants.

Consistent and impartial hiring practices ensure all candidates equal opportunity to be selected for a vacant position.

#### Retention, Recruitment, and Promotion

Employing new methods to attract and recruit individuals to assistant principal positions is an essential role of school districts. The most common vehicle for the advertisement of job vacancies is the use of job postings describing the position on district websites. Ryan and Martinson (1996) found six general categories to be the greatest concern in recruiting new employees: advertising the job, providing adequate information about responsibilities, treating candidates honestly, conducting interviews, searching for candidates, and addressing discrimination (p. 9). In all six of these areas, Ryan and Martinson (1996) recommend recruiters be completely honest with potential candidates (p. 12). Deciding the type of candidate an organization is searching for prior to posting a position and conveying this information in a clear and truthful manner throughout the hiring process will streamline the recruitment process.

In related research, Merskin and Huberlie's (1995) content analysis of university faculty position announcements reiterates the need for recruitment to be honest and straightforward. They found the largest problem with advertisement of position openings was that they were too general and vague. From an applicant point of view, the ads failed to provide specific information related to the type of candidate that would be considered for the position. Moore (2009) further recommends advertising assistant principal vacancies "by listing quantifiable expectations and linking those to performance outcomes" (Importance of Standardization section, para. 2). To limit the number of inappropriate

applications, job advertisements should include all attributes pertinent to the position such as: candidate qualifications, responsibilities of the position, salary and other benefits, and any materials requested from the applicant (Merskin & Huberlie, 1995). With a limited pool of qualified candidates, school systems are also encouraged to provide well-written job descriptions and examine their guidelines and procedures for recruiting and hiring personnel. These components are instrumental in recruiting and retaining quality employees (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Bloomer, 2008; Gagnon, 2003; Froschheiser, 2007).

Additionally, given that most administrators begin their careers in teaching, it is imperative to “attract high-quality potential administrators into the teaching pool” (Bates et al., 2003, p. 64). When hiring a teacher, considering leadership potential is essential. It is evident that today’s teachers are tomorrow’s administrators (Bates et al., 2003, p. 64). Encouraging successful teachers to move into an assistant principal role is critical to ensure increased diversity and competency in the administration positions yet to come.

Once administrators are in the position, it is equally important to consider retention of qualified individuals. American schools are experiencing a high rate of turnover in administrative personnel positions due to retirement and resignation (Norton & Kriekard, 2002, Petzco, 2008). Administrators leaving the profession contribute to school-site instability and the loss of valuable experience and intellect in school districts, and it is also very costly to fill administrative vacancies (Norton, 2003).

#### Summary of Research Related to the Hiring Procedures for Assistant Principals

A review of literature reveals a limited amount of educational research on the hiring, recruitment, and employment practices of public school administration (Braun, et al, 1987).

However, it is clear position descriptions are essential to ensure diverse and qualified candidates. Carefully constructing job descriptions and establishing consistent and inclusive hiring procedures may increase the pool of potential candidates available to fill vacancies (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Conrad & Rosser, 2007).

### Part III: Transformation of the Assistant Principalship Job Description

School districts benefit from having a more diverse work force that includes both men and women. Increasingly student populations are more diverse and require role models similar to them. Diversity is understood as more than a set of categories to which people belong or self-identify. Diversity extends to ideas of inclusion and the recognition and value of differences. To recruit diverse administrative personnel, school systems need to define diversity, establish principles and values to promote diversity, and encourage specific attitudes (Chan, 2005). Victims of discrimination in hiring typically fall into four categories: age, sex, race, and experiential discrimination (Ryan & Martinson, 1996, p.11; see also Chan, 2005). Educational leaders must embrace an appreciation for the “human and cultural differences” that make us all different (Haeggans & Polka, 2009). Valuing diversity and recognizing the dangers of reinforcing homogeneity and standardization promotes the hiring of underrepresented groups into educational administration (Haeggans & Polka, 2009).

#### Hiring Diverse Administrators

The process of becoming a more diverse organization begins with strategic planning and applying quality management principles (Haeggans & Polka, 2009). There are no quick or easy fixes to ensure a more diverse workforce. Strategic plans must tackle critical and

controversial topics to identify ways the educational organization inhibits diversity and develop specific strategies to address discrimination. Long term planning, conscious awareness and the formulation of targeted strategies promote the attainment of diverse administrators.

Seeking a more diverse pool of candidates requires a considerable time commitment to conduct an exhaustive search and implement practices so all applicants receive an equal opportunity to apply and interview for a vacant position. Theoretically, the use of search committees promotes diverse hiring practices by establishing joint decision-making and ensuring faculty involvement in decisions. However, often times these committees are unaware of their biases and subjectivities when hiring individuals into the organization (Chan, 2005). Without proper training, committees serve to promote the status quo of “white male” dominated subculture (Chan, 2005, p. 148).

In the United States, minorities generally work in urban communities. Suburban and rural districts should make an attempt to recruit more minorities as assistant principals (Smith, 1987). Research by Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, and Richards (2004) concluded that predominantly white institutions were more likely to hire underrepresented faculty of color when a job description emphasizes a connection to race or ethnicity and when an institutional intervention strategy that bypasses or enhances the traditional search process is used (p. 152). Carefully constructing job descriptions provides the intervention potential to link hiring to the needs of the organization. Furthermore, allowing principals to bypass usual search processes or changing the composition of search committees can also lend itself to the hiring of more diverse administrators (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004).

‘Cloning their own’

Perpetuating the status quo and hiring from within can also limit the number of women in the assistant principalship. Gronn and Lacey (2006) define this practice of nominating candidates from within the school, in preference to external applicants as “role cloning” (p. 102, see also Simplicio, 2007). More specifically,

selection panels that act on behalf of schools and their communities are seeking to ensure that the persons to whom they accord senior level responsibilities are known, as distant from unknown, quantities. This tendency is a way of seeking to guarantee that new appointees fit a preferred mould, or are deemed to be moulded, the assumption being that such moulding is more likely to occur if appointees come from within the school where they may have already been socialized in preferred ways in prior lead-up roles consistent with the overall leadership culture of a school (Gronn and Lacey, 2006, pp. 102-103).

## Experience

Candidates interested in pursuing educational administration may have begun their careers in fields other than education. The need for increased innovation and advocacy for new leadership approaches in education has resulted in assistant principal positions being filled by individuals from the business world and the military (Ediger, 2008). Non-traditional candidates and the potential they have to bring a unique perspective to education are potentially valuable to school districts. Leadership styles vary greatly and leadership attributes from other professional fields may enhance school leadership (Ediger, 2008); however, these individuals may not have adequate grounding in best practices for teaching and learning. Critics of non-traditional administrative candidates “claim that schools need more than just leaders, they need educational leaders who understand how children learn and how teachers teach as well as they can manage staff and run a big-budget operation” (Bianchi, 2003, p. 3).

## Leadership styles

The administrators of the future must not only be diverse in their experiences, they must also possess a “diverse application of leadership skill and abilities” (Leone, Warnimont, & Zimmerman, 2009, p. 92). Mastering these skills and abilities promotes the success of assistant principals. Although leadership styles differ between men and women, due to the nature of female leadership styles, there is even more diversity amongst women. Masculine leadership styles typically adopt traditional positions of authority with power to reward or punish. While feminine leadership styles embrace the more complex and dynamic attributes of charisma, work record, and contacts in a variety of ways (Witmer, 2006, p.149). Women bring a unique perspective and application of leadership styles that deviate from traditional leadership roles and instead focus on relationships, instruction, work and home balance, spirituality, and the distribution of power (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Marshall & Wynn, 2012).

### Female leaders.

The greatest distinction between male and female leadership styles is that, overall, women are more caring and nurturing (Shakeshaft, 1989; Witmer, 2006, p.149). In general, these leadership behaviors define women as being participatory and democratic. de Casal and Mulligan (2004) dichotomize leadership styles as either agentic (primarily associated with men) or communal (primarily associated with women). The agentic leadership style is synonymous with autocratic and/transactional styles. Agentic leadership incorporates traits such as ambition, dominance, force, etc. to lead subordinates and deters input from others on decision making. Contrary to this, the communal leadership style is affectionate and focused



on nurturing others. Communal leadership emphasizes building relationships to promote trust and working together to plan for the future (p. 26). To explore the changing style of leadership as more women enter administration, de Casal and Mulligan (2004) used open-ended questions to survey female graduate students on four major areas: qualities of women leaders, leadership and power, expected difficulties, and the defining characteristics of influential people (p. 27). Their findings revealed that women are developing their own leadership style “based on collaborative efforts by a group of leaders, each in their own right, who are moving forward with shared vision, shared power (empowerment), and an emphasis on professional and personal relationships as the basis of growth” (de Casal and Mulligan, 2004, p. 31).

Gender also has an impact on the perception of principal leadership behavior (Nogay & Beebe, 2008). Based on results of a study surveying teacher and supervisors and their perception of female secondary principals, Nogay and Beebe (2008) found “certain relationships exist between the gender of leaders and the perceived effectiveness of their leadership” (p. 598). These findings bolster the idea that female school leaders must be aware how they are perceived by teachers, students, and supervisors to successfully lead others.

Stereotypes regarding women and their leadership styles can negatively impact their effectiveness as school administrators. Wilmore (2012) explains women may be perceived as sensitive and nurturing, but when they express their considerate point of view they are characterized as being overly emotional; however, if a women is aggressive, she is likely to be labeled “bitchy.” Men in the same situation are regarded as in control. The roles women are assigned as assistant principals may also be based on stereotypical notions. Women are

often considered ill-equipped to supervise athletics, organize custodians, or manage discipline just on their nature of being female and not accustomed to “dirty work.” These discernments require women to work harder to earn respect from staff, students, and parents when men are “inclined to get respect simply due to gender” (pp. 42-43). The characteristics of female leaders and the stereotypes they address on a daily basis impact how they choose to lead. There are many different types of leadership styles adopted by school leaders, but this literature review focuses on the attributes of school management and collaborative leadership.

#### School management.

Administrators that prefer a school management style in leading a school favor administrative behaviors of structure, productive orientation, directives, task motivation, and transactional leadership (Creighton, 2005). School management refers to “maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements.” Managers often exhibit leadership skills; however, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change (Cuban, 1988, p. 193, see also Bush, 2008; Weller & Weller, 2002). These leaders live in the moment and focus on maintaining the status quo. School management refers to daily school operations such as student discipline, school building maintenance, supervision of staff, etc. Administrators that employ school management often work alone and make many of the decisions for the school solo. This leadership approach emphasizes a one-way exchange from a leader and their followers (Creighton, 2005, p. 14). School management is often considered unappealing and lacking passion. In fact Ramsey (2006) describes being a school manager as “hard work and not much fun” (p.7).

### Collaborative leadership.

While school managers focus their energy on daily operations, administrators who employ collaborative leadership behaviors understand the importance of building relationships between teachers and administrators to accomplish the vision and mission of the school. Through collaborative leadership, assistant principals partner with everyone in the school building to foster relationships and promote a successful school environment (Harley, 2009, p. 79). Collaborative leadership involves administration, staff, students, parents, and the community working together towards a common vision to improve a school community. As Kochan and Reed (2005) explain, “The ultimate goal of collaborative leadership is to create democratic learning communities in which power is shared and there is a mutual belief in working together for the common good” (p. 72). Leaders, as opposed to managers, create a shared vision by involving, engaging, and motivating others (Ramsey, 2006, p. 7).

### Hiring Competent Assistant Principals

Determining the most important leadership skills and characteristics needed for assistant principals is important to plan successful leadership programs, hire the best people, and create successful leadership preparation programs (Clark & Clark, 1996). As instructional leaders, competent school leaders possess the skills, traits, behaviors and responsibilities that improve student achievement (Norton, 1987; Rammer, 2007). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identify 21 responsibilities of effective school principals and correlate each of the responsibilities to student achievement. In addition, the 2009 Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) evaluation system looks at seven leadership components: (a) strategic leadership, (b) instructional leadership, (c) cultural

leadership, (d) human resource leadership, (e) managerial leadership, (f) external development leadership, and (g) micro-political leadership. Combined with the The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, it is apparent that administrative competencies extend beyond the traditional assistant principal job description of “buses, butts, and books.” These responsibilities stress the need for the “best possible individuals” in school administrative positions; suggesting that these competencies be used as a criterion in the hiring of administrators. Marzano et al. (2005) reiterates this point,

At no time in recent memory has the need for effective and inspired leadership been more pressing than it is today. With increasing needs in our society and in the workplace for knowledgeable, skilled, responsible citizens, the pressure on schools intensifies. The expectation that no child be left behind in a world and in an economy that will require everyone’s best is not likely to subside (p. 123).

### Transformational Leaders

Minimal research has been conducted on the specific knowledge and skill elements that are most important for novice school administrators (Petzco, 2008). However, Clark and Clark (1996) surmise:

The research findings on the skills, attributes, and characteristics needed by leaders to successfully reform their schools are summed up by Carlson (1996) when he states “there is a consensus view that the organization of the future... will need leaders and followers invested in a transformational process” (p. 137). Such a process according to Bryman (1992) includes visionary leadership, communicating the vision, empowerment, organizational culture, and trust (p. 19).

Transformational leaders bring special gifts and traits to the assistant principalship: zeal, confidence, clarity, and persistence. These characteristics must be sought when recruiting future competent school leaders (Johnson, 2008). Transformational leadership inherently includes the behaviors associated with collaborative leadership. Creighton (2003) explains “leaders who practice transformational leadership...pay special attention to the needs and

desires of their followers and try to help members achieve their highest potential. Many female leaders intuitively use transformational leadership and collaborative leadership strategies such as listening, building relationships, group decision making, and cooperative planning to foster creativity and nurture new ideas (Witmer, 2006, pp. 148 -149).

### Teacher Leadership

Hiring competent teachers is the first step in hiring competent assistant principals, given the largest percent of assistant principals are recruited from the teaching ranks (Bates et al, 2003). The importance of the knowledge of instructional pedagogy and the expectations for teacher leadership can be emphasized during the interview and hiring process to strive to hire the best candidates. Helterbran (2010) emphasized “every new hire provides an opportunity to increase leadership strength in a school building” (p. 369).

Teacher leadership is defined as a “set of skills demonstrated by teachers who continue to teach students but also have an influence that extends beyond their own classrooms” (Danielson, 2006, p. 12). Teacher leaders take initiative to “influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287, see also Fullan, 1994). This influence can be utilized in many different ways by a teacher leader and establishes credibility with fellow educators. Killion and Harrison (2006) listed a sampling of ten roles of teacher leaders employ to contribute to school success.

1. Resource Provider
2. Instructional Specialist
3. Curriculum Specialist

4. Classroom Supporter
5. Learning Facilitator
6. Mentor
7. School Leader
8. Data Coach
9. Catalyst for Change
10. Learner

Teacher leaders cannot assume all these roles alone. Due to the wide variety of teacher leadership opportunities, teacher leaders are able to select roles that are aligned to their strengths and collaborate with others to promote change (Nappi, 2014). Often, teacher leaders take the responsibility for a few or just one of these roles in formal and informal ways to improve student achievement and contribute to their school success (Killion & Harrison, 2006). The nature of their work promotes teacher leaders to utilize collaborative leadership to work together in a positive and productive way.

Once hired, encouraging successful teachers to move into an assistant principal role is critical to ensure increased diversity and competency in the position. Teachers who exhibit strong leadership skills can be groomed into effective school administrators; however, teacher leaders are often reluctant to consider assistant principal and principal positions. Adams and Hambright (2004) studied teacher leaders by administering an anonymous survey to teacher leader program participants about their perception of administrator roles and possible reasons by female teacher leaders do not pursue principalships. One of the primary concerns with transitioning to an assistant principalship expressed by teacher leaders is “losing contact with children in a classroom setting” (Adams & Hambright, 2004, p. 210).

Other reasons reported by the survey participants were the lack of desire to deal with difficult parents, additional time away from their areas of interest, and the prospect of “dealing with difficult, complaining, and noncompliant teachers, staff, and students” (Adams & Hambright, 2004, p. 210). To mitigate these concerns and assist teacher leaders with the transition to administration, districts have designed ways to recruit from within and make it easier for teacher leaders to transition to assistant principal and principal positions.

### Leadership Academies

Many school districts have chosen to develop and provide their own opportunities for leadership growth and comprehensive professional staff development programs in the form of leadership academies or leadership centers. These academies allow school districts to strategically recruit and train future leaders from their employee pools (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). Existing and future administrators are provided focused training, extensive professional socialization, and renewed understanding of the administrative role. The goal is to work within the organization to promote innovative ways of thinking about administrative roles. The academies provide structured leadership activities aligned with the district’s vision and the role of leadership in education (Cantwell, 1993; Peterson, Marshall, & Grier, 1987). Administrators participating in these programs have increased access to professional development activities, on-the-job mentoring, small-group seminars, retreats, consultation, and networking (Cantwell, 1993). According to Tracy and Weaver (2000), graduates of the leadership academies “have a greater understanding of the various roles administrators play in school and felt much more confident in their abilities to be effective leaders” (p. 82). Career planning with participants can also assist school districts with recruiting the “best and

the brightest candidates” and support employed assistant principals’ plan for career advancement (Peterson et al, 1987, p. 34).

Academies provide integrated opportunities to learn more about leadership and administrative issues. However, these programs are faced with the challenge of selecting and designing processes to most effectively implement meaningful socialization programs. Cantwell (1993) explains, “Research indicates that the prevailing processes of assistant principal professional socialization are most likely to reinforce a custodial orientation of the job” (p. 51).

The processes reinforce the idea that the job is just a stop on the way to the principalship, rather than a “leadership position with identified responsibilities and assigned tasks, criteria of success, and recognition” (Cantwell, 1993, p. 51). The perception of the assistant principalship as just a means to another job limits the amount of time dedicated to the position to develop essential leadership skills. The difficulty in designing staff development to ensure proper professional socialization results in assistant principals lacking the essential competencies necessary to be successful in the assistant principal position.

#### Education Administration Programs: Pedagogical Philosophy

Education administration programs (Masters in School Leadership) also have difficulties designing appropriate curriculum to develop school leaders and prepare individuals for assistant principal positions. Typically education administration programs are designed to prime graduates to assume the role as principal, not assistant principal. Even so, with the extreme breadth and variety of assistant principal job descriptions throughout the United States, it is impossible to design a graduate course of study to fully prepare graduates



to competently perform all tasks such as discipline, scheduling, transportation, inventory, finances, food service, student counseling, curriculum, and supervision (Lane, 1984).

Assistant principal training programs perpetuate the gap in what is being learned and what the job entails. Norton and Kriekland (1987) emphasize this point, “It is of paramount importance that individuals in training understand the requirements of the position of assistant principal and complete preparation programs that best qualify them for success in the role” (p. 29). Weller and Weller (2002) list the following areas in which educational leadership courses did not adequately prepare assistant principals: (a) motivating teachers; (b) resolving conflict; (c) developing curriculum for the “real world”; (d) working effectively with teams; (e) improving instruction; and (f) dealing the “politics” of the job. These areas directly relate to indispensable tasks assistant principals are responsible for on a daily basis (p. 13).

Acknowledging the need for change, many pre-service education programs for teachers and administrators have evolved tremendously. McCall (1997) explains universities have recognized the need to provide students with the skills to create and promote caring institutions. To address this need, new curriculum has been designed to include sensitivity training. Making students more aware of diverse approaches toward educational leadership serves to expand education programs and build upon the strengths of all participants.

### Principal Awareness

It is vital that school principals supervising assistant principals understand limitations in current administrator training programs. Schainker and Brown (2008) discuss the limitations of preparation programs. They feel these programs operate in a world of “Ivory

Towers” where students have set guidelines and procedures, few interruptions, and “work within a context that is characterized by civility and rationality” (p. 12). Schools today, unfortunately, have little in common with the orderly and refined practices of higher education. Principals need to participate in training to effectively mentor new assistant principals and to model best practices. Providing strategies for fledging administrators on how to voice their questions with supervisors and how to learn from their mistakes is essential. Marshall and Hooley (2006) report, “Assistant principals who have sponsors or mentors greatly benefit from the specific advice, confidence-building, access to opportunity, and caring guidance” (p. 133-134). Educational administration degrees not only provide little experiential and applicable knowledge for new assistant principals, these programs also provide little support or education on how to empower them to take risks to initiate change.

### Courage to Take Risks

Many aspects of competence can be taught through well-planned staff development; however, the courage to embrace risk is what it really takes to be a transformational leader. While the will to embrace change may be perhaps nurtured or encouraged, risk-taking can’t be taught (Johnson, 2008). When hiring an assistant principal, it is imperative to seek those who possess the foundations of these skills prior to entering the field. The ability for individuals to feel comfortable taking risks comes from within. To be a risk taker, assistant principals must first be confident in their abilities and ideas and then be open to seeking new ways to improve the educational environment (Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, & Scott, 1992). Risk takers also acknowledge the fine line between initiating action and being a “trouble maker.” Before engaging in risk taking, assistant principals must understand the unspoken

rules about initiating action and how cultural and political environments pose potential consequences to risk taking behavior (Marshall & Mitchell, 1991). Finally, risk takers take advantage of self-growth opportunities and are willing to create opportunities where existing programs do not exist (Langley & Jacobs, 2006).

#### Assistant Principal as a Change Agent

The ability to embrace change is a key characteristic of the assistant principalship (Langley & Jacobs, 2006). Leone, Warnimont, and Zimmerman (2009) describe the school administrator for the future as an “active change agent within the school” (p. 92). No longer is it acceptable for school administrators to maintain the status quo. The new norm is for administrators to challenge the status quo (Marzano et al., 2005). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) describe the change process as, “every time we take steps toward improvement, we are undertaking risks (p. 72). A well written assistant principal job description includes expectations to embrace new ideas and initiate change.

#### Supportive Working Conditions

Change is possible and easier to implement only if individuals are supported by their supervisors (Leone, Warnimont, & Zimmerman, 2009). Safe working environments also provide the necessary support to encourage individuals to take risks, succeed or fail, and learn from those risks (Marshall & Greenfield, 1987). Quality professional socialization and professional development can also encourage novice administrators to be innovative and assertive (Peterson et al, 1987).

## Creative Insubordination

Risk takers may embrace creative insubordination as a method to push the boundaries to challenge bureaucratic organizations and understanding how to get things done in bureaucracies. Lyman, Ashby, and Tripses (2005) define creative insubordination as a “counter bureaucratic approach to decision making that bends and/or ignores rules and otherwise subverts the authority of the chain of command when such subversion is justified by the greater authority of personal values, service to students, and common sense” (p. 63). Individuals possessing the skills and courage to take unobtrusive action with minimal impact on superiors can be invaluable to maximize positive change.

## Summary of Research on Diversity, Competence, and Risk Taking in the Assistant Principalship

As educational leadership programs change their emphasis and attempt to prepare school leaders for the actual jobs they will face in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, the hiring practices for assistant principals also need to be reviewed. Considering how to attract a diverse group of highly qualified school administrators and developing a means to ensure individuals are successful and fulfilled in their new positions is crucial to school district success. The research recommends analyzing assistant principal job descriptions and school district policies to determine if they are written to discourage particular groups of individuals from applying or being successful in the role. An examination of how power is manifested is an important means to positively change institutions (Chang, 2005; Smith, et al, 2004). If given the opportunity, assistant principals with the courage to “trouble bureaucracy” can be an asset in the drive to meet educational needs in a “pluralistic society” and minimize the achievement gap (Lyman, Ashby, & Tripses, 2005, p. 65).

## Part IV: Assistant Principal Recruitment Research

In this section, several research studies will be examined to explore ways to transform assistant principal job descriptions to increase recruitment. These suggestions are a starting point for school districts to examine their own job descriptions and determine changes that are appropriate for their organization.

### Transforming Assistant Principal Job Descriptions

Working from within the organization and jointly with the school principal can promote job satisfaction, attractiveness, and restructure the long-established assistant principal role. Marshall (2006) lists the following structures and supports that make the assistant principalship more attractive:

- Collaborative site team leadership
- Being valued by the principal
- Having the flexibility and time to develop pet projects for the school
- Consistency in policies from above
- Noninterference with their jobs
- Policies supporting professional affiliations (paid trips to conferences, sabbaticals)
- Salary, benefits, and awards; and
- Being recognized as special

These innovative structures are a new approach to legitimizing the work of assistant principals. According to Glanz (1994), delegating traditional duties assigned to other school personnel “will have a threefold effect: (1) it will allow more time for staff –development

planning or simply assisting teachers in the classroom; (2) morale will improve by allowing APs [assistant principals] to engage in more creative and intellectually stimulating instructional/curricular activities; and (3) academic and social objectives will have a greater chance of being achieved because more time will be allotted for instructional improvement” (p. 4). Emancipatory policies would provide support to assistant principals and demonstrate the value and importance of their work. Increased job satisfaction and flexibility can have a positive impact on performance and morale resulting in more opportunities becoming available for promotion.

### Job Satisfaction

Individual job satisfaction also has a large impact on a person’s drive to stay within a particular profession or seek promotional opportunities. Shumate (2003) determined there are three variables that correlate with assistant principals and their job satisfaction: (a) the individual’s previous role as a teacher-leader; (b) the individual’s primary responsibilities as an assistant principal; and (c) the individual’s past teaching assignment. These variables also assist with recruitment practices to help school systems identify the best qualifications for individuals to enter the assistant principal role. Carefully examining prior job experience and performance and candidate’s pre-conceived notions of the assistant principalship may determine if the position is the “best-fit” for the individual.

Taylor’s (2007) research also found these variables impacted job satisfaction. However, his findings determined assistant principals were most unhappy with the monetary compensation they received for the long hours and huge responsibilities mandated by their role at a school and job description. This sense of fair compensation and job satisfaction is

further explored in a study by Diekman, Sondak, and Barsness (2007). Their findings emphasize the need for transparent hiring practices, as well as perceived fairness in an organization. School systems need to ensure they are consistently fair when hiring, promoting, compensating, and assigning job responsibilities. Well-written job descriptions can be the first step in this process.

### More Appealing

Attracting prospective candidates to the position is a significant component of a job description. When job descriptions are used to encourage individuals to apply to vacant positions, ensuring the content not only embraces an emancipatory perspective, but also describes job responsibilities that would promote job satisfaction is significant. Gronn and Lacey (2008) provide the following example:

Job descriptions have to be appealing to them [applicants], rather than creating a disincentive (A# 20) [Quoting an applicant]: I read a couple of the job descriptions [for assistant principal] and they had in it that you needed to be able to deal with issues such as violence, regular occurrences of truancy, regular non-compliance with uniform policy, all this sort of stuff. And I'm looking at that thinking: 'Oh is that really what I want to do?' (p. 111).

Principals are the key in designing the assistant principalship to be more attractive (Gorton, 1987). Principals should be educated on how to “maximize the leadership contribution” of the assistant principal and consider collaborative leadership opportunities. Gorton's research recommends the following four steps to increase job satisfaction and develop the administrative talents of assistant principals: (1) Expand the job to include job responsibilities beyond discipline and attendance; (2) Become an advocate for the assistant principal position and champion the many achievements and critical tasks attributed to assistant principals; (3) Increase rewards by restructuring the assistant principal's job to

include a greater variety of responsibilities.; and (4) Facilitate professional growth by recognizing the need for both principals and assistant principals to participate in staff development activities (p. 2-3).

Provide personal time.

The great time demands of the assistant principal position leave little time for individuals to pursue personal interests or professional growth opportunities. School districts may consider offering “generous vacation policies and allocate time for professional renewal” (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001, p. 73). Providing time for administrators to take paid sabbaticals, complete doctoral studies, or attend staff development is another way to honor years of service and promote reflective practice and professional development (Adams, 1998; Marshall, 1993).

Honor family obligations.

Implementing family-friendly policies and practices provides support to employees and encourages productivity even amid potential family crises. In addition, school districts should consider redefining “family” to include both men and women and diverse family structures, such as caring for foster or step children, elderly parents, or a domestic partner (Quinn, Lange, & Olswang, 2004, p. 32). Such policies may include:

- Family leave
- Elder-care support
- Dependent-care assistance
- On-site child care



- Support programs for members experiencing personal crises (Quinn, et al, 2004; Secret & Sprang, 2001)

Balancing home and work obligations is especially difficult for female administrators (Loder, 2005). Loder (2005) studied 31 women administrators and found “the overwhelming responsibility for managing work-family conflicts falls largely on women administrators” (p. 768). To address work-family conflicts, Loder (2005) found, “from a policy perspective, there is an urgent need for more employer supported child-care and elder care, flexible scheduling and family leave policies” (p. 741). Jordan (2012) expanded this research by examining the conflicts and choices many women face between choosing an administrative career and motherhood. Jordan (2012) recommended, “By reconsidering leave benefits, allowing flexibility for workplace assignments that complement the school attended by a principal’s children, and working to create more realistic expectations for principals, districts could increase the work satisfaction and thus the retention of female employees who also wish to be parents” (p. 123). These studies highlighted the need for future research addressing ways districts can promote a healthy life balance between home and work.

#### Assign mentors.

New administrators often lack the support and guidance needed to ensure success in their position. In a survey of secondary school administrators, Shelton (1992) reports that although 72 percent of administrators were not assigned a mentor when they began their administration career, 91 percent of those surveyed felt that they would have been able to receive more assistance and do a better job if they had had the guidance of a mentor (p. 114). Assigning new assistant principals a mentor could ensure that everyone receives the help,

support, and encouragement needed to promote professional growth and socialization and “get the job done” (Langley & Jacobs, 2006, p. 43).

#### Opportunities to network.

Providing the structure and means for assistant principals to engage in professional discussion with other administrators about their practices can empower assistant principals. Programs such as assistant principal retreats, leadership academies, book clubs, and informal discussion sessions provide professionals the opportunity to interact with peers to “try out, work with, understand, and adapt role behaviors, and master role communication skills” (Cantwell, 1993, p.66; see also Fields, 2005).

#### Recruitment Research

Factors such as job applicant characteristics, labor market conditions, characteristics of the position vacancy, and characteristics of the hiring organization may also impact recruiting (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). Research by Winter and Morgenthal (2002) used three recruitment models from “private-sector recruitment literature” to investigate candidate attraction to principal positions prior to the job interview. Their study found student achievement at the advertised job site to be a “potentially decisive factor in applicant decisions to interview for and accept a job as principal” (p. 334). Based on this finding, Winter and Morgenthal (2002) suggested school districts may have to aggressively recruit personnel from outside the state and provide incentives such as signing bonuses and additional support personnel to generate a pool of qualified applicants at lower performing schools (p. 334). This research also applies to the assistant principalship. If school districts

want to attract more diverse and more knowledgeable applicants to a position that is less desirable, policies may have to be written to provide recruitment incentives.

### Teacher Leadership and the Assistant Principalship

School administration should focus on cultivating and rewarding educators at all levels in an organization; however, administration should also recognize the need to ensure transformational leaders are being recruited into teacher positions. The dependency on teachers to fill administrator positions may pose implications for policymakers. Gates et al. (2003) suggests the following considerations for policy makers:

First, to attract high-quality administrators, one must attract high-quality potential administrators into the teaching pool. Second, changes in teachers' wages and working conditions can affect the incentives teachers have to move into administration. The spillover effect of teacher pay increases or class size reduction should be kept in mind. Third, teaching is the fundamental activity going on in schools, so while some teachers do need to be developed into administrators, most teachers will remain in the classroom their entire career (p. 64).

Gates et al., (2003) further cautions that since teaching is the typical pathways into school administration, hiring from within may simply be a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 64). School districts limit their pool of candidates by not evaluating the certification requirements and hiring procedures that may exclude those with no teaching experience from applying for assistant principal positions. Additionally, leadership capacity should also be developed in potential administrators employed by the school district with the instillation of leadership academies for teachers interested in pursuing administration (Gilman and Lanman-Givens, 2001). Recruitment policies can provide a balance of hiring strong aspirants from within the organization and individuals from outside the organization.

## Summary of Research Related to Transforming the Assistant Principal Job Descriptions and Supportive Policies

The research in the areas of educational administration programs, hiring procedures and societal demands of assistant principals directly relate to how job descriptions are written and implemented. This research does little to suggest strategies to help deal with the growing demands of the school administration at the assistant principal level. The research does urge districts to look beyond the current methods of structuring leadership roles in order to overcome the components of the work that are reported as least satisfying; however, the research unanimously affirms that the demands of the assistant principalship are simply too great. Changes to job descriptions and supportive policies are essential to ensure ideal candidates are recruited and selected to fill important leadership positions.

### Further Questions

Based on the review of the literature, a majority of research related to the assistant principalship is embedded in or extrapolated from research related to the principalship. A significant portion of the research explores how assistant principals spend their time (duty logs) rather than examining which attributes potential assistant principal candidates find attractive. Very little research has been done to investigate the recruitment of assistant principals. Practitioners have inadequate data or examples of appropriate and successful ways to create assistant principal job descriptions that are designed to encourage recruitment of women into the assistant principalship. Additionally, how can higher education, school districts, and the society reframe job descriptions to that contain attributes that are attractive to promote an increased desire in applying for and obtaining an assistant principal position? With increased awareness, school districts can critically examine how existing assistant

principal job descriptions and supporting policies are failing to recruit school leaders for the future.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose for this research was to investigate how job descriptions impacted the recruitment of women into educational leadership positions in one rural school district in North Carolina.

#### Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Job choice theory and business recruitment models were used as the basis of this research and were applied to determine the selection of independent and dependent variables to be studied. Job choice theory was applied to scrutinize why individuals “select one job over another” and was originally utilized in research by Behling, Labovitz, and Gainer (1968) to examine potential candidate’ perceptions and job intentions (Eadens, Bruner, Black, 2011). This framework was later employed in educational research by Young, Rinehart, and Place (1989). Young, Rinehart and Place (1989) further described job choice theory as either objective, subjective, or critical contact. All three categories of job choice theory are addressed in this study and external and internal motivational factors were considered in determining what attracts teachers to the assistant principalship. Participants were asked to rate the attractiveness of a job description based on specific attributes (objective theory), examine the expectations and requirements for the job provided in the job description, (critical contact theory), and consider their own psychological motivation based

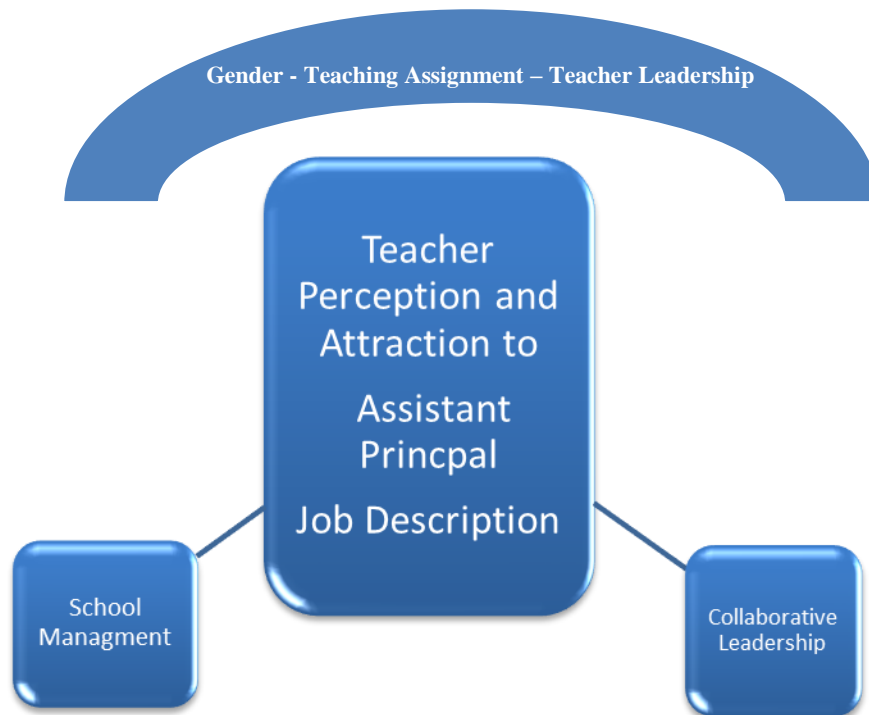
on their knowledge of the assistant principal role and the provided job description (subjective theory).

Business recruitment models were also used in conjunction with job choice theory to design the research study. Rynes and Barber's (1990) applicant attraction model, and Schwab (1982, p. 105) "Employment Process" model were used to identify that vacancy characteristics (job attributes) and the personal characteristics of the job applicant are the most important factors that influence recruitment outcomes (Partenheimer, 2002).

Aligned with the theoretical frameworks, the conceptual framework guided the research study (Figure 1). In the conceptual framework the overarching characteristics of gender, teaching assignment, and teacher leadership were considered when analyzing teacher perception and attraction to the assistant principalship based on the job description attributes of school management and collaborative leadership. These characteristics and the job description attributes were considered to have an overall impact on teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description.

Figure 1:

The Impact of Gender, Teaching Assignment, and Teacher Leadership on Teacher Attraction to the Assistant Principal Job Description.



Based on these frameworks, vacancy job attributes and applicant characteristics were the focus of the study.

### Research Design

To identify the connections between job descriptions in recruitment and gender of teacher leaders, this study used a mixed method approach. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research was the most effective means to address the complexities and individual perspectives related to the attractiveness of assistant principal job descriptions. The quantitative data collected from the recruitment simulation generated specific data that was statistically analyzed and described trends from a larger sample size (Creswell, 2008). The



open-ended interview questions in the ethnographic interviews captured the actual words of individual people in the study, offered many different perspectives on the topic, illuminated some of the perceptions in both the formal and informal job descriptions, and provided a vehicle for capturing the specific aspects of the assistant principalship that are attractive and unattractive to teacher leaders. The positive attributes of both quantitative and qualitative research were used to provide a comprehensive analysis to the research questions.

Quantitative research was based on recruitment simulation (Partenheimer, 2002; Winter, Partenheimer, & Petrosko, 2003) and the qualitative research was based on ethnographic interviews. Dillard (1995) emphasized the importance of also using qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of individual perspectives.

Given the questions to be answered were comprehensive and directly related to the participants' beliefs, feelings, and values, there was a compelling reason to collect the data using a job description recruitment simulation along with ethnographic interviewing. These methods necessitated the use of both quantitative and qualitative research to complete this study.

### Major Research Question

How do job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into positions as assistant principals?

### Research Questions

- How does gender (male, female) impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?

- How do the role, responsibilities, and job attributes (school management vs. collaborative leadership) outlined in an assistant principal job description impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How does current job assignment (elementary school, middle school, high school) impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How does teacher participation in leadership opportunities impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?
- How do female teacher leaders perceive the roles and responsibilities outlined in assistant principal job descriptions?

### Role of Researcher

In this mixed methods study the author served as the primary research instrument. As the research instrument, the author acknowledged her role as a former assistant principal and white female administrator. In addition, she also recognized her role as a mother and wife working in school administration. These definitions of self may bias the data collection as she interviewed participants. Wade (1994) advised:

...interactions between observer and subjects always are infused with some measure of shared responsibility for each other's needs that surface in a variety of ways. This aspect of field study method is crucial, particularly when the researcher is studying a social issue in a setting where she or he wears another hat (p. 214).

Rather than allow biases to muddy the data collection, the researcher used former experiences as an assistant principal to establish a rapport with the individuals being interviewed. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated, "Discussions of one's role in the setting and consideration of how participants' willingness to engage in thoughtful reflection may be affected help provide evidence that the researcher knows enough about the setting and the

people, their routines, and their environments” (p. 124). Geer (1964) further recommended, “...selecting a neutral, approachable role in the sense of acting and speaking in ways which are not threatening to informants” (p. 147). To do this, the researcher dressed professionally, yet casually and mimicked the conversational tone and pace of the person being interviewed.

### Site Selection and Participants Access

The participants in this study were North Carolina certified public school teachers working in elementary, middle, or secondary schools. To access teachers to participate in the recruitment simulation the researcher contacted the superintendent of a rural North Carolina school district and asked permission to contact principals to schedule a time to meet with their staff. The recruitment simulation was completed prior to a scheduled faculty meeting.

The next step was to access teacher leaders that were identified by school principals and were elected by their colleagues to their school’s school improvement teams. Each of these teacher leaders was employed at same schools that completed the recruitment simulation. Before meeting with and interviewing the identified teacher leaders, permission was gained from the superintendent of the school district to contact and conduct interviews in the district. After approval, the superintendent was asked for permission to notify principals of the possibility of interviewing teacher leaders at their school sites, the purpose for doing so, and for his support in encouraging teacher leaders to participate in the study.

To gain entry to teacher leaders for the ethnographic interviews, each principal was contacted via phone and asked to identify female teacher leaders in their buildings who serve on the school improvement team. Each of the identified teacher leaders were then contacted by phone or in person. When contacted, each teacher leader was provided information about

the purpose of the study. Marshall and Rossman (2016) recommended, “rather than be inauthentic by adopting a contrived role, qualitative researchers be themselves, true to their social identities and their interests in the setting and/or topic” (p. 120). To achieve this, information was shared with the participant about the researcher’s background, as well as informed them of the researcher’s understanding of their position by identifying the researcher as a “former teacher and assistant principal.” Sharing this information, the researcher hoped to establish legitimacy and engage the reader immediately and motivate them to participate in the research topic. The researcher recruited 15 teacher leaders from nine schools to participate in the one-on-one interviews.

#### Rationale for Choice of Participants/Sample Size

The sample group of teacher leaders interviewed consisted of women working in the same school system, with at least three years of experience, who had been recognized as teacher leaders by their principal. A sample size of 15 teacher leaders from the same school system dictated a school system with at least ten schools consisting of at least two elementary, two middle, and two high schools as a site selection. Using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) maximum variation sampling strategy, particular consideration was given to “document diverse variation and identify important common patterns” (p. 114). The participants interviewed represented a wide variety of variables related to, race, age, teacher leadership experience, and family status. The interview participants were all from central North Carolina and worked in one rural school district. The sample size of 15 also allowed for loss of potential interview candidates.

In addition, Wade (1984) explains, “researchers who elect to conduct a study in their home field must respond to the competing pressures and unanticipated demands arising from this relatively unusual position in a manner that best preserves the scientific and professional integrity of both role stances” (p. 214). Heeding this advice, the researcher conducted the proposed research study in different schools than where she currently serves as a school principal.

### Data Collection

The researcher met with teachers at 10 schools in one rural North Carolina school district to complete the recruitment simulation and met with 15 teacher leaders from these schools to complete the ethnographic interviews. These two data collection methods were used to triangulate the data collected to provide evidence of credibility, dependability, and transference.

### Recruitment Simulation

The recruitment simulation used in this research was modeled on the research protocols of Partenheimer (2002) and Winter, Partenheimer, & Petrosko, (2003). The recruitment simulation documents developed by Partenheimer (2002) were adapted for this study with permission from the author (see Appendix J). The teachers participated on a voluntary basis in the recruitment simulation by completing four tasks: (a) reading an advised consent form (see Appendix B), (b) completing a demographic data form (see Appendix C), (c) reading one of the two assistant principal job descriptions focusing on one of two job attributes (school management or collaborative leadership) (see appendices D and E), and

completing a job evaluation instrument (see Appendix F) (Partenheimer, 2002). The teachers reviewed one of two assistant principal job description documents that focused on the attributes of school management and collaborative leadership. These attributes were chosen based on the research discussed in Chapter II and their potential impact on assistant principal recruitment. The responsibilities listed for each attribute were selected and sorted based on research related to assistant principal job duties and job satisfaction, ISSLC standards, and the North Carolina School Executive: Principal Evaluation Process. In addition, current job descriptions were analyzed for common themes related to school management and collaborative leadership (see appendices D, E, H & I).

## Interviews

By completing in-depth interviews, an analysis of each individual's perspective regarding assistant principal job descriptions was completed with a specific emphasis on their firsthand encounters with how gender may or may not impact the attractiveness of the assistant principal role in their particular school setting. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described an interview as "a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, that is directed by one in order to get information" (p. 135). Particular attention was focused on how the assistant principal's job description does and does not impact gender and allow personal flexibility based on individual strengths, weaknesses, and family life. The ethnographic interviews explored each teacher leader's perspective regarding the value and importance of assistant principals' gender in relation to the school system's culture as a whole (see Appendix G). Additionally, the ethnographic interviews examined how the specific assistant principal job attributes of school management versus collaboratively leadership appealed to

the teacher leader. Weeks and Schensul (1993) state, “Ethnography is most useful when theory, standards, goals, and objectives are viewed as ‘fuzzy’, ‘flexible’, ‘discoverable’, and ‘changeable’, in other words, when it can assist in generating or discovering the theory and methods underlying a program approach” (p. 55).

### Ethics

At the beginning of the study, IRB approval was obtained. All participants received a consent form that addressed how data would be obtained, secured confidentiality, and provided participants the opportunity to review transcripts of interviews for accuracy upon request. To provide reciprocity, as well as accuracy, each teacher leader had the option to receive a copy of the transcription of their interview. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned for all names (school, individuals, city, county, etc.) included in the data.

The data collected were recorded in a variety of different ways depending on the original source. The recruitment simulation surveys were collected and the ethnographic interviews were recorded digitally and field notes were also taken. This information was labeled and kept in a locked location to ensure confidentiality. The content analysis of the teacher interviews were completed using NVivo software and saved in a secure location, including a backup. All documents were transcribed and compiled and kept in a secure location (NVivo, 2012).

## Analysis

### Recruitment Simulation

The quantitative data collected from the recruitment simulation were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and chi-square tests.

### Coding schemes- Ethnographic Interview

To analyze the qualitative data collected during the interviews, the researcher searched for common themes that were identified during the collection process. These themes were launching points to make generalized statements and begin identifying relationships (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, Wolcott, 2009). In the ethnographic interviews, the data was analyzed based on common ideas and language used during the interviews. In addition, outliers were identified. The data was coded according to themes revealed in the literature review and emerging categories from the data.

Based on triangulation mixed methods design, the quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed separately. The results of both data sets were then compared to identify patterns, including ways they support or contradict each other (Creswell, 2008, p. 557).

### Trustworthiness and Credibility of the Coding and Analysis

In this mixed method study, triangulation is employed to promote rigor and trustworthiness (Bowen, 2005; Padgett, 1998). Using both quantitative and qualitative data served as a means to “corroborate evidence” from different types of data and data collection (Creswell, 2008, p. 266). Using data from multiple sources, the researcher examined each



data source to find evidence to support a theme. Creswell (2008) further explained, “This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes. In this way, it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible” (p. 266).

The researcher engaged in a thorough analysis of the interview transcripts and notes to identify categories based on the conceptual framework. The data collected through interviews, observations, and surveys were sorted, read, re-read, and questioned repeatedly (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout this process a computerized system was created and maintained to assist with the management and analysis of the data using NVivo (NVivo, 2012). The data collected from the interviews and surveys were coded and sorted immediately after collection. The categories were used in the coding process and in the process of data reduction (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The guiding hypotheses and research questions remained the focus of the data collection. As categories and patterns were identified through data analysis, the credibility of the guiding hypothesis was examined, tested, and evaluated based on the data collected. The purpose was to evaluate the data for informational adequacy, credibility, usefulness, and centrality (Creswell, 2008).

### Limitations

Both aspects of this mixed method study face certain limitations. The sample size and participant list is limiting in this study given that the teachers are from one rural school district in a single state. Additionally, the recruitment simulation may not be transferrable to an actual job application process and the participants’ reactions in this study may not be the

same if they were actually pursuing an assistant principal position. Finally, using Hammersley's (1991) criteria for ethnographic research, the researcher is unsure if the study would prove valid especially in meeting the criterion of "the consistency of the claims with empirical observations" and the "extend to which the cultural description produced provides a basis for competent performance in the culture studied" (p. 56). The data gathered from the 15 female teacher leaders interviewed in this study may not be representative of all teacher leaders in the rural school district.

### Significance

This study examined the current hindrances and limitations of assistant principal job descriptions and the realities of the expectations as they relate to gender issues. These guiding hypotheses allowed the researcher to explore whether recommendations, to policy makers and district level school administrators, could be found to make the assistant principal job less of a struggle and more attractive to all genders. The information gained from this research could be used to assist policy makers in reframing the assistant principal job description and, hopefully, its enactment, to make it more appealing to future potential applicants.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS: ATTRACTION TO THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JOB DESCRIPTION

This study examined how job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into assistant principal positions. Using hypothetical job descriptions and ethnographic interviews, the researcher explored how gender, leadership activities, and school level impacted a teacher's attraction to the assistant principalship. The results from this research could assist school districts with the recruitment of future school leaders by providing insight on ways to develop assistant principal job descriptions that are more attractive to all potential candidates. Further, it may identify recruitment strategies that attract and support a different style of leaders for schools.

The results in this study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data. Part I will feature the results from the recruitment simulation and Part II will share the results from the ethnographic interviews. To complete the statistical analysis on the recruitment simulation in Part I, the following steps were used. The first step was to complete a demographic analysis on the participants. The second step was to compute statistical analyses addressing each of the research questions. Data were first analyzed based on the responses from the demographic sheet (Appendix C) and then examined based on responses to the recruitment simulation assistant principal job evaluation (Appendix F). The analyses used either ANOVA (continuous data) or a chi-square test (nominal and categorical data). For continuous data ANOVA was used to compare the means of the distributions of two or

more groups and the significance threshold set at .05. For nominal and categorical data the chi-squared test was used to investigate independence of the groups and an alpha of .05 was used. Post-hoc tests were used to determine the most significant differences when the null hypothesis was rejected. Sampling was not required as the data represents an entire population. To complete the content analysis in Part II, each of the 15 interviews were transcribed and each interview was coded based on emerging themes using NVivo software (NVivo, 2012).

## Part I: Recruitment Simulation

### Participants and Descriptive Statistics

The participants in the recruitment simulation were from 10 schools in one rural school district in North Carolina. The survey instrument was administered by the researcher at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. A total of 230 teachers voluntarily participated in the recruitment simulation and completed the research instrument.

Descriptive statistics for all participants are shown in Table 4.1. Seventy-eight percent of the participants were female, 18% were male, and 4% of the participants did not respond to the question. The mean age for the participants was 42.2 years and teacher experience averaged 13.9 years. Eighty-seven percent of the participants were White and 13% were minorities. Sixty percent of the participants' highest degree earned was a bachelor's degree and 33% had attained a master's degree. One hundred seven (47%) of the participating teachers worked at an elementary school, 67 (29%) worked at a middle school, 42 (18%) worked at a high school and 14 (6%) worked at a two or more levels of school.

The teacher demographics for the North Carolina school district in this study are similar to national teacher demographics. As reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2012b), the national statistics for teachers include: gender (76.3% female and 23.7% male), race (81.9% White, 6.8% Black, 7.8% Hispanic, and 1.8% Asian) and highest degree earned (39.9% bachelor's and 47.7% master's). The average age for a teacher in North Carolina is 40.9 years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). In comparison, public school principal national statistics are as follows: gender (51.5% female and 48.5% male), race (80% White, 10% Black, 7% Hispanic, and 3% All other races) and highest degree earned (2% bachelor's, 62% master's, 26% educational specialist, and 10% doctorate) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012a).

Table 4.1:

## Descriptive Statistics for Study Participants (N = 230)

| Variable                    | N   | %    | Mean | Standard<br>Error | Range |
|-----------------------------|-----|------|------|-------------------|-------|
| Age (years)                 |     |      | 42.2 | .7                | 22-65 |
| Gender                      |     |      |      |                   |       |
| Male                        | 41  | 17.8 |      |                   |       |
| Female                      | 179 | 77.8 |      |                   |       |
| No response                 | 10  | 4.4  |      |                   |       |
| Ethnicity                   |     |      |      |                   |       |
| White                       | 199 | 86.5 |      |                   |       |
| Black                       | 21  | 9.1  |      |                   |       |
| Hispanic                    | 3   | 1.3  |      |                   |       |
| Asian                       | 1   | .4   |      |                   |       |
| Other                       | 5   | 2.2  |      |                   |       |
| No Response                 | 1   | .4   |      |                   |       |
| Highest Degree Earned       |     |      |      |                   |       |
| BS/BA                       | 138 | 60   |      |                   |       |
| MS/MA                       | 76  | 33   |      |                   |       |
| Other                       | 16  | 7    |      |                   |       |
| School Level                |     |      |      |                   |       |
| Elementary                  | 107 | 46.5 |      |                   |       |
| Middle                      | 67  | 29.1 |      |                   |       |
| High                        | 42  | 18.4 |      |                   |       |
| Other                       | 14  | 6    |      |                   |       |
| Teaching Experience (Years) |     |      | 13.9 | .6                | 0-38  |

The sample is representative of the population of the school district in the study.

## Inferential Statistics

First research question summary.

How gender (male, female) impacts teacher attraction to that assistant principalship was examined in respect to participant ratings for willingness to be an assistant principal. Based on participant responses, there was a slight significance observed between male and female participants. Using the information gathered from participant demographic information (Appendix C), a chi square test was performed and resulted in a p-value of .03, which is less than the significance threshold of .05. As can be seen in Table 4.2, gender has a slight effect on the willingness to be an assistant principal. The categories of willingness were combined because more than 20% of the expected values were less than 5 (as indicated by the shaded area in Table 4.2).

Table 4.2:  
Gender and Willingness to be an Assistant Principal

|  |       |       |           | Observed          |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-----------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1     | 2     | 3         | 4                 | 5     | 6     | 7     | Total |
| Male                                       | 9     | 6     | 6         | 7                 | 4     | 4     | 5     | 41    |
| Female                                     | 85    | 19    | 15        | 17                | 10    | 11    | 22    | 179   |
| Total                                      | 94    | 25    | 21        | 24                | 14    | 15    | 27    | 220   |
|  |       |       |           | Expected          |       |       |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1     | 2     | 3         | 4                 | 5     | 6     | 7     | Total |
| Male                                       | 17.52 | 4.66  | 3.91      | 4.47              | 2.61  | 2.80  | 5.03  | 41    |
| Female                                     | 76.48 | 20.34 | 17.1      | 19.53             | 11.39 | 12.2  | 21.97 | 179   |
| Total                                      | 94    | 25    | 21        | 24                | 14    | 15    | 27    | 220   |
|  |       |       |           | Observed Combined |       |       |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1 & 2 |       | 3, 4, & 5 |                   |       | 6 & 7 |       | Total |
| Male                                       | 15    |       | 17        |                   |       | 9     |       | 41    |
| Female                                     | 104   |       | 42        |                   |       | 33    |       | 179   |
| Total                                      | 119   |       | 59        |                   |       | 42    |       | 220   |
|  |       |       |           | Expected Combined |       |       |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1 & 2 |       | 3, 4, & 5 |                   |       | 6 & 7 |       | Total |
| Male                                       | 22.18 |       | 10.10     |                   |       | 7.83  |       | 41    |
| Female                                     | 96.82 |       | 48.01     |                   |       | 34.2  |       | 179   |
| Total                                      | 119   |       | 59        |                   |       | 42    |       | 220   |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .03 < .05)           |       |       |           |                   |       |       |       |       |



When the categories of willingness were combined, the data revealed men were more likely to be willing to pursue a job as an assistant principal, as indicated in their response to categories 3, 4, & 5 and 6 & 7.

In addition to demographic information, each participant was asked to complete a recruitment simulation evaluating an assistant principal job description that focused on either managerial leadership or collaborative leadership. The research question concerning gender and willingness to be an assistant principal was further explored analyzing the data from the recruitment simulation in respect to gender. Using a chi square test it was also determined that gender had an effect on participant responses to the recruitment simulation (Table 4.3-4.5). In particular, the results revealed a slightly significant response in regard to the first question in the recruitment simulation assistant principal job evaluation, “How likely would you be to apply for the assistant principal position described?” (see Appendix F). The results for the chi square test for question 1 was p-value of  $=.02$ . No significance difference was observed for question 2 of the simulation job evaluation, “If offered, how likely would you be to accept an interview for the assistant principal position described?” (p-value =  $.22 > .05$ ) and question 3, “If offered, how likely would you be to accept a job offer for the assistant principal described?” (p-value  $=.51 > .05$ ).

Table 4.3:

## Recruitment Simulation and Gender – Question 1: Apply for an AP position

| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Observed |       |       |       |       | Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 8        | 10    | 4     | 10    | 9     | 41    |
| Female                               | 58       | 15    | 34    | 37    | 35    | 179   |
| Total                                | 66       | 25    | 38    | 47    | 44    | 220   |
| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Expected |       |       |       |       | Total |
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 12.30    | 4.66  | 7.08  | 8.76  | 8.20  | 41    |
| Female                               | 53.70    | 20.34 | 30.92 | 38.24 | 35.80 | 179   |
| Total                                | 66       | 25    | 38    | 47    | 44    | 220   |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .02 < .05)     |          |       |       |       |       |       |

Table 4.4:

## Recruitment Simulation and Gender – Question 2: Accept an Interview

| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Observed |       |       |       |       | Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 7        | 9     | 3     | 11    | 11    | 41    |
| Female                               | 47       | 21    | 28    | 41    | 42    | 179   |
| Total                                | 54       | 30    | 31    | 52    | 53    | 220   |
| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Expected |       |       |       |       | Total |
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 10.06    | 5.59  | 5.78  | 9.69  | 9.88  | 41    |
| Female                               | 43.94    | 24.41 | 25.22 | 42.31 | 43.12 | 179   |
| Total                                | 54       | 30    | 31    | 52    | 53    | 220   |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .22 > .05)     |          |       |       |       |       |       |

Table 4.5:

## Recruitment Simulation and Gender – Question 3: Accept a Job Offer

| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Observed |       |       |       |       | Total |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 8        | 7     | 4     | 11    | 11    | 41    |
| Female                               | 49       | 21    | 30    | 38    | 41    | 179   |
| Total                                | 57       | 28    | 34    | 49    | 52    | 220   |
| Scale (Very Unlikely to Very Likely) | Expected |       |       |       |       | Total |
|                                      | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |       |
| Male                                 | 10.62    | 5.22  | 6.34  | 9.13  | 9.69  | 41    |
| Female                               | 46.38    | 22.78 | 27.66 | 39.87 | 42.31 | 179   |
| Total                                | 57       | 28    | 34    | 49    | 52    | 220   |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .51 > .05)     |          |       |       |       |       |       |

Second research question summary.

The second research question (How do the role, responsibilities, and job attributes (school management vs. collaborative leadership) outlined in the assistant principal job description impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship?) was investigated by asking participants to complete an assistant principal job evaluation for an assistant principal job focusing on either school management or collaborative leadership. No significance was found between the job attributes of school management (Treatment 1) or collaborative leadership (Treatment 2) in any of the three responses related to the recruitment simulation questions, as can be seen in Tables 4a –c. The results of the chi square test are as follows: Question 1: p-value =.82, Question 2: p-value =.34, and Question 3: p-value =.11, all greater than the significance threshold of .05.

Table 4.6:

Recruitment Simulation Response Related to Job Attributes and Interest in Applying for Position

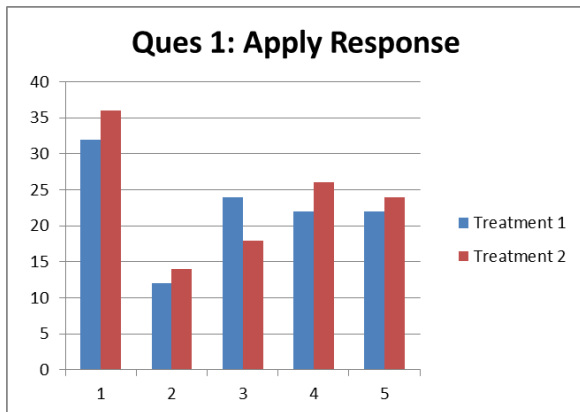


Table 4.7:

Recruitment Simulation Response Related to Job Attributes and Interest in Interviewing for Position

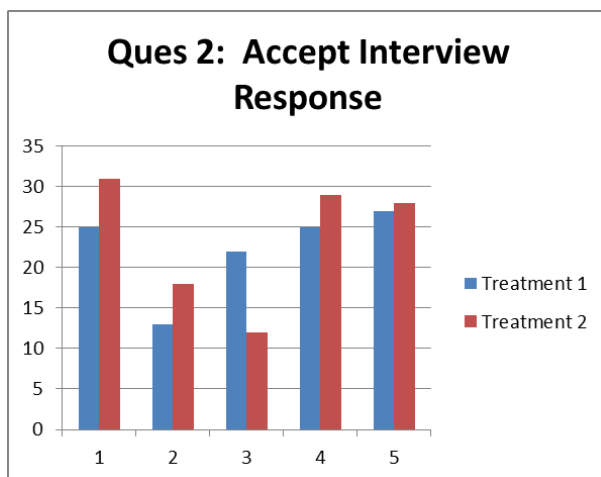
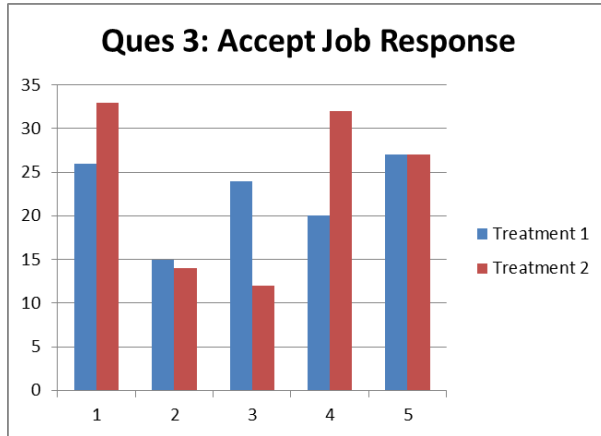


Table 4.8:

Recruitment Simulation Response Related to Job Attributes and Interest in Accepting the Position



Third research question summary.

The third research question asked: How does current job assignment (elementary school, middle school, high school) impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship? Job assignment (elementary, middle, or high school) was also found to not have any significance on an individual's willingness to be an assistant principal. Using participant demographic information, the categories of willingness were combined because more than 20% of the expected values were less than 5 and a chi square test was performed ( $p\text{-value} = 0.31 > .05$ ) (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9:

## Job Assignment and Willingness to be an Assistant Principal.

|  |       |       |           | Observed          |       |      |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-----------|-------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1     | 2     | 3         | 4                 | 5     | 6    | 7     | Total |
| Elementary                                 | 51    | 14    | 10        | 13                | 7     | 5    | 9     | 109   |
| Middle                                     | 26    | 8     | 8         | 6                 | 4     | 6    | 9     | 67    |
| High                                       | 18    | 3     | 4         | 5                 | 1     | 3    | 8     | 42    |
| Total                                      | 95    | 25    | 22        | 24                | 12    | 14   | 26    | 218   |
|  |       |       |           | Expected          |       |      |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1     | 2     | 3         | 4                 | 5     | 6    | 7     | Total |
| Elementary                                 | 47.50 | 12.50 | 11.00     | 12.00             | 6.00  | 7.00 | 13.00 | 109   |
| Middle                                     | 29.20 | 7.68  | 6.76      | 7.38              | 3.69  | 4.30 | 7.99  | 29.20 |
| High                                       | 18.30 | 4.82  | 4.24      | 4.62              | 2.31  | 2.70 | 5.01  | 42    |
| Total                                      | 95    | 25    | 22        | 24                | 12    | 14   | 26    | 218   |
|  |       |       |           | Observed Combined |       |      |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1 & 2 |       | 3, 4, & 5 |                   | 6 & 7 |      | Total |       |
| Elementary                                 | 65    |       | 30        |                   | 14    |      | 109   |       |
| Middle                                     | 34    |       | 18        |                   | 15    |      | 67    |       |
| High                                       | 21    |       | 10        |                   | 11    |      | 42    |       |
| Total                                      | 120   |       | 58        |                   | 40    |      | 218   |       |
|  |       |       |           | Expected Combined |       |      |       |       |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to Very Willing) | 1 & 2 |       | 3, 4, & 5 |                   | 6 & 7 |      | Total |       |
| Elementary                                 | 60.0  |       | 29.0      |                   | 20.0  |      | 109.0 |       |
| Middle                                     | 36.9  |       | 17.8      |                   | 12.3  |      | 67.0  |       |
| High                                       | 23.1  |       | 11.2      |                   | 7.7   |      | 42.0  |       |
| Total                                      | 120.0 |       | 58.0      |                   | 40.0  |      | 218.0 |       |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .31 > .05)           |       |       |           |                   |       |      |       |       |

When the categories of willingness were combined, Table 4.9 illustrates the observed chi-square is not significantly different from expected in all school levels (elementary, middle, and high).

Analyzing results related to job assignment and the recruitment simulation also indicated no significant correlation. The chi square test results are as follows: Question 1 (p-value =  $0.22 > .05$ ), Question 2 (p-value =  $0.17 > .05$ ), and Question 3 (p-value =  $0.11 > .05$ ).

#### Fourth research question summary.

How teacher participation in leadership opportunities impacts teacher attraction to the assistant principalship was investigated based on demographic data and the recruitment simulation. Of the 230 participants in the research study, 129 teachers indicated they were involved in some type of leadership activity (56%); however, participation in leadership activities as indicated on the demographic sheet had no significant effect on an individual's willingness to accept an assistant principal position (Table 4.10). Leadership participation and willingness to be an assistant principal revealed a p-value of  $0.11 > .05$ , as can be seen in Table 4.10. In the recruitment simulation, this was also true. Leadership participation in past and/or current experiences did not have any significance in relation to the recruitment simulation responses. The results of the chi square test of the recruitment simulation and leadership are as follows: Question 1: p-value = .32, Question 2: p-value = .15, and Question 3: p-value = .51, all greater than the significance threshold of .05.

Table 4.10:

## Leadership Participation and Willingness to be an Assistant Principal

| Scale (Not at all Willing to<br>Very Willing)       | Observed |       |       |       |       |       |       | Total |
|---|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|   | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |       |
| Does Not Participate in<br>Leadership Opportunities | 43       | 13    | 13    | 10    | 4     | 2     | 8     | 93    |
| Participates in Leadership<br>Opportunities         | 52       | 12    | 10    | 15    | 9     | 12    | 19    | 129   |
| Total   | 95       | 25    | 23    | 25    | 13    | 14    | 27    | 222   |
| Scale (Not at all Willing to<br>Very Willing)       | Expected |       |       |       |       |       |       | Total |
|   | 1        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |       |
| Does Not Participate in<br>Leadership Opportunities | 39.8     | 10.47 | 9.635 | 10.47 | 5.446 | 5.865 | 11.31 | 93    |
| Participates in Leadership<br>Opportunities         | 55.2     | 14.53 | 13.36 | 14.53 | 7.554 | 8.135 | 15.69 | 129   |
| Total   | 95       | 25    | 23    | 25    | 13    | 14    | 27    | 222   |
| CHISQ.TEST (p-value = .11 > .05)                    |          |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |

## Additional findings.

In addition to the findings related to gender, job attributes, job assignment, and leadership participation, data comparing age and years of teaching experience could not be ignored and was also analyzed. Age and teaching experience proved to be the most significant factors that influenced a participant's willingness to be an assistant principal.

Using a one way ANOVA to explore these questions, it was evident participant ratings for interest in applying for an assistant principal position indicated younger teachers were more interested in pursuing administrative careers than older teachers. The means in



this summary decreased from  $M = 3.4$  at age group 30 to  $M = 1.5$  at age group 70, with a p-value of .02, as seen in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11:  
Age and Willingness to Apply for an Assistant Principal Position

| SUMMARY       |              |            |                |                 |  |  |
|---------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|--|--|
| <i>Groups</i> | <i>Count</i> | <i>Sum</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Variance</i> |  |  |
| 30            | 40           | 136        | 3.4            | 1.938462        |  |  |
| 40            | 58           | 181        | 3.12069        | 2.388687        |  |  |
| 50            | 63           | 182        | 2.888889       | 2.100358        |  |  |
| 60            | 55           | 146        | 2.654545       | 2.378451        |  |  |
| 70            | 6            | 9          | 1.5            | 0.7             |  |  |

| ANOVA                      |           |           |           |          |                |               |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Source of Variation</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>F crit</i> |
| Between Groups             | 27.43759  | 4         | 6.859398  | 3.140845 | 0.015459       | 2.413251      |
| Within Groups              | 473.9138  | 217       | 2.183934  |          |                |               |
| Total                      | 501.3514  | 221       |           |          |                |               |

p-value .02 < .05

Teaching experience also revealed that individuals with less years of teaching experience were significantly more interested and willing to apply for an assistant principal position.

The ANOVA test revealed a p - value of .03 as seen in Table 4.12 and 4.13. This revealed an increased willingness of teachers with less experience to pursue an assistant principal position.

Table 4.12:

## Teaching Experience and Willingness to Apply for an Assistant Principal Position

Anova: Single Factor

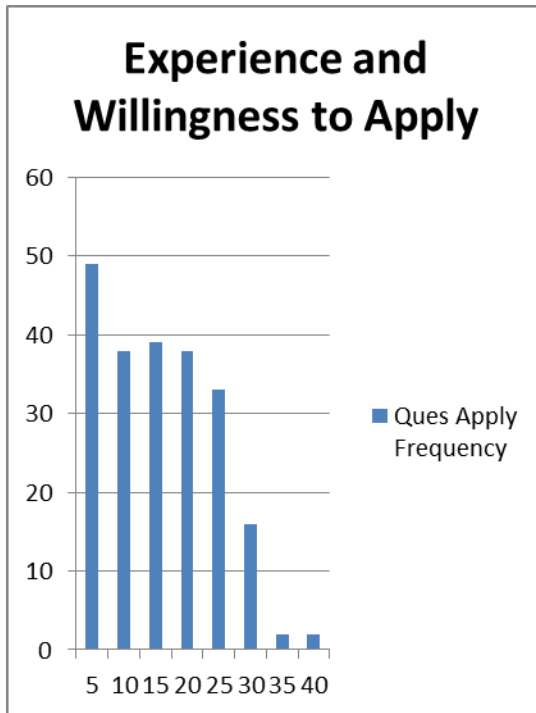
| SUMMARY       |              |            |                |                 |  |
|---------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>Groups</i> | <i>Count</i> | <i>Sum</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Variance</i> |  |
| 5             | 49           | 166        | 3.387755       | 4.32568         |  |
| 10            | 39           | 137        | 3.512821       | 5.835358        |  |
| 15            | 39           | 108        | 2.769231       | 4.340081        |  |
| 20            | 38           | 118        | 3.105263       | 5.502134        |  |
| 25            | 33           | 79         | 2.393939       | 3.621212        |  |
| >25           | 20           | 37         | 1.85           | 2.660526        |  |

| ANOVA                      |            |           |           |          |                |               |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>Source of Variation</i> | <i>SS</i>  | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>F crit</i> |
| Between Groups             | 58.3213854 | 5         | 11.66428  | 2.564356 | 0.02813281     | 2.256657      |
| Within Groups              | 964.307055 | 212       | 4.548618  |          |                |               |
| Total                      | 1022.62844 | 217       |           |          |                |               |
| p-value = .03 < .05        |            |           |           |          |                |               |

The means in this summary decreased from  $M = 3.4$  at a teaching experience of 5 or less years to  $M = 1.9$  with 25 or more years of teaching experience, with a p-value of .03, as seen in Table 4.12. The graph in Table 4.13 illustrates the ANOVA results from Table 4.12, graphically representing the large gap. Teachers with less experience are significantly more willing to apply for an assistant principal position.

Table 4.13:

Teaching Experience and Willingness to Apply for an Assistant Principal Position



The quantitative data analysis from the recruitment simulation indicated gender, age and teaching experience have an impact on a teacher's attraction to an assistant principal job description. These data outcomes were further explored using ethnographic interviews to gain additional insight on female teacher perspective on the assistant principal job description.

## Part II: Interviews

### Participants

In this study, the 15 female interview participants were from 9 schools in one rural school district in North Carolina. All of the interview participants were elected by their colleagues to serve on the school's school improvement and identified by their school principal as teacher leaders. Information about the interview participants are shown in Table 4.14. Eight of the participants worked in elementary schools, four worked in middle schools, and three worked in high schools. Ten of the 15 interviewees had no interest in pursuing administrative careers and five of the women were activity pursuing an administrative job or considering one in the future; therefore, their discussion of the appeal of leadership were worth further exploration to provide a female perspective related to how job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into assistant principal positions.

Table 4.14:

## Interview Participants and a Summary of their Responses

| Teacher Leader Participant Pseudonyms | School Level | Interested in Administration | School Management or Collaborative Leadership more attractive |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| Sophia Smith                          | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Olivia Johnson                        | Elementary   | Yes                          | Both  |
| Isabella Davis                        | High         | Yes                          | School Management   |
| Ava Williams                          | Elementary   | Yes                          | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Emily Brown                           | High         | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Abigail Miller                        | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Kelly Anderson                        | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Madison Taylor                        | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Elizabeth Lee                         | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Charlotte Clark                       | Middle       | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Avery Walker                          | Middle       | Yes                          | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Ella Green                            | High         | Yes                          | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Harper King                           | Middle       | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Amelia Scott                          | Middle       | Yes                          | Collaborative Leadership                                      |
| Natalie Baker                         | Elementary   | No                           | Collaborative Leadership                                      |

## Interview Findings

In this mixed method study, the interviews were completed to provide additional insight about job descriptions and their impact on the recruitment of women into positions as assistant principals. In particular, the interviews focused on the research questions addressing job attributes and female teacher leader perceptions of assistant principal job descriptions. The interview questions were developed based on the literature review and the quantitative findings. Table 4.15 addresses the correlation between these two research questions and the corresponding interview questions (Appendix G).

Table 4.15:

Research Questions and Association to Interview Questions

| Research Questions  | Interview Questions        |
|---|----------------------------|
| How do the role, responsibilities, and job attributes (school management vs. collaborative leadership) outlined in an assistant principal job description impact teacher attraction to the assistant principalship? | Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| How do female teacher leaders perceive the roles and responsibilities outlined in assistant principal job descriptions?   | Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |

The data in Part II were analyzed and then presented in a format organized in reference to these two research questions. In the first section, the influence of role, responsibilities, and job attributes revealed a preference for collaborative leadership, with an emphasis on group decision making and relationships with staff, parents, and students. In the

second section, topics about teacher leader perceptions on the roles and responsibilities outlined in assistant principal job descriptions are divided into two sub sections. The first sub section includes teacher perceptions of the assistant principal job description related to discipline, testing, and personnel issues. The second sub section addresses teacher perceptions and their reasons to remain in the teacher leader position including teacher efficacy, relationships with students, and personal commitments.

### Section 1: Collaborative Leadership

Interview participants were asked, “As a teacher leader, do you feel teachers would find a job description focusing on school management or on collaborative leadership more attractive?” Thirteen out of 15 of the teacher leaders (87%) interviewed stated that they felt collaborative leadership would be more attractive to someone pursuing an administrative career; however even the other two teachers mentioned the importance of working collaboratively. Data referencing teacher preference for collaborative leadership could be categorized into the interrelated topics of group decision making and building relationships.

#### Group decision making.

As discussed in the literature review, great administrators do not work alone (Harley, 2009; Kochan & Reed, 2005). The teachers in the interviews echoed this sentiment sharing their perceptions that “two heads are better than one.” Sophia Smith, a fourth and fifth grade math teacher emphasized this with her reason for preferring collaborative leadership. Sophia shared, “...it is nice to know you always have someone to work with. That you are not all by yourself in all your decisions. Because what sounds good in your head when you say it out

loud to someone else... they might say, ‘now have you thought about this?’” Amelia Scott, a middle school physical education teacher who desired to learn from all her colleagues, echoed this, saying:

It [collaborative leadership] gets everyone involved. And it doesn't put all the burden on one person. Because someone may be able to schedule...better than me and if you could do that than let's do that because it's for the greater good of the school... I think a lot of people just have different things to offer.

The attractiveness of collaborative leadership to make group decisions and create a sense of “buy in” was also very apparent in the teacher responses. Ella Green, a high school exceptional education (EC) lead teacher, explained:

I would say the collaborative [leadership] would be more appealing because everybody would have a say so... Sometimes you can have so many opinions that make it difficult, but to me that would be the easiest way. I would want everybody to have a buy in.

Having a voice and being heard were key components in teacher preference for collaborative leadership. Abigail Miller, an elementary teacher with 25 years of experience who chose to never use her administrative degree, commented,

I think they [assistant principals] would feel they have more a say in [collaborative leadership]. When we meet with the SIT team and when we have grade level meetings we all have our input and we feel like we are listened to and those decisions are made based on getting input from everybody that is involved.

For the female leader interview participants, collaborative leadership was favored due to the female leader preference of more than one person making decisions for the school community. Working together toward a shared vision was important to all of these women.

Relationships with teachers, students, and administration.

Teachers found group decision making an appealing leadership attribute. But they noted another benefit of collaborative leadership was the ability to form meaningful



relationships. As the literature review indicates, school administrators who are able to work collaboratively with staff members are not only able to form relationships and create a sense of shared vision, but they are able to be transformational leaders (Anderson, 2008). The first step in this process is getting to know the culture in the building and the people working there. Elizabeth Lee, an elementary teacher who started her career tutoring students part-time, described why it is so important for assistant principals to work collaboratively, saying

...you would have more information from the teachers about what's going on. Then you would also be able to build more of the relationship with the students. You might not see them [students] as often, but through conversations with the teachers you would know more about that student instead of just general demographics or issues that you have with them.

Assistant principals also serve a vital role in forming these relationships and using them helping to create a link between teachers and administrators. Avery Walker, a young middle school teacher in the beginning of her career, explained this important role. Avery described assistant principals as “navigators.”

I think being able to navigate between administrators and teachers themselves is a really big part of what assistant principals do. This in-between level... the go-between... the bridge. They [assistant principals] bridge the gap. I think that's the biggest part with being assistant principal is having that collaborative leadership role and being a teacher advocate as well. We don't have many of those!

The teacher leaders shared not only would the relationships formed using collaborative leadership promote a positive culture with staff and students, administrators would also be more content and secure a greater job satisfaction. Kelly Anderson commented,

I think it is important that you have collaboration among your peers to be successful as principal or as an assistant principal and I think if they [assistant principals] felt they were going to be more involved directly with the teachers... making that impact on the students, I think that they would be much more happier and do a better job.

Kelly is in a unique position to share this point of view. As a former business administrator with a staff of 93 people, she is now in her second career and in her “dream job” as an elementary teacher. Although two teachers stated a preference for either school management or both management and collaborative leadership, their reasons were also aligned with the importance of working together. Olivia Johnson, an elementary teacher, preferred a combination of both school management and collaborative leadership attributes, but Olivia’s reasoning emphasized the need of helping each other.

If you had someone in the middle that could... take a little bit of pressure off of both things..., not saying they would run smoother because they run smooth now, it just would be more efficient, I guess you could say, because the people in charge would not have as much pressure on them.

Data revealed that “pressure” and negativity associated with school management were a primary reason teachers chose collaborative leadership. Charlotte Clark, a middle school exceptional education teacher, explained the attraction to collaborative leadership. Even though she had no desire to be an administrator, Charlotte says [with collaborative leadership], “at least [I would be] dealing with teachers in teaching situations instead of always more negative situations. It’d be ideas and teaching ideas and I think I would enjoy doing that more than discipline and more negative [managerial leadership]. It just has a negative connotation to it.”

As the literature review stated, many of the undesirable aspects of the assistant principal job description are related to managerial leadership and specifically student discipline (Glanz, 1994; Gorton; 1987; Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Deviating from student discipline and focusing on building relationships and helping teachers is another reason teachers preferred collaborative leadership. Harper King, a middle school teacher serving as a school improvement chair, believed she would prefer collaborative leadership because it

serves as a “leadership role... helping the teachers instead of the negative aspect of administration of discipline.” Harper further dreamed if more schools focused more on academics, rather than on discipline, “We could change the perspective in the community. We do have good kids. We can change it!”

## Section 2: Teacher Leader Perceptions

All 15 teachers interviewed mentioned student discipline as one of the primary roles and responsibilities outlined in the assistant principal job descriptions. Student discipline was by far most frequently mentioned duty of the assistant principalship that was overwhelming aligned with the literature review. Discipline was described as one of the traditional roles performed by assistant principals on a daily basis (Glanz, 1999; Gorton, 1987, Marshall & Hooley, 2006). It was apparent that this traditional role is still a large part of the assistant principal job description as observed by teachers in this rural North Carolina school district. Although all teacher leaders interviewed shared how they perceived discipline as an overwhelming aspect of the assistant principal job description, teachers interviewed often shared their opinion on the ways discipline is an unattractive component of the assistant principal job description. Their responses are represented below, in their own words:

- Sophia Smith shared her aversion to student behaviors that are especially serious. “Extreme behavior issues [are overwhelming]. If it was extreme violence or mis-sexual conduct... I wouldn’t want to have to deal with it.”
- Olivia Johnson revealed her perception of how ambiguous an assistant principal job describing could be undesirable in terms of student behavior. “I don’t know that it’s

the sole job of the assistant principal to handle discipline issues, but I know that could be overwhelming at a time to have one person handle them all.”

- Charlotte Smith explained how she viewed student discipline and how being objective when dealing with students and parents could potentially be a burden.  
“Overwhelming, I would think dealing with the student discipline. I know a lot of things go on in the school and just making sure being fair. I think that would be really difficult in dealing with some parents that get very upset and angry.”
- Ava Williams shared her perspective on how discipline becomes overwhelming when it extends to the school bus, beyond the school walls, and supporting bus drivers.  
“I would say overwhelming in... I would think discipline. And I would think a lot of that falls under... bus discipline... Bus discipline is a whole different issue [than classroom discipline] and I think because the students see bus drivers in a different realm. They don't have the same respect that they have in the classroom with the teachers.”
- Natalie Baker explained how discipline referrals may monopolize the talents of an assistant principal and limit his/her ability to do anything else. “I'm sure that they kind of get bombarded with the discipline issues at a school... I think they [assistant principals] could be such an asset with the curriculum and helping out with that respect and sometimes get over loaded with discipline and referrals...”

From a female leader perspective, these teachers all expressed the assistant principal responsibility of handling student discipline as one of the most unattractive aspects of the job description. Emily Brown, a high school teacher leader, interestingly described her self-reflection related to student discipline and lack of motivation to be an assistant principal in terms of black and white versus shades of gray.

I am a gray area person [laughs] and you need a little gray, but you [the assistant principal] really need to be black and white because you have to be fair... if you are

an assistant principal, especially if you are doing discipline. But I'm too gray. [Laughs]. I would never. I wouldn't make a good assistant principal. I am too much in the gray.

Although managing student discipline was named as an undesirable aspect of the assistant principalship, teacher leaders also mentioned coordinating testing as a managerial role that they found almost as unappealing.

### Testing.

In this rural school district in North Carolina, assistant principals not only deal with the traditional responsibility of managing student discipline, but they also assume the role of test coordinator. With recent changes in the NC legislature and the addition of many different types of assessments, and also new assessments, testing occurs throughout the entire school year and was perceived as being especially burdensome by the teachers interviewed. Eight out of 15 teachers mentioned testing as a major component or overwhelming or unfair aspect of the job description. The mere thought of organizing and administering End of Course exams was perceived as a daunting task for Isabella Davis, a career and technical teacher in a high school setting. Isabella speculated, “The possibility of dealing with testing on a large scale in a larger school could be unfair [to an assistant principal]. Especially if they have not had any experience with testing before.” Kelly Anderson further explained the time and commitment required of testing that she felt was unfair.

I think it's probably unfair to put a lot of the testing responsibilities on an assistant principal. I think it would be better if there was a position in our county especially for a testing person with the school. I think it is unfair [because a] principal's first duties are to the students and the behavioral issues that arise... and if they're in the midst of being tied up with testing it takes them away from their responsibilities that are really more important.

These teacher leaders perceived serving as test coordinators as a barrier in an assistant principal's ability to serve students and support teachers.

#### Personnel.

Not only does the prospect of being responsible for testing make the assistant principal job description unappealing to teachers, but the possibility of having to deal with potential conflict and adversity is equally as unpleasant (Adams & Harbright, 2004). Natalie Baker, an elementary teacher and chair of her school's school improvement team, reflected upon her reasons that she prefers to stay in the classroom.

I'm the type of person that I don't really like to get into the conflict stuff and a lot the principal and assistant principal have to deal with. I kind of like being with the kids and being with the other teachers in that respect.

By remaining in the classroom, teachers are sheltered from having to deal with conflict and situations beyond their control. Teacher leaders find dealing with uncooperative parents and teachers as a deterrent to the principal and assistant principal positions (Adams & Harbright, 2004).

#### Teacher efficacy.

As the literature review discussed, hiring great teachers is instrumental to promoting leadership in the school building (Bates et al, 2003; Helterbran, 2010). Teacher leaders are invaluable in fostering student success in the building; for this reason, many of these leaders choose to stay in their classroom due to their unyielding dedication to their students. Teacher efficacy embodies these teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning (Henson, 2001; Hoy, 2000; Protheroe, 2008). Sofia Smith personified this conviction when

she identified student achievement as her primary responsibility as a teacher leader. “I teach fourth and fifth grade math, so my first responsibility is to make sure the standards are taught to where the kids understand them and they master them.” Twelve of the 15 teachers interviewed (80%) mentioned the primary reason they did not want to be school administrators was because of their dedication to teaching or to the importance of developing meaningful relationships with their students. Kelly Anderson, who had been an administrator in the business sector prior to becoming a teacher, explained her reason for believing her primary role was in the classroom.

Why I don't really desire to do anything [at the] administrative level [is] because I have been there and done that... I really like to be able to touch the children one-on-one and be with them. My biggest responsibility is directly to them every day. Thinking in an administrative position you have a lot more taking them [assistant principals] away from the students and I don't want to do that.

Madison Taylor, a high school EC teacher, has been in the classroom for more than 30 years. She also believed strongly that is where she was meant to be.

I just love being with the kids. All day long. I love my kids and I love seeing that outcome of an impact you can make on one child. And I know as an administrator that they can make the impact on one child, but we have a little bit closer... we're with our children longer. It is closer. We are mama, daddy, nurse, doctor.... I like being in the classroom.

Other teachers feared that leaving the classroom would have an impact on their job satisfaction. Teaching and being in the classroom gave them great joy and they didn't perceive assistant principals as enjoying their work. Charlotte Clark, a middle school teacher, explained her point of view.

I think for me it would take my enjoyment away from teaching. I like to be in my classroom teaching my students and I think the assistant principal is just more being on that admin level. You are not teaching. You're doing so many other things that may not even have to do directly with students and that just doesn't fit me.

Ella Green, an EC teacher with 30+ years teaching experience, considered pursuing an administration position at one time, but also made the determination that the key to happiness was in the classroom. “When it comes down to it, I always know I would miss my kids. That's the whole reason I went into it [teaching] to begin with, is the kids. I don't think I would be happy not being in a classroom.”

#### Relationships with students.

Many teachers had various ways of saying that teaching was more than a job to them. They believed strongly in reaching out to each of their children and getting to know each one on a personal level and this would not possible as school administrators. Their perception that administrators relinquish their ability to have positive relationships with students when they transition from teaching to the assistant principalship was evident. Elizabeth Lee began her career as a tutor and successfully transitioned to the role of a teacher, but couldn't imagine working in an administrative capacity.

I never thought that I would teach and I started tutoring and found that I just really liked the kids. I liked the interaction with them. I don't think that I would have the same interactions with students as I would if I had it in an administration position. So I like the one-on-one and I like seeing them in the classroom more. Because I know I would see [as an administrator] a lot with the demographics and data. But I want to know them [the students].

Emily Brown was also emphatic about the value of the relationships she could form with students as a classroom teacher. These relationships were one of the many reasons she had no desire to pursue administration.

I'm too attached to the kids. I know that they [assistant principals] get to interact with kids, but not in the same way that I would be able to and maybe it is because I am an EC [exceptional children] person. The relationships that I am able to develop with kids are closer. So I wouldn't be able to do that. Help as much. I am a helper. My room is like a safe haven kind of thing and I don't think I could do that anymore.



Harper King perceived the majority of relationships assistant principals have with students as being negative. She found it much more important to remain in the classroom and get to know her individual students' strengths.

I can build relationships with 100 students per year on average. With being an assistant principal and in administration I [would] have 520 students to build that relationship and it is going to be harder to build it with all of them. And the ones that I will see for the most part will be the discipline problems.

Teachers found the idea of leaving their classrooms and the additional time commitments required of the position to be deterrents for pursuing the assistant principal job. One teacher representing this point was Abigail Miller, an elementary teacher leader, summarized her dislike for the position emphasizing the lack of autonomy in establishing your own agenda and the nature of the work required.

I see the assistant principal having to do lots of meetings, lots of discipline areas, and they don't have the time to visit classrooms like they want to. Or they don't have the time to check on things that maybe they value, [such as a] program or something that they really wanted to work on in the school. But they are sort of bogged down with other things.

The desire for female teacher leaders to stay in the classroom and form relationships with their students makes them reluctant to pursue administration.

Personal reasons.

Despite expressing an interest in pursuing a position as an assistant principal, three out of the 15 teacher leaders made the decision to stay in the classroom. In these teachers' lives family obligations and aspects of the assistant principal position have served as barriers to seeking an assistant principal position. Children, time commitments, and finances overlapped to hinder interested teachers into seeking an assistant principal position. The

female teacher leaders interviewed perceived some of these barriers as temporary and looked to the future for when they could progress to the next step in their career. Amelia Scott, a middle school teacher just beginning her educational career after retiring from the military, shared her reasons for waiting before seeking a job as an assistant principal. Amelia believed her son comes first and her primary job right now was to ensure his success.

The only reason I wouldn't be [an assistant principal] is because of my son in school. I wouldn't want to take him out of school. Especially the last couple of years of school and change schools [He graduates from high school in two years]. That is the only reason I wouldn't right now. After that, for me the sky is the limit.

Time can also limit people who want to pursue an administrative career. As high school teacher, Emily Brown understands the extraordinary commitment and responsibility that administrators assume. Emily explained why the long hours required of an assistant principal were not appealing to her, even now that her children had grown.

I would not be able to commit that much time. Of course my children are grown. When my children were younger there was absolutely no way. Now it is just my husband and I, empty nest, but even now it's like ooh time, too much time.

The compensation for the long hours often doesn't translate into financial reasons to pursue an assistant principal ship. Ava Williams is pursuing an administrative degree but the salary of an assistant principal has caused her to hesitate before accepting a job as an assistant principal. "When I looked at the pay scale and realized I would have to take a pay cut to become an assistant principal before becoming principal...that's been my biggest hold back through the whole process."

The increased time commitment and lack of financial compensation serve as barriers limiting female teacher leaders from considering the assistant principalship. The perspectives of the women interviewed echoed the research presented in the literature review (*NAESP Fact Sheet on the Principal Shortage*, n.d; Quinn, et al, 2004; Taylor, 2007).

Female teacher leaders considered how assuming a role as an assistant principal would impact their family, personal life, and wallet. The majority of the female teacher leaders interviewed viewed the sacrifice required of the assistant principal role to not be worth the additional time commitment for a minor pay increase or none at all.

### Results Summary

Using mixed methods research methods, this research study was designed to answer the question, “How do job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into positions as assistant principals?” Based on the data from the job simulation and the teacher interviews, the job description attribute of collaborative leadership, gender, age, and years of teaching experience all influenced teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description. These findings and their theoretical, practical and research implications will be discussed in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This mixed methods research study asked teachers from one rural North Carolina school district to respond to simulated job descriptions that focused on managerial or collaborative leadership. Female teacher perception about the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals were further examined by conducting one-on-one interviews with 15 teacher leaders from the same school district. The results of the findings from Chapter IV have implications for practice and future research designed to make assistant principal job description more attractive to potential future administrator.

#### Implications

##### Theoretical Implications

Examining the findings from theoretical frameworks of job choice theory and applicant attraction model, the findings mirrored the results from previous studies. Using the three job choice theory categories (objective, subjective, or critical contact), it was evident that all three theories had some application to questions about attractiveness to the assistant principalship (Behling, Labovits, & Gainer, 1968). Applying objective theory (job attractiveness), the job description attributes focusing on school management or collaborative leadership had a mixed influence. The job description attributes had no impact on participant

preference in the recruitment simulation; however when the interviewees were forced to make a choice between the two attributes during the one-on-one interviews, collaborative leadership was selected 87% of the time. Collaborative leadership was chosen by the majority of teacher leaders based on the appeal of group decision making and developing and maintaining relationships with students and colleagues. Critical contact theory, (emphasizing work climate and the expectations and requirements for a job) and subjective theory, (emphasizing a person's psychological motivation and knowledge of a job) had an even greater influence than objective theory for explaining factors related to teacher decisions to pursue an assistant principal position (Young, et. al, 1989). The expectations and requirements of the job (critical contact theory) had a significant impact on teacher leader attractiveness to the assistant principal job as evident in the teacher interview. Teachers found the idea of leaving their classrooms and the additional time commitments required of the position to be deterrents for pursuing the assistant principal job. Additionally, subjective theory proved to be a significant reason teachers found the job so unattractive. Teachers reported their own personal reasons for not wanting to assume the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principalship.

In similar studies applying job choice theory to job recruitment (Appiah-Padi, 2014; Partenheimer, 2002; Pounder and Merrill, 2001), subjective theory attributes of the job were also found to have the greatest impact on job desirability. Appiah-Padi (2014) explained further, “both CAOs [College Academic Officers] and principals/vice-principal were concerned about the nature of the role as well as the time demands and potential negative effects of the job on their quality of life” (p. 6). While subjective theory provided the best explanation in these previous studies, this research study also found critical contact theory

and objective theory to have a contributing explanation for teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description.

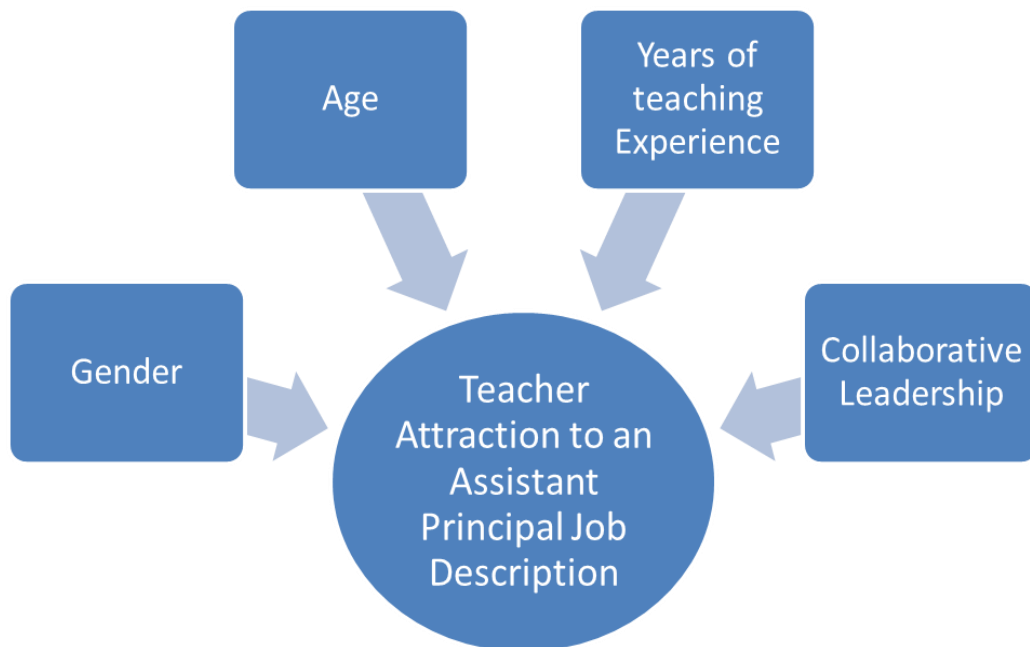
Rynes and Barber's (1990) applicant attraction model and Schwab's (1992) employment process models (as explained on pages 47 – 48) were also applied when considering whether the job attributes (managerial vs collaborative leadership) were important factors that influenced recruitment outcomes depending on applicant personal characteristics. Overall, teachers did not find one job attribute more attractive than the other, but when forced to choose collaborative leadership was overwhelmingly more attractive to female rural teacher leaders. The simulated vacancy attributes and the personal characteristics of the job applicant had little influence over participants' willingness to apply for, interview for, or accept a job; however, it was revealed age and years of teaching experience had a significant influence and gender had a slight influence over a teacher's attraction to an assistant principal job description.

Upon completing the data analysis, the conceptual framework presented in Chapter III was revised. The findings were applied to the theoretical frameworks and generated new insights. Gender, teaching assignment, and participating in teacher leadership opportunities were determined to not be overarching influences in the attractiveness to be an assistant principal as originally hypothesized. Instead, gender was found to serve as just one of factors that influenced teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description along with age, years of teaching experience and the job attribute of collaborative leadership. Teaching assignment and leadership participation were revealed to be non-factors, having no influence on teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description. Figure 2 illustrates how each of

the attributes should be considered when considering teacher attraction to an assistant principal job description.

Figure 2:

Impact of Gender, Teaching Assignment, and Teacher Leadership on Teacher Attraction to the Assistant Principal Job Description: Revised



This explanatory conceptualization and the research findings are important because school districts can use this information to design assistant principal recruitment efforts to address each of these factors and appeal to the largest group possible of highly qualified female candidates. Additionally, school districts, human resource departments, and school principals can consider this research when examining hiring practices, restructuring job descriptions, and exploring alternative leadership models to attract more females to the assistant principalship.

## Practical Implications

### Hiring.

Todd Whitaker (2003) states, “The quickest way to improve your school is to hire great teachers at every opportunity (p. 43). The research findings and literature review also support the idea of hiring great teachers can increase the number of qualified candidates for assistant principal positions. In this study, younger teachers and teachers with the fewest years of teaching experience were more likely to find the assistant principal job more appealing. When hiring teachers, administrators should “look for the teachers who will be exceptional in the classroom; but more than that, they look for those who will be influential in the school” (Whitaker, 2003, p. 44). Hiring teachers and supporting their leadership ability can greatly influence the number of future candidates interested in the assistant principalship. After hiring a teacher leader with the disposition for leadership, providing opportunities to assume leadership roles early in their career is a means to grow leadership potential.

In this study, a majority of the participants were female (78%), yet very few females expressed a willingness or interest to be an assistant principal. The findings in this study should encourage school districts and school principals to apply Pounder and Merrill’s (2001) recommendation to consider females as an “untapped resource” for administrative positions traditionally held by men (p. 49). To dispel the negative perspectives of teachers regarding the assistant principal job descriptions, recently hired female teachers should be nurtured early in their career by administrators, provided a positive glimpse of what it means to be an assistant principal, and encouraged by school leaders to pursue any interest in administration (Winter, Partenheimer & Petrosko, 2003). Also, school districts should be



encouraged to grow their own administrators based on specific leadership skills needed for their community (Versland, 2013).

#### Restructuring the job description and assignments.

The interview participants in this study preferred a job description that favored collaborative leadership over school management when forced to choose between the two attributes; however, in the recruitment simulation no significant difference was determined between the two attributes. These findings suggest that male or female teachers are generally not interested in an assistant principal position regardless of the two attributes presented; however, only when female teacher leaders were compelled to choose, then leading collaboratively was deemed to be the better choice. These findings are important for school districts as they consider restructuring the assistant principal job description. Throughout the one-on-one interviews, teachers repeatedly mentioned their preference for shared decision making, remaining in the classroom, and building relationships with others.

School districts should incorporate these findings into rewriting assistant principal job descriptions. Job description attributes, with some effort and flexibility, could vary based on each candidate's leadership preferences and strengths. Additionally, schools with multiple assistant principals could divide the roles and responsibilities based on individual preferences and abilities. Teacher leaders and other school personnel could also be utilized to reduce the assistant principal job responsibilities (such as discipline and testing) and free up more time for building positive relationships with students and "creating learning environments that enhance student achievement" (Pounder & Crow, 2005, p. 59). Based on the findings, school districts should increase attractiveness to the assistant principal job description by creating

partnerships between administrators to share responsibilities and implementing flexible work hours that vary the work day to limit the long hours required of the position.

Job assignments for assistant principals can also be addressed to increase teacher interest in the position. Avery Walker, a middle school teacher, made the suggestion that school districts eliminate assistant principal positions that are split between multiple schools. She found this element of the job to be very unappealing. “I know several... assistant principals at one school, but they [assistant principals] are also shared with another school due to the population. I think that would make it much, much harder.” It appears assigning assistant principals to only one school is one way school districts could reduce the stress and negativity associated with the assistant principal position.

#### Alternative leadership organization.

During the teacher interviews the desire to remain in the classroom was a significant reason teachers were unwilling to pursue administrative opportunities. These results suggest the importance of school districts exploring ways for teachers to assume assistant principal positions while remaining in the classroom. The development of a teacher-assistant principal job description may be one way to address this need. In the Beltramo (2014) study, teacher-APs were observed to have “substantial involvement in both faculty life and administration” (p. 129). This new role would permit teachers to continue to pursue their commitment to teacher efficacy, while also serving as an assistant principal. Adopting this leadership model would permit teachers to still teach and work with students, while having an influence over the entire school community. Beltramo (2014) suggests the use of teacher-AP (assistant principals) to foster the growth of potential candidates for a principalship; however, it is

important that when implementing this type of hybrid role, school districts make adjustments to salary and teacher job responsibilities. This new role would not be more appealing to potential administrative candidates if it increased the workload of a traditional teacher without compensation (Williams, 2007).

### Future Research

This research study was conducted in one school district in rural North Carolina. There is a need for future research on the assistant principal position to examine a wide range of school communities such as rural districts in other states, urban school districts, and/or suburban school districts. Additionally, the participants in this study completed a job recruitment simulation on two job attributes. Other job attributes that may prove to be influential in attracting female assistant principals to the assistant principal job description may include alternative leadership styles, specific instructional roles and responsibilities, educational requirements, job benefits, and possibly school environments. These attributes should be investigated to determine if they have significance in the recruitment of women in the assistant principalship. More specifically, research may consider how gender-specific barriers such as motherhood, child care, home/work balance, and social isolation impact female attraction to assistant principal job descriptions (Jordan, 2012). Future studies could utilize qualitative research to learn more about teacher perspective on recruitment and hiring practices, specific roles and responsibilities teacher leaders would want to be omitted or included in an assistant principal job description to make it more attractive, and ways for teachers to assume assistant principal roles while remaining in their classrooms. Analysis of

actual job descriptions, job advertisements, and assistant principal interview questions may also prove worthy of future research studies. Such further studies may reveal more attractors.

This study revealed the need for additional research on the impact of age and teaching experience on teacher attraction to the assistant principal job description. The following possible research questions were exposed and not answered by this study, “Do teachers begin their teaching career already programmed with the desire to pursue administration? Does increased time teaching in a classroom negatively impact the attraction to the assistant principalship? How do female leadership dispositions or participation in leadership opportunities early in career impact the desire to be an assistant principal?” These questions demonstrate a need for additional quantitative and qualitative research in this area.

### Conclusion

This mixed methods study employed critical choice theory and applicant attraction and employment process models to investigate how job descriptions impact the recruitment of women into positions of assistant principals. Previous empirical research and literature from business and educational sectors provided the framework for the design of this study (Appiah-Padi, 2014; Natarella, 2008; Partenheimer, 2002; Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Winter, Partenheimer, Petrosko, 2003). The major findings in this study indicate a teacher’s age and years of teaching experience are the most significant factors that influence a teacher’s willingness to pursue an assistant principal position. Further, the research revealed a significant connection between gender and the job attribute of collaborative leadership that impacted the attraction to an assistant principal job description. These findings reveal

potential implications for future research in regards to hiring practices, recruitment policies, and future studies related to the assistant principal position.

Despite all the perceived unappealing aspects related to the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal job description, there continue to be female teacher leaders who express a passion for pursuing an assistant principal position. These female leaders serve as potential pioneers and the voices needed to transform the assistant principalship to be more appealing to others. Avery Walker, a middle school teacher leader, expressed her minority point of view about why she is one of a few female teacher leaders that is interested in pursuing an AP position, saying:

I like building up relationships with students and you get to know students on a really personal level as an assistant principal... that you don't always get in the classroom all the time. Even though I deal with my students every single day, there is a lot that even I miss sometimes. As an assistant principal you get to meet and you get to know the parents, as well as the students really well. Students really open up to authority figures a lot more of the time then they do with teachers.

Given the importance of the assistant principal position in leading schools, as well as being the gateway into school administration, this research reveals the urgency for researchers and school districts to continue to investigate ways to make the assistant principalship more attractive to a larger group of candidates. Only by having the best candidates working in our schools, can all students be successful.

## Appendix A:

### Definition of Terms

#### *Assistant Principal*

In this paper, the term assistant principal will refer to a school administrative position that works under the direction of a school principal and only performs administrative duties. An assistant principal will not have any responsibilities as a classroom teacher. An assistant principal may work in an elementary or secondary school with common tasks such as student discipline, parent conferences, and working with teachers (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

#### *Collaborative Leadership*

Collaborative leadership involves administration, staff, students, parents, and the community working together towards a common vision to improve a school community. “The ultimate goal of collaborative leadership is to create democratic learning communities in which power is shared and there is a mutual belief in working together for the common good” (Kochan & Reed, 2005, p. 72).

#### *Competent*

Competent refers to the knowledge, skills, and experiences an assistant principal must possess and master to be successful in an administrative position. “Real competencies” are skills that are actually performed by public school assistant principals on the job and “ideal competencies are skills that should be performed by assistant principals in order for them to be most effective (Norton & Kriekard, 1987, p. 29).

#### *Diversity*

For the purposes of this paper diversity includes the characteristics of gender, race, age, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as diversity in professional and cultural experiences and leadership styles.

#### *Formal Job Description*

For the purpose of this paper, a formal job description will refer to a published document provided by a school system or school principal. The job description may include aspects such as, “a detailed breakdown of responsibilities, to whom the worker reports, ways to measure the person’s effectiveness, how the worker will spend his time, his authority within the organization, the competencies, background and experience required” (Frouschheiser, 2007, p. 14).

#### *Informal Job Description*

An informal job description in this paper will describe all aspects of a job not included in a formal job description. According to Marshall and Hooley (2006), an assistant principal job description is often vague and inconsistent. In addition to the responsibilities written into the formal job description, assistant principals must also complete additional tasks as needed throughout a school day or school year. These additional job responsibilities are often inconsistent, time consuming, and not well-defined. The expectations of the informal job description can be difficult to document and measure during a job performance review.

#### *Professional Socialization*

Professional socialization refers to “the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavioral orientations” required to understand and successfully perform the role (Marshall & Greenfield, 1987, p. 37, see also Cantwell, 1993).

### *Recruitment*

In this paper, “recruitment includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (Barber, 1998, p. 44).

### *Risk Taking*

In this paper, risk taking refers to the innovative actions an assistant principal takes that may expose them to professional injury or loss. In addition, risk taking describes the courage to stand by conviction and do what is necessary to promote change within yourself, your school, and the educational organization (Johnson, 2008).

### *School Management*

School management refers to “maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements.” Managers often exhibit leadership skills; however, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change (Cuban, 1988, p. 193, see also Bush, 2008; Weller & Weller, 2002). For this research, school management refers to daily school operations such as student discipline, school building maintenance, supervision of staff, etc. School management is not working collaboratively with the school community toward a common vision.

### *Supportive Policies*

Supportive policies are “comprehensive statements of decision, principle, or increase of action” that sustain and assist employees in demanding job roles (Webb & Norton, 2009).

### *Teacher Leader*

Teacher leaders are classroom teachers that assume leadership roles in addition to their instructional responsibilities. Teacher leaders take initiative to “influence their



colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 287, see also Fullan, 1994). School leaders often serve in roles such as school leadership team member, new teacher mentor, professional development provider, department chair, etc.

#### *Traditional Assistant Principal Job Description*

A traditional assistant principal job description is a written document that assigns general and vague managerial responsibilities to the position. Aspects pertaining to collaborative leadership, instructional leadership, and transformational leadership are rarely included or not at all.

#### *Transformational Leader*

In this paper, a transformational leader is one who has an explicit vision to transform a school and possesses the leadership skills to promote positive change (Johnson, 2008). Particularly, a transformational leader engages others in such a way that “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.”

#### *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader*

A 21<sup>st</sup> century leader is a leader who understands, models, and supports instructional systems related to 21st century standards, assessments, curriculum, instruction, professional development and learning environments to ensure mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media skills (P21 Framework Definitions, n.d.).

## Appendix B:

### Subject Informed Consent

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
Adult Participants**

**IRB Study # 15-0270**

**Title of Study:** The Role of Job Descriptions in the Recruitment of Female Assistant Principals

**Principal Investigator:** Heather Seawell

**Principal Investigator Department:** School of Education Deans Office

**Principal Investigator Phone number:** 9104643077

**Principal Investigator Email Address:** hwright@email.unc.edu

**Faculty Advisor:** Catherine Marshall

**Faculty Advisor Contact Information:** (919) 260-0632

**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

You are invited to participate in a research study on the job descriptions and responsibilities of assistant principals. The study seeks to learn more about how teachers react to hypothetical assistant principal job descriptions in a simulated job application setting.

All information gathered will be anonymous and remain confidential. If the data collected in this research study is published, your identity will not be revealed. You are free to refuse or withdraw your consent at any time.

**How many people will take part in this study?**

There will be approximately 150 people in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

You can expect to spend no more than 20 minutes completing an anonymous demographic information sheet, reviewing a simulated job description, and completing a hypothetical job evaluation form. You may be asked to take part in an additional one-on-one interview session that will not last more than 30 minutes.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**

In this study you will be asked to you will be asked to:

1. Complete an anonymous demographic information sheet
2. Review a simulated job description for a hypothetical assistant principal position.
3. Complete a job evaluation form.

Additionally, 15 teachers, identified by their principal, will be invited to participate in a one-on-one interview session.

You may choose not to answer a question for any reason.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. There is little chance you will benefit from being in this research study.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**

There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**What if we learn about new findings or information during the study?**

You will be given any new information gained during the course of the study that might affect your willingness to continue your participation.

**How will information about you be protected?**

Survey participants will remain anonymous throughout this research study. All demographic information and survey documents collected will be labeled and kept in a locked file cabinet when not being studied. No individually identifiable data will be collected.

Interview participants will be assigned a participant number and audio recorded. The linkage file will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet separate from the research data. Audio files will be numerically labeled and kept locked to ensure confidentiality. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms will be assigned for all names (school, individuals, city, county, etc.) included in the data.

Interview participants may request to turn off audio recording at any time during the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ OK to record me during the study

\_\_\_\_\_ Not OK to record me during the study

Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?**

You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**

It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions about the study (including payments), complaints, concerns, or if a research-related injury occurs, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to [IRB\\_subjects@unc.edu](mailto:IRB_subjects@unc.edu).

**Participant's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

---

Signature of Research Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Research Participant

---

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Appendix C:  
Demographic Data

**Demographic Data**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Information on this form will remain confidential and anonymous. Please check one item below that best applies or fill-in the requested information.

**Background Data:**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Black (Non- Hispanic) \_\_\_\_\_ Native American  
\_\_\_\_\_ White (Non- Hispanic) \_\_\_\_\_ Asian  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Total Years of Teaching Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate your overall willingness to pursue a job as an assistant principal? (Circle the number that applies best)

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |                 |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Not at All<br>Willing |   |   |   |   |   |   | Very<br>Willing |
| 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |                 |

How would you rate your overall interest in earning an administrator certificate?  
(Circle the number that applies best)

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |                 |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Not at All<br>Willing |   |   |   |   |   |   | Very<br>Willing |
| 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |                 |

**Education:**

Highest Degree Earned: \_\_\_\_ BS/BA \_\_\_\_ MS/MA \_\_\_\_ EdS \_\_\_\_ EdD/PhD

Are you taking courses to earn administrator certification?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Have already earned my certificate

**Current Teaching Assignment:**

Current Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary School \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_\_\_ High School

Do you serve in leadership capacity at your school? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what leadership role do you serve? \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Committee Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_ School Improvement Team Member  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

From "Assistant principal recruitment: The effects of job attributes, job assignment, gender, and administrator program status" by P. R. Partenheimer (2002). Doctoral Dissertation, University of Louisville, Adapted with permission.

## Appendix D:

### Simulated Job Description #1

### Simulated Job Description

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** A position as assistant principal for hypothetical school X is described below. Assume the hypothetical job is located at the same school level (elementary school, middle school, high school) where you currently work. For the purposes of the simulation, assume you hold a valid North Carolina Administrator Certificate. After reading the job description, please evaluate the assistant principal position using the rating items on the job evaluation form of the following page.

---

#### ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JOB DESCRIPTION #1

**General Qualification:** A valid North Carolina Administrator Certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teacher experience. Good communication skills and organizational skills. A working knowledge of local, state, and federal policies.

**Reports to:** Principal

**Evaluated by:** Principal

**Terms:** 12 Months

**Primary responsibilities:** While the assistant principal assists the principal in supervising and coordinating staff and students, providing leadership, promoting a positive learning environment, the primary responsibilities for this particular position center on the specific responsibilities below:

1. Coordinate transportation (buses, car riders, walkers) services for school.
2. Inventory, distribute, and collect textbooks and instructional supplies.
3. Oversee building maintenance and custodial services.
4. Enforce district and school discipline policies.
5. Monitor student and staff attendance.
6. Promote school safety and security.
7. Serve as school testing coordinator.
8. Develop and implement supervision and duty schedules for staff.
9. Develop the school's master schedule.
10. Complete teacher evaluations.

From "Assistant principal recruitment: The effects of job attributes, job assignment, gender, and administrator program status" by P. R. Partenheimer (2002). Doctoral Dissertation, University of Louisville, Adapted with permission.

## Appendix E:

### Simulated Job Description #2

### Simulated Job Description

---

**INSTRUCTIONS:** A position as assistant principal for hypothetical school X is described below. Assume the hypothetical job is located at the same school level (elementary school, middle school, high school) where you currently work. For the purposes of the simulation, assume you hold a valid North Carolina Administrator Certificate. After reading the job description, please evaluate the assistant principal position using the rating items on the job evaluation form of the following page.

---

#### ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JOB DESCRIPTION #2

**General Qualification:** A valid North Carolina Administrator Certificate and a minimum of five years of successful teacher experience. Good communication skills and organizational skills. A working knowledge of local, state, and federal policies.

**Reports to:** Principal

**Evaluated by:** Principal

**Terms:** 12 Months

**Primary responsibilities:** While the assistant principal assists the principal in supervising and coordinating staff and students, providing leadership, promoting a positive learning environment, the primary responsibilities for this particular position center on specific responsibilities below:

- Partner with the principal to provide leadership to faculty and staff.
- Design programs to incorporate teachers and support staff into leadership and decision-making roles to promote career development.
- Participate with faculty in professional development activities.
- Establish collective decision-making processes to ensure that parents/ guardians, community members and staff members have autonomy to make school decisions.
- Work with a mentor to reflect upon leadership practice.
- Be an active member of the school district assistant principal professional learning committee.
- Assist the principal in establishing a collaborative work environment which promotes cohesion and cooperation among staff.
- Establish quality contact and interactions with teachers, students, parents, and the community.
- Facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge and skills.
- Partner with the school principal to limit long hours and distribute supervisory roles to limit extra-curricular supervision and evening events.

From “Assistant principal recruitment: The effects of job attributes, job assignment, gender, and administrator program status” by P. R. Partenheimer (2002). Doctoral Dissertation, University of Louisville, Adapted with permission.



Appendix F:

Assistant Principal Job Evaluation

**Assistant Principal Job Evaluation**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The purpose of this evaluation is to receive your personal evaluation of the assistant principal position described on the simulated job description you just read. Please **circle** the **one** number of each of the following questions that best reflects your reaction to the job described.

1. How likely would you be to **apply** for the assistant principal position described?

Very  
Unlikely  
To Apply

1

2

3

4

5

Very  
Likely  
To Apply

2. If offered, how likely would you be to **accept an interview** for the assistant principal position described?

Very  
Unlikely  
To Apply

1

2

3

4

5

Very  
Likely  
To Apply

3. If offered, how likely would you be to **accept a job offer** for the assistant principal position described?

Very  
Unlikely  
To Apply

1

2

3

4

5

Very  
Likely  
To Apply

From "Assistant principal recruitment: The effects of job attributes, job assignment, gender, and administrator program status" by P. R. Partenheimer (2002). Doctoral Dissertation, University of Louisville, Adapted with permission.

## Appendix G:

### Ethnographic Interview Questions for Teacher Leaders

#### (Spradley, Grand Tour Questions)

- I. What are your roles and responsibilities as a teacher leader?
- II. How would you describe your assistant principal's job description?
- III. Could you describe a typical day of an assistant principal at XXX School?

#### (Spradley, Mini-Tour Questions)

- IV. Are there any specific responsibilities or duties required of assistant principals that you that you feel are overwhelming or unfair?

#### (Spradley, Experience Questions)

- V. Can you recall any times when you consider pursuing administration?
- VI. Can you recall why you may or may not be pursuing administration?
- VII. As a teacher leader, do you feel teachers would find a job description focusing on school management or on collaborative leadership more attractive?

## Appendix H:

### North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

#### Job Description

##### Job Descriptions

These job descriptions are a sampling from several adopted by the State Board of Education between 1984 and 1987 and were designed to correspond with the evaluation instrument. Local school systems can and often do modify the job descriptions to meet their individual needs. Please contact the school system in which you are interested for a finalized job description.

##### Assistant Principal

- Reports to Principal
- Supervises those assigned by Principal
- Purpose: The assistant principal serves as a member of the administrative team to develop and implement the total school program.
- Pre-Class Organization: assists to implement student orientation and registration activities.
- Planning the School Program: assists in the development and establishing of the school goals and objectives and the planning of the schools instructional program.
- Implementing the School Program: assists to provide direction to staff in implementing goals and objectives and interacts and meets with staff to assist in their development.
- Evaluation and Remediation of the School Program: assists in the evaluation of the school program and of staff and assists to initiate needed improvements.
- Involving the Staff in Budget Allocations: involves the staff in setting budget priorities.
- Keeping Professionally Competent: acts to upgrade own professional knowledge and skills.
- Coordinating Budgets and Schedules: assists in the preparation and management of budgets and schedules and in the coordination and implementation of the co-curricular program.
- Handling Disciplinary Procedures: assists to define and disseminate information about school disciplinary policies and procedures to parents, students, staff and community.
- Coordinating and Communicating the Schools Formal Structure: communicates and carries out established policies, delegates and accepts responsibility for completion of tasks and communicates program goals, objectives and policies to the community.

- Coordinating School Services and Resources: assists in supervising and maintaining auxiliary services and uses community resources to supplement the school program.
- Facilitating Organizational Efficiency: promotes and maintains open communications, positive student attitudes, respects dignity, worth of staff, students, and complies with established lines of authority.
- Assisting in Record Keeping: assists in completion of records and reports and in the supervision and inventory of necessary supplies, textbooks, equipment and materials.

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/work4ncschools/employment/jobdescrip/>

## Appendix I:

### An Example of a Small Rural School District's Job Description

**Title:** Assistant Principal

**Reports to:** Principal

**Terms of Employment:** 10, 11 or 12 months

**Salary:** State Salary Schedule plus local supplement

**Qualifications:** • Classroom Teaching Experience required  
• Eligibility for North Carolina Principal Licensure required

**Supervises:** Will supervise as assigned by the principal

**Essential Job Functions:**

1. Assists in the implementation of student orientation, registration and scheduling
2. Assists in ensuring that the district mission statement is carried out and that the School Improvement Plan is adhered to by all stakeholders of the school
3. Assists in the evaluation of the school program and of staff and assists to initiate needed improvements by using the TPAI-R instrument, adopted by the State of North Carolina
4. Assists the principal in involving the staff in setting budget priorities.
5. Acts to upgrade own professional knowledge and skills.
6. Assists in the preparation and management of budgets and schedules and in the coordination and implementation of the co-curricular program
7. Uses and promote technological tools
8. Assists to define and disseminate information about school disciplinary policies and procedures to parents, students, staff and community
9. Communicates and carries out established policies, delegates and accepts responsibility for completion of tasks and communicates program goals, objectives and policies to the community.
10. Assists in supervising and maintaining auxiliary services and uses community resources to supplement the school program
11. Promotes and maintains open communications, promotes positive student attitudes, respects dignity, worth of staff, students, and complies with established lines of authority
12. Assists in completion of records and reports and in the supervision and inventory of necessary supplies, textbooks, equipment and materials
13. Performs other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the supervisor

## Assistant Principal Physical and Cognitive Requirements

The major physical and cognitive requirements listed below are applicable to the Assistant Principal job classification.

Work in this classification is considered light physical work requiring the exertion of up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to move objects.

Must be able to:

- prepare, read and comprehend a variety of job related forms, reports, spreadsheets, maps, plans, records, documentation and correspondence in all languages required by the job
- understand and conform to all rules of punctuation, grammar, diction and style
- speak to individuals or groups of people with poise, voice control and confidence
- respond adequately to inquiries or complaints
- write using standard convention in all languages required by the job
- apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions
- apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral or diagrammatic form
- communicate effectively and efficiently in all languages required by the job using whatever communication device or system is required (telephone, Braille)
- use/interpret job related terminology, mathematical formulas and functions effectively and efficiently
- deal with people beyond giving and receiving instructions
- perform under stress, deal with persons acting under stress and adapt when confronted with emergency situations
- be sensitive to cultural differences among individuals and groups of persons
- operate a motor vehicle
- operate/use a variety of automated office machines and other office equipment
- operate/use a variety of printing/graphic arts machines
- operate/use a variety of audiovisual/electronic machines and devices
- operate/use a variety of communication machines/equipment/devices
- operate/use a variety of job specific machines/equipment

Source: Moore County Schools (2006). *Assistant Principal Job Description*. Retrieved from  
[http://schoolcenter.mcs.k12.nc.us/education/sctemp/d9db6bda9cda84c63197793d927ab50f/1197287524/Job\\_Description\\_-\\_Assistant\\_Principal.pdf](http://schoolcenter.mcs.k12.nc.us/education/sctemp/d9db6bda9cda84c63197793d927ab50f/1197287524/Job_Description_-_Assistant_Principal.pdf)

Appendix J:

Permission of Author for Use of Recruitment Simulation

**From:** Phil Partenheimer [<mailto:philp@wesc.k12.in.us>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 07, 2015 7:39 AM  
**To:** Heather Seawell  
**Subject:** RE: Request

Heather,

I give you my permission to adapt my recruitment simulation to use in your dissertation as long as you give proper credit to me in your citations.

Please send me a copy of your simulation when you complete it.

Good luck with your dissertation.

Phil

**Phil Partenheimer, Ed.D.**  
**Executive Director**  
**Wilson Education Center**  
**2101 Grace Avenue**  
**Charlestown, Indiana 47111**  
**812-256-8000 (Office)**  
**812-256-8012 (Fax)**

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**From:** Heather Seawell [<mailto:Heather.Seawell@montgomery.k12.nc.us>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 07, 2015 12:01 AM  
**To:** Phil Partenheimer  
**Subject:** Request

Dear Dr. Phil Partenheimer,

Thank you so much for speaking with me about your dissertation and my interest in your study the other day.

As we discussed, I am a doctoral student in educational leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a high school principal in Biscoe, NC. After an extensive review of literature related to job descriptions and the assistant principalship, I found your research especially interesting.

I am requesting your permission to adapt your recruitment simulation documents to use in my mixed methods dissertation. The recruitment simulation documents would be adapted to compare the attributes of managerial leadership versus collaborative leadership. In addition to the recruitment simulation, I will be completing ethnographic interviews with teacher leaders to further explore their perception of the assistant principalship. The mixed methods study would be on a much smaller scale than your dissertation, focusing on approximately 100 teachers in one rural school district in North Carolina.

I greatly appreciate your support in this endeavor,

Heather Seawell  
Principal  
East Montgomery High School  
(910) 428-9641



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