Teacher perceptions of the changing role of the secondary middle school principal

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Teacher Perceptions of the Changing Role of the Secondary Middle School Principal

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the greatest gift of all, the loves of my life, my children, Kasey Thomas and Christopher Lee. Their unconditional love has made this professional and educational goal possible. Their support and understanding meant more to me than they will ever realize. It is my hope that they now see that anything is possible if you work for it. I love you both beyond words.
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Teacher Perceptions of the Changing Role of the Secondary Middle School Principal

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to examine perceptions of middle school teachers regarding the changing role of the secondary middle school principal and compare teachers’ results with assistant principals’ and principals’ perceptions of their role, thus adding the voice of teachers, regarding the secondary principal’s role, to existing literature.

Data was collected electronically using the survey method in one urban Florida school district. Qualitative and quantitative data were captured using the Principal’s Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Goodwin, 2002). Thirty-six principal role descriptor statements on the PRQ survey requested a level of agreement from research participants regarding changes, current and future roles of the secondary principal. Four open ended comment requests allowed participants to comment on the principal’s role in those areas. Role descriptor statements were categorized into four areas: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, organizational leadership and political and community leadership.

Quantitative findings revealed that teacher perceptions regarding the secondary middle school principal’s role were significantly significant for only 14 of the 36 role descriptors when compared to principals’ scores. Teachers’ mean score ratings were lower than principals’ for all 36 PRQ items, however their scores were considered in agreement, as no score was lower than 2.52. Lower score ratings for all 36 PRQ items suggested somewhat of a disconnection between principals and teachers as to the principal’s role. Qualitative findings from teachers varied from an understanding of the principal’s role to suggestions for the principal.

Further research is needed to determine secondary principal role expectations that are important and desired by secondary teachers.
Chapter One

“The future of American Education can be no brighter than the future of the…school principalship.”

NAESP, (1990, p. 45)

Introduction

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) are concerned that there is, and will continue to be, a principal shortage. There are many articles about schools with principal positions they cannot fill, retired principals being called back to full-time service, and districts being forced to go to great lengths to recruit qualified candidates (Educational Research Service (ERS), 1998 & 1999). Many of the state affiliates of the two national groups (NASSP, NAESP) consider the lack of qualified principal candidates to be a serious problem in their respective states (ERS, 1999; Koerner & Sava, 2001; Whitaker, 2001). The principal’s position is as challenging as ever due to accountability requirements, serious safety and security issues, unending demands for time, poverty, prejudice, disadvantage, and legislation, all of which contributes to the shortage of candidates (National Policy Board Educational Administration (NPBEA), 2001; Shen, Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2000).

The principal shortage is a complex issue and the literature is abundant with astonishing facts and statistics about the shortage, the most alarming was that an estimated one-half of all public school principals were eligible to retire during the 1990s (ERS, 1998, 1999). On the other hand, much research points to the existence of an...
adequate number of persons certified to fill current and future positions, however, the
problem is a lack of quality applicants, not quantity of applicants (Bottoms & O’Neill,
2001; Dituri, 2004; Kolek, 2002; Portin, 2000). The National Center for Educational
Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting
data related to education in the United States and other nations. NCES (2007) indicates
that there were 19,700 public secondary principals in 2003-2004 compared to 18,300 in
1993-1994. Of the 19,700 public secondary principals, 74% were male and 26% were
female. Fifty-seven percent were over age 50 and 29% were between the ages of 40 and
49. Comparatively, the over 50 group increased by 11% over the ten year period and the
40-49 age group decreased by 23%. In 2003-2004, 70% of principals had 10 years or less
experience as a principal compared to 65% in 1993-1994. This data supports the current
trends in the literature concerning the principal shortage.

The message in the literature is clear that school systems today are dynamic,
complex organizations who cater to many constituent groups and who also serve a very
diverse student population, making the work of today’s school leader more intricate and
challenging (Fullan, 1997; Gupton, 2003; Lyons, 1999; Shellard, 2003). Many potential
candidates for the position feel there is a significant disconnect between the rewards of
the job and the wear and tear imposed on the lives of the persons who occupy the
position. Another contributing reason is that teachers are opting to stay in the classroom
as a result of achieving National Board Certification status, which provides financial
incentives for a period of ten years, bringing their salaries closer to that of an
administrator (Dituri, 2004; NPBEA, 2001).
Fullan (1997) suggested that discussion of the complexity of the principalship should not be based on the assumption “that the position is rational and the work is linear, for, in reality, it is inherently, ineluctably, hopelessly nonlinear” (p.x). The successive waves of school reform have put more demands on the principals, making the job more complex which has lessened the appeal of the position. Principals are accountable for all aspects of the school and many principals and principal candidates feel that the job just isn’t realistic and that they lack the authority and skills they need to make meaningful change (Harris, Arnold, Lowery & Crocker, 2000; Lyons 1999). To do the job well, the principal must be a skilled instructional leader, change initiator, manager, personnel director, problem solver, and visionary, and there is little doubt that trying to be proficient at all of these roles has contributed to the shortage of qualified candidates (Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Fullan, 1997; Harris et. al, 2000).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has strongly influenced the role of principals by requiring them to make data-driven decisions and implement programs that are research based in order to bring every child up to grade level by the year 2013 (United State Department of Education (USDE), NCLB: A Desktop Reference, 2002). The intent of NCLB was to improve student achievement and to change the culture of America’s schools (Jackson, 2004). NCLB embodies four key principles: stronger accountability for results, local control, expanded options for parents and an emphasis on teaching qualifications and methods (USDE, NCLB, 2002). Americans believe that quality education is fundamental to the economic well being of the nation and the
democratic foundation of society (Gullatt & Ritter, 2000). As a result of this belief, efforts to strengthen public education have been unfolding throughout the United States. Accountability in education has been a focus of governments and educational authorities, and schools are held accountable for both the effective teaching of students and for implementation of polices (Forster, 1999). It is extremely evident in this era of standards and accountability that the principal’s role is critical in terms of the overall success of a school, leaving no doubt that the job is extremely complex and demanding, requiring new skills for today’s school leaders (Harris, et al, 2000; Lin, Sherman & Gill, 2007).

Principal positions are generally filled from the assistant principal ranks and most assistant principals have classroom teaching experience. If principal vacancies continue to remain difficult to fill, it is important to know how the teachers and assistant principals perceive the role of the principal. It is also just as important to examine how principals perceive their roles, how they’ve changed and for them to have an understanding of the perceptions of the constituent groups that they lead.

*Significance of the Study*

Today’s schools serve an increasingly diverse student population with many academic and non-academic needs which caused the principalship to evolve into a very different job from the principalship most often associated with the early and mid-1900s. The position is considered more important than ever as schools face a myriad of issues, many of which are different from anything principals have had to deal with in the past or been trained for (ERS, 2000; Gupton, 2003). The federal government as well as states
and school districts, have raised standards for student learning as a result of many reform efforts, most recently being the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Tirozzi (2003) through his research identified six key events that were significant political pressure points for principals (1) The enactment of Title I, which is now a major component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), (2) The 1975 enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), (3) The 1983 publication of *A Nation At Risk*, (4) The Goals 2000 initiative of the late 1980s, (5) The standards movement of the mid 1990s, (6) The accountability/high stakes testing initiatives of the past few years (p.55).

Each reform effort increased expectations and responsibilities for the school principal. National and state public policy and politics continue to drive the educational agenda and Tirozzi (2003) asserts that principals need to step up and embrace reform, being leaders in the process; “administering a school in an environment that is politically motivated is not a spectator sport – it needs active participants” (Tirozzi, 2003, p.59).

Scholars and practitioners of educational administration believe that principals can affect virtually all aspects of school life, making today’s principal a key determinant of a school’s effectiveness and level of student achievement (Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Ferrandino & Terozzi, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000; Gupton, 2003; Lyons, 1999; Millette, 1994; NASSP, 1988). “Every educational reform report of the 1980s concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders” (National Commission for the Principalship, 1990, p.9). The Commission further elaborates:
Principals provide leadership to schools along two dimensions. Exercising broad leadership, they influence school cultures by building a vision, stimulating innovation, and encouraging performance. Principals also exercise initiative in a more technical sense by the daily practice of functional leadership. They “make things happen” and ensure that the organization’s tasks are accomplished (Principals for Our Changing Schools, The National Commission for the Principalship, p. 21).

The role of competent, innovative, and ethical leaders remains a cornerstone of school effectiveness and improvement (Portin, 2000). Expectations for principals are as varied and conflicting as the groups that hold them (Portin, 2000). These views are formed by differing perceptions of leadership, management, priorities, style, education, politics, economics, and other factors. Successful leaders need to have the skills to deal with these incompatible expectations from both internal and external sources (Goens, 1998).

The professional literature is abundant with research regarding the principal’s changing role, from managerial to that of instructional leader (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; ERS, 1999; Gupton, 2003; Mackler, 1996; Stronge, 1993). Instructional leadership has been associated with supervision, staff development, and curriculum development to improve student achievement, however more recently Blasé and Blasé (2004, p. 11) describe instructional leadership as defined by Sheppard’s (1996) interpretation of the literature as, “interactions between leaders and followers wherein the followers’ beliefs and perceptions are viewed as important.” Successful, effective schools have strong
instructional leaders who monitor whether the best teaching methods are being used and student learning is taking place (Glatthorn, 2000).

Perceptions of the secondary principal’s role have been extensively written about and this study may add to the literature by including the teacher perceptions of the principals’ role and comparing the teacher perceptions to the administrator groups (principal and assistant principal). Researchers and scholars seem to agree that the principal is the most pivotal position in the school, influencing the school’s success and the students’ achievement (Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Ferrandino & Terozzi, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000; Gupton, 2003; Lyons, 1999; Millette, 1994; NASSP, 1988). Given the importance of the role of principal, this study may be of value to those persons who establish the expectations for the principalship and regulate schools. This study may also provide valuable information to principals as they work to create a climate of collegiality and teamwork in their schools. In addition it may also be beneficial to those who work with aspiring principals or mentor new principals so they have a better understanding of the stakeholders they serve. The local school board may find the information useful as they move to approve policy concerning the principalship that could place even more demands on principals and their time. Although this is a local study, it could be useful to the principals’ professional organization, The National Association of Secondary School Principals, as they further study the secondary principalship in the future. Finally, the study may be of value to principals as they plan for school improvement as well as professional and personal growth. The results may also assist principals in understanding the importance of building relationships with their teachers, assistant principals and
varied constituent groups. The qualitative as well as quantitative data analysis could help increase their understanding of their role by more clearly explicating the challenging, complex, and sometimes chaotic role they have.

**Purpose**

The literature is scant, if not non-existent, on the teachers’ perception of the role of the principal. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers on the changing role of middle school principal and compare with the principals and assistant principals perceptions of the changing role of the middle school principal.

**Research Questions**

The research questions addressed in this study were:

Question 1. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 2. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 3. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

These questions provided the framework for analyzing the participant responses to the opened ended comment questions in the Principal’s Role Questionnaire.

**Method**

This study used a mixed method approach and was a document analysis only. Quantitative data was obtained from three different research groups: teachers, assistant principals and principals using the Principal’s Role Questionnaire (Goodwin, 2002).
Qualitative data was obtained from the open ended comment statements at the end of each category of questions: changes, current, future.

The Principal’s Role Questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed and validated by Dr. Rebecca Goodwin, Marshall University. Permission was obtained to use the questionnaire from Dr. Goodwin. Goodwin conducted a national survey in 2002 to examine the changing role of the secondary principal. Goodwin used the Delphi technique to engage expert principals, those principals who were 2000-2001 Met-Life National Association of Secondary School Principals state high school principals of the year, in three rounds of electronic conversation and rating activities. As a result, the expert panel of principals identified 45 descriptors for the changing role of the principal. Goodwin (2002) created the Principal’s Role Questionnaire using the 45 descriptors and a Likert scale that indicated a confidence level for each of the descriptors. The questionnaire was sent out to 375 secondary principals who were members of NASSP. A moderate to high level of confidence for each descriptor was obtained from the 109 principals who participated in the study. Principals were the focus of Goodwin’s study and this study was different in that it also included teachers and assistant principals.

The survey method was used in this study as it provided both quantitative and qualitative data as well as ease of access and administration. Statistical analyses were run on the quantitative data using SPSS 14. A content analysis was conducted on the responses of the open ended questions and patterns and themes were identified. “Content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and
meanings” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). “Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge from the data, through the analyst’s interactions with the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 453).

A purposeful sample was used in the study. According to Patton (2002) purposeful sampling “illustrates characteristics of particular subgroups of interest; facilitates comparisons” (p.244). Every teacher, assistant principal and principal in all 22 middle schools in an urban Florida school district were invited to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire.

Limitations of the Study

This study was restricted to one school district in an urban school district in Florida restricting sample size to 22 middle schools. For the purpose of this study a middle school is a school that serves grades six through eight. Based on the sample size, nationwide generalizations would be limited. The district where the study took place is the 23rd largest in the nation, 7th in the state of Florida,. The structure of the principalship in this particular district may influence the responses from the participants as it may be the only administrative experience of the participant. At the time of the study, the researcher was a principal in the district which could be considered a limitation as well as an advantage to the study. Data were gathered using only a single instrument for a very complex problem.

Definition of Terms

Cultural Leadership: Tending to the symbolic resources of the school: its climate, traditions, and history (Portin, 2003).
External Development Leadership: Representing the school in the community, developing capital, tending to public relations, recruiting students, buffering and mediating external interests, and advocating for the school’s interests (Portin, 2003).

Human resources Leadership: Recruiting, hiring, firing, inducting, and mentoring teachers and administrators; developing leadership capacity and professional development opportunities (Portin, 2003).

Instructional Leader: Ensuring quality of instruction, modeling teaching practices, supervising curriculum, and ensuring quality of teaching resources (Portin, 2003).

Managerial Leadership: Overseeing the operations of the school (its budget, schedule, facilities, safety and security, and transportation) (Portin, 2003).

Micro-political Leadership: Buffering and mediating internal interests while maximizing resources (financial and human) (Portin, 2003).

Middle School: Schools that serve grades six, seven, and eight (Pinellas County Schools).

Principalship: The principal’s position or job in a school.

Strategic Leadership: Promoting vision, mission, and goals and developing a means to reach them (Portin, 2003).

Stakeholders: The groups of individuals that have an interest in a school or schools (Svendsen, 1998).

Survey/Questionnaire: The Principal’s Role Questionnaire (Goodwin, 2002).

Summary

It is evident that the demands on our schools, including our teachers, administrators and support staff, are immense and continue to increase and change in a
way that no one could have predicted. Resources are scarce and there seems to be a state of fiscal uncertainty where education is concerned. Schools today serve more diverse, complex student populations who have many special needs that are academic as well as non-academic in nature, challenging everyone on the school campus and taking time away from instruction. Principals must be managers of their buildings but more importantly they must be instructional leaders, a role that some principals do not feel comfortable with or feel they have time for. This comes at a point in time when there is tremendous pressure on schools to meet the accountability standards of NCLB and teachers, as well as principals, are feeling the stress. Administrators across the United States recognize that the education system needs fundamental changes to keep pace with an increasingly complex global society (Anderson, 1993; Murphy, 2001). Change can be difficult as stakeholders in the system tend to see change primarily from their own perspective and it has been noted that stakeholders want change, but in reality don’t want anything to change (McGuire, 2001). Principals need the skills, knowledge, and resources to deal with all the expectations, whether perceived or real, logical or illogical, so they are able to address them effectively and successfully. This is the non-rational world of the secondary principal, a world of complexity and nonlinearity (Fullan, 1997). Katz (1974), a renowned author of management theory, in the article *Skills of an Effective Administrator*, stated that the selection and training of good administrators is one of the most pressing problems in American Industry. Katz is noted for his “three skills approach” (p. 3) to management: technical, human and conceptual, all which he states can be developed and are not necessarily inborn. Katz contends that everything a leader
does falls into one of these three categories and clearly the work of school leaders falls under his management approach, therefore making understanding the perceptions of the people that principals lead both a conceptual and human skill that are critical, in this ever changing time of accountability and uncertainty.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 1, a brief review of the literature revealed that the perceptions of teachers of the changing role of the principal was absent from the literature. Research questions were identified along with The Principal’s Roe Questionnaire (Goodwin, 2002) as a method of data collection. The study used purposeful sample which limits the generalizability of the study. Chapter 2 presents a literature review regarding the history, traditional roles, current conditions and preparation of the principalship. Chapter 3 discusses the data collection and method of analysis. Chapter 4 presents the data and the themes and patterns that emerge. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the findings and recommendations for future research.
Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

“The single most important factor in determining the climate of an organization is the top executive.”

Charles Galloway

Introduction

Researchers, policy makers, and educational practitioners agree; principals are the keystone of good schools (Educational Research Service (ERS), 2000; Fullan, 2002; Olson, 2000; Portin, 2003; Shellard, 2003). The building principal is considered the pivotal position in American public schools and this challenging position requires persons with exceptional ability, energy, and commitment (Blasé & Kirby 2000; Bloom, 1999; Chirichello, 2004; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; ERS, 2000; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Kennedy, 2002; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2001). The review of literature clearly points to the principal’s office and its importance in terms of school success (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Cuban, 1986; Harris, 2004; McEwan, 2003; Olson, 2000; Stronge, 1993; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001). “Effective school leadership, in the form of a dedicated, skilled principal, is a key element in creating and maintaining high-quality schools” (Cusick, 2003, p. 1). Some researchers compare the principalship to that of a Corporate Executive Officer (CEO) (Hollar, 2004). The students are referred to as the principals’ clients and the principal, like a company president, encourages innovation, teamwork and risk-taking by his staff
(Cuban, 1986; Hollar, 2004). Fenwick and Pierce (2001) argue that great principals are master teachers with expert knowledge in teaching strategies, curriculum content, classroom management, and child development. There are also many researchers who will argue that the principal, being the instructional leader, is the key ingredient to effective and high performing schools, making it the most important position in the school (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Chirichello, 2004; Glatthorn, 2000; Gupton, 2003; Harris, 2004; McEwan, 2003; Peterson, 2001; Tirozzi, 2000; Wanzare & DaCosta 2001).

According to Fullan, (1997) much focus has been placed on the principal’s leadership, however, “despite all the attention on the principal’s leadership we appear to be losing ground, if we take as our measure of progress the declining presence of increasingly large numbers of highly effective, satisfied principals” (p.1). The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) further stated:

Schools nationwide are grappling with serious problems ranging from random outbreaks of violence and crumbling facilities to staff shortfalls and chronically low academic expectations for students, but many people believe that a scarcity of capable education leaders ranks among the most severe of the problems. Without strong leaders, schools have little chance of meeting any other challenge (2000, p.1).

Researchers have addressed the lackluster enthusiasm for the principal’s job and claim there is a shortage of candidates for the position (Chirichello, 2004; ERS, 1999; 2000; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Grubb & Flessa 2006; Norton, 2002). Two main themes
emerge for the shortage: there appears to be a shortage of qualified candidates and those who are qualified aren’t applying for vacant positions (Chirichello, 2004; Cusick, 2003; ERS, 1999; 2000; Klempen & Richetti, 2001; Norton, 2002; Olson, 2000). The principal shortage is nationwide and is particularly evident at the secondary level (Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Klempen & Richetti, 2001; Yerkes & Guaglione, 1998). The multitude of social problems and the scarcity of resources in urban areas have added to the difficulty of the principalship and have increased the reluctance of teachers to pursue a position which many believe is not doable (Chirichello, 2004; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Cusick, 2003; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; NPBEA, 2001; Portin, 2000). Kevin McGuire, Director of the Center for School Leadership at the University of New York, cites four reasons for the perceived principal shortage: (1) the fact that a large numbers of persons who went into education in the 1960s are now reaching retirement age, (2) the perception that preparation programs are not reflective of the reality of daily school administration, (3) the lack of incentives that would motivate teachers to move into administration, and (4) environment that is unforgiving and not very supportive (McGuire, 2001, p.14).

The reform efforts over the past 20 years, as well as social changes, have impacted the principalship (Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Murphy, 1994; Portin, 2000; Shen, Rodriguez & Rincones, 2000). Principals have reported that their job has changed both in the amount of work and complexity of the work (Delisio, 2006; ERS, 1999; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Norton, 2002; Portin, 2000). Portin (2000) recognized several themes in his study of the changing principalship over
the past 20 years which has led to a greater sense of frustration, pessimism, decline in morale and enthusiasm for principals. The themes included frustrations over a layering of responsibilities, the inability to find enough time to engage in perceived leadership activities of the school, ambiguity of authority, the complexity in problems encountered and in decision making (p. 499).

The objectives of this study were to research the perceptions and experiences of the principalship role, examine how the role has changed over the years, and examine teachers’, assistant principals’, and principals’ perceptions of the role of the principal.

History

The history of the principalship was not precisely documented so the actual date that the principal position became an entity all of its own is unclear (Rousmaniere, 2007). Rousmaniere (2007) suggests three reasons why the principal is missing from both the political history of school administration and the social history of schools. The first reason is that “histories of educational administration are written primarily by scholars with limited historical training in order to frame prescriptive guidance for contemporary school leaders” (p.3). A second reason that the principal has been neglected is that “historians of education have tended to encapsulate the entire field of school administration in the popular historical trope of the administrative progressive” (p.4). She suggests that in the late nineteenth century educational reformers were basically divided into two groups: pedagogical progressives who promoted a child-centered, humanistic approach to education, and administrative progressives who advocated for the development of school systems driven by values of fiscal economy and organizational
accountability. Rousmaniere’s third reason why historians have overlooked the principalship is personal bias against them. She suggests that most of us remember a teacher that inspired us but we tend to remember the principal only for unfortunate, less pleasant reasons.

The word principal was used as early as 1841 in a report Horace Mann wrote to the Massachusetts School Board and it was used as an adjective to describe what the role function was (Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985). Horace Mann, considered the Father of American Education, is credited for providing the leadership behind the common school movement which led to tax supported compulsory schools (Bookbinder, 1992; Cremin, 1957; Matthews & Crow 2003; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985).

Teachers were responsible for running the one room schoolhouses in those days which included taking care of all administrative, janitorial and clerical tasks (Bookbinder, 1992; Matthews & Crow 2003; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985; Rousmaniere, 2007). Schools eventually grew larger and so did the responsibilities of the teacher. Schools designated a principal teacher or head teacher to take care of all the administrative tasks of the school and to serve as the leader of the school. The principal teacher at that time still taught in the classroom (Bookbinder, 1992; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985).

The term headmaster is also associated with the formation of the principalship. In the eighteenth century the term headmaster was in common use and the functions of the headmaster were similar to that of the head teacher (Bookbinder, 1992; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985). Headmasters took care of the administrative tasks of the school as did head teachers (Bookbinder, 1992; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985). As schools grew,
the need to have one person designated to be responsible for the operations of the school became apparent. The head teacher eventually became what we now know as the principal.

As towns grew larger, local school committees found that one and two teacher schools were inefficient, so smaller schools were combined. As the schools became larger, more authority was given to the head teachers. During the period of 1840-1870, school committees in the larger cities felt the need to delegate administrative responsibility. The first superintendents of schools were appointed in 1837 in Buffalo, New York, and in Louisville, Kentucky. Superintendents soon realized that the head teacher who also taught classes was not in a position to provide needed administrative assistance. The school principalship developed into an official staff post as the head teacher assumed increasing responsibility for the administration of the local school. As these head teachers were relieved of their teaching responsibilities, the word principal came into common use (Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985, p.2).

Most of the duties principals performed were clerical in nature prior to 1850. By 1900, the principal had become the manager of the school and assumed supervisory responsibilities to include supervision of instruction, instructional staff and staff development (Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985).

Bookbinder (1992) also identified several factors that contributed to the early development of the principalship.
1. The rapid growth of the cities during the 1850-1900 period and subsequent problems accompanying the schooling of an ever expanding school age population.

2. The introduction of new sets of management problems related to the coordination of pupils and curriculum.

3. The reorganization of schools and the consolidation of departments under a single administrative head.

4. The establishment of the position of a head assistant to free the principal from teaching responsibilities (p.10).

The newly established school principal was a mid-level executive responsible for day-to-day building operations rather than strategic policy decisions (Goodwin, Cunningham & Eagle, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2007). The principal’s position continued to evolve during the nineteenth century into what is now known as the modern day principal (Bookbinder, 1992; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985).

Of the many organizational changes that took place in public education in North America at the turn of the last century, few had greater impact on the school than the development of the principal. The creation of the principal’s office revolutionized the internal organization of the school from a group of students supervised by one teacher to a collection of teachers managed by one administrator. In its very conception, the appointment of a school-based administrator who was authorized to supervise other teachers significantly restructured power relations in
schools, realigning the source of authority from the classroom to the principal’s office. Just as significant was the role that the principal played as a school based representative of the central educational office. Created as a conduit between the district and the classroom, the principal became an educational middle manager in an increasingly complex school bureaucracy (Rousmaniere, 2007, p. 1).

Beck and Murphy (1993, p.202) assigned metaphorical themes to the general eras of the principalship based on evidence found in the literature: 1920s values broker, 1930s scientific manager, 1940s democratic leader, 1950s theory guided administrator, 1960s bureaucratic executive, 1970s humanistic facilitator, and 1980s instructional leader. The 1990s metaphorical theme could be the principal as a “learning organization catalyst” (Linn, Sherman & Gill, 2007, p. 164).

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of growth and change for the principalship as teacher unions were on the rise and collective bargaining agreements changed the basic nature of the principalship from that of colleague of teachers to a representative of the school board (Goodwin, 2002). Beck and Murphy (1993) also described the role of the principal in the 1960s as a role in conflict due to the civil rights movement and other protest movements.

Public education in the 1960s became front-page news as a battleground in the War on Poverty and the quest for racial equality. Across the land in the generation following Brown appeared major changes in public education: desegregation, federal aid to schools serving poor children,
dozens of state and federal categorical programs aimed at neglected populations, legislation guaranteeing racial and sexual equity, new entitlements for handicapped pupils, state laws demanding accountability and minimum standards for promotion and graduation, bilingual-bicultural programs, career education, and a host of other reforms large and small. The courts took an increasingly active role in school governance and finance. Teachers became more militant and well organized and won collective bargaining rights that preempted many traditional powers of school boards and superintendents (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, pp. 214-215).

These forces became and continue to be factors in the complex responsibilities of the building principal.

Beck and Murphy (1993) describe the 1970s as a period when the principal was described as a community leader, imparter of meaning, facilitator of positive relationships, and juggler of multiple meaning. Principals started dealing with issues that were non-academic in nature such as: teen pregnancy, drug abuse, alcoholism, decreasing attendance and were expected to provide leadership in solving these issues (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

The 1970s also were noted for the passage of 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Federal Public Law 94-142 Education for Handicapped Children Act (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)). Title IX required administrators to make sure that the schools were free of
gender inequalities. Federal Public Law 94-142 provided a free and appropriate public education for all handicap children in the least restrictive environment possible. Hallinger (1992) described the principal’s role during the 1960s and 1970s as one of program manager, as all these federal mandates required implementation and compliance.

The 1980s brought about three waves of reform beginning with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) which called for increased achievement and accountability (Goodwin, 2002). The second wave began in 1986 when *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) and *Time for Results* (National Governor’s Association, 1986) called for more teacher empowerment and restructuring of school governance and the third wave, beginning in the late 1980s, emphasized the involvement of teachers, parents, students, community members and business leaders in site-based school management (Goodwin, 2002). Snyder and Anderson (1986) wrote extensively about this movement of school improvement which involved all stakeholders in the management of the schools. School administrators may have a vision for the school, but so do the state, the local school board, parents, community members, and the central office. The administrator must move the school in the direction of combined expectations and visions (Snyder & Anderson, 1986).

Murphy (1998) described the principal of the 1990s as leader, servant, organizational architect, social architect, educator, moral agent, and person in the community. Murphy (1994) further claimed that principals who were working hard at school improvement and reform had a difficult task and their jobs became much more
demanding and difficult. “A nearly universal concern is the expanded work load
confronting principals in restructuring schools” (Murphy, 1994, p.95). McGuire (2001)
noted in his interview with Curriculum Review, that political pressure was great for
school improvement, however, it was wanted without having to make any changes. “To
really move forward, you have to shake the cage, and not everybody likes that” (p.1).
Goens, 1998, p. 103 concurred, “It appears everyone wants reform but no one wants to
change.” School improvement became filled with complicated bureaucratic
responsibilities and massive paperwork which left little creativity at the school level
(NASSP, 2001). The increased expectations for principals, along with balancing strong
leadership and shared power, as well as the need for increased resources created “role
overload and role ambiguity” for principals (Murphy, 1994, p. 95).

Dale Brubaker (1995), a Professor of Education at the University of North
Carolina, read the autobiographies of 500 principals he had taught in graduate classes
over the course of 20 years. He identified the following themes about the changes in the
principalship that emerged from those autobiographies over the 20 year period:

- The importance of access to information.
- Public accountability.
- An emphasis on quantitative measures (data).
- More controlled accounting practices.
- An increase in feminist and ethnic consciousness and career aspirations.
- Emphasis on curriculum and instruction.
- An increase in political involvement with both school boards and legislatures.
- An impatience with externally imposed innovations
- Lack of time to accomplish all that needs to be done
- Lack of reflection (pp. 88-95).
Principal’s Role

Many studies have examined the role of the principal and how that role has changed over the past 20 years (Beck & Murphy, 1992; Brubaker, 1995; Catano & Stronge, 2006; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Metlife Examination of School Leadership, 2003; Murphy, 1998; Goodwin, Cunningham & Childress, 2003; Goodwin, Cunningham & Eagle, 2005; Langer & Boris-Schacter, 2003; Pierce, 2000; Portin, 2000; Portin & Shen 1998; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach, 2003). In the last 20 years, scholars of leadership theory have attempted to define types of leadership in schools to include: instructional, facilitative, transformational, visionary, curriculum, and school culture (Catano & Stronge, 2006). It is evident that the complexity of the principal’s role is increasing and demands a multitude of leadership skills (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Fink & Brayman 2006; Fullan, 1997; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Pierce, 2000; Portin & Shen 1998; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach, 2004).

The role of the principal continually changes and principals are expected to provide leadership in response to numerous expectations and demands from a divergent public, which further complicates their role (Goens, 1998; Holland, 1997; Murphy, 1994; Portin, 2003; Shellard, 2003; Shen, Rodriguez, & Rincones, 2000; Stronge, 1993; Tirozzi, 2001). In years past the principal was the building manager and took care of the operational aspects of the job such as monitoring students and their behavior, as well as carrying out the directives of the superintendent and school board (Cuban, 1986; DiPaola & Moran, 2003; Rousmaniere, 2007). Principals carried out the school district’s
initiatives, took care of personnel issues, ordered supplies, took care of budget issues, kept the school grounds safe, kept public relations tranquil, as well as be the busing coordinator and food service monitor (IEL, 2000). Today’s principal is expected to continue the role of the past, take on new tasks, and also be the instructional leader of the school (Portin, 2003). Many researchers feel the tasks of management and instructional leadership is overwhelming and leads to job dissatisfaction (Chirichello, 2004; Haar, 2004; Lashway, 2002; Pierce, 2000; Peterson & Kelley, 2001).

The principals’ role will change as the external environment changes (Bookbinder, 1992). Changing political, economic, and social environments, both national and international, have some impact on the role of the principal (Bookbinder, 1992; Hollar, 2004; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985). Researchers have explored the circumstances of rural administrators (Edinger & Murphy, 1995; Muse & Thomas, 1991) as well as urban administrators (Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Kimball & Sironik, 2000) and found that role of the principals were not different in different settings. However, studies have shown that region, community and individual school’s needs affect the type of problems facing school principals (NCES, 1995; Portin, 2000).

The principalship will also be affected by trends in education which fall into three categories: teaching and learning, governance, and communication (Murphy, 1998). Pedagogy, psychology, and content are undergoing scrutiny and revision as schools move toward constructivism, active learning, and cooperative relationships (Murphy, 1998). The importance of technology and the inevitability of virtual learning will have powerful
implications for curriculum and instruction (Terrozi, 2001). Shared governance that is more flexible and responsive to local school needs and based on the development of human resources will require new collaborative and developmental skills (Boyer, 1993; Murphy, 1998). Finally, the relations with the greater community will affect the control of schools and will demand communication and negotiation skills by principals (Murphy, 1998).

Matthews and Crow (2003) concluded from their study of the principalship that there are primarily seven different roles principals have and that most everything a principal does, as part of the job, will fall into one of those categories: mentor, supervisor, leader, learner, manager, politician and advocate. These roles are similar in nature to the seven critical leadership roles that Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003) describe in their study of the principalship in 2000 in conjunction with The College of Education and the Center on Reinventing Public Education of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, both at the University of Washington and funded by the Wallace Foundation. The study was part of a major, multi-year, multi-million dollar effort by the foundation to help improve and develop new leadership for American schools. Portin (2003, p. 18), Chair of the Educational Leadership Department at the University of Washington, took on the task of examining what principals actually do, not what principals should or could be doing or their effectiveness. The three year study involved 21 schools with the researchers conducting in depth interviews with principals, teachers, department heads, and assistant principals. The goal of the research was to
understand what it takes to actually lead a school. The research was guided by three questions, which were all perceptions:

1. Are there core roles that all principals play in regardless of the type of school they lead?
2. How do these roles differ across traditional public, magnet, charter, and private schools?
3. Do current training programs address the demands of the job?

The study team hoped to issue findings in three key areas: dimensions of school leadership, leadership tasks, and whether training for principals could be improved.

The study team drew five major conclusions at the end of the study:

1. The core of the principal’s job is diagnosing his or her particular school’s needs and, given the resources and talents available, deciding how to meet them (p.9).
2. Regardless of school type, schools need leadership in seven critical areas: 1. instructional (ensuring quality of instruction, modeling teaching practices, supervising curriculum, ensuring quality of teaching resources) 2. cultural (tending to the symbolic resources of the school: climate, traditions, history) 3. managerial (overseeing operations: budget, schedule, facilities, safety and security, transportation) 4. human resources (recruiting, hiring, firing, inducting and mentoring teachers and administrators, developing leadership capacity and professional development opportunities) 5. strategic (promoting vision, mission, and goals and developing a means to reach them), 6. external development (representing the school in the community, developing capital, public relations,
buffering and mediating external interests) and 7. micro-political (buffering and mediating internal interests while maximizing resources: financial and human) (p. 17).

3. Principals are responsible for ensuring that leadership happens in all seven critical areas, but they don’t have to provide it. Principals can be one man bands, leaders of jazz combos, or orchestra conductors (p. 25).

4. Governance matters and a school’s governance structure affects the way key leadership functions are performed (p. 31).

5. Principals learn by doing. However trained, most principals think they learned the skills they need on the job (p. 37).

The research report clearly brought to light that not every school needs the same type of leadership, not every school is the right place for principals with little training, and the principals’ authority matters a great deal (Hill, 2003).

When principals lack the authority to choose teachers or adapt methods and schedules, they become mere middle managers. And when they do not enjoy the support they require from policymakers, district administrators, and training institutions, they can easily be put in a double bind of being responsible for everything while lacking the authority to decide anything (Hill, 2003, p. 8).

In order to perform the many functions of management and assume all of the roles that are expected, principals must be skilled, for it is the principal who directs the activities of others and undertakes the responsibility for the results of the school (Bookbinder, 1992;
Portin, 2003; Portin & Shen, 1998; Wood, Nicholson, & Findley, 1985). Robert Katz (1974) considered a legend for his publications in management, wrote in 1955 that the ideal executive is one who is equipped to cope effectively with any problem in the organization and one who possessed three managerial skills that are essential to be successful in management: technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill. Katz (1974) argues that a skill is an ability that can be developed and not necessarily inborn and Tom Peters, author of *In Search of Excellence*, agrees with him (NASSP, 1988). Technical skill, as Katz describes, is an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity. Technical skill involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques (Katz, 1974; Peterson & Fleet, 2004). Human skill is the ability to work effectively with others (Katz, 1974; Peterson & Fleet, 2004). It is the ability to perceive and recognize the perception of the people one works with and how one behaves as a result of that knowledge (Katz, 1974).

The person with highly developed human skill is aware of this own attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about other individuals and groups, he is able to see the usefulness and limitations of these feelings. By accepting the existence of viewpoints, perceptions, and beliefs which are different from his own, he is skilled in understanding what others really mean by their words and behavior (Katz, p.3, 1974).

The principal’s job is to help the school achieve a high level of performance through utilization of its human and material resources. Simply put, the job of the principal is to get things done by working with and through other people (p.270). Murphy (1998) defines the principal’s job as the person who guides good instruction, manages effectively, disciplines fairly and one who reaches out well beyond the campus.

Conceptual skill refers to the ability to be a visionary and see the global picture so that actions are taken to move the organization forward (Katz, 1974; Peterson & Fleet, 2004). Perceiving how decisions will affect each and every part of an organization is an essential element of conceptual skill and will determine the success of those decisions on the organization as a whole (Katz, 1974). Given a vision, the actual work of the leader is to facilitate the organization’s learning and responding to changing conditions. Leaders engage routinely in the following activities: develop listening and sharing systems, stimulate discourse with information, build work groups and networks, expect self-organization to emerge, foster piloting of complete new system, and shed the old and nurture the new system (Snyder, Acker, Hocevar & Snyder, 2000). Principals need to develop these three management skills, and all they encompass, if they are going to survive the complexities of the position (Bookbinder, 1992; Portin, 2004; Portin & Shen, 1998; Terrozi, 2001; Wood, Nicholson, & Findley, 1985).

While previous principals functioned primarily as managers of school operations, today’s principal has to be much more than a manager as the complexity of society continues to be ever changing, evolving, pressing and real (Copeland, 2001; ERS, 2000; Harris, Arnold, Lowery, & Crocker, 2000). As the job continues to change, none of the
previous responsibilities have been taken away (Portin, 2000). Administrators keep having additional responsibilities imposed on them by society’s present day demands; never giving anything up, just adding it to the already long list of responsibilities and duties causing a layering effect (Peterson, 2001; Portin, 2000; Richard, 2000; Supovitz, 2001; Whitaker & Turner, 2000; Whitaker, 2001). “The days of the hero principal are over,” says Carole Kennedy (2002). Principals are finding that the energy level and enthusiasm needed to be effective and successful leaders of their schools, in present times, is very hard to sustain (Cusick, 2003; Stricherz, 2001).

There is no question, based on the literature, that the demands and responsibilities on principals have increased tremendously over the years (Bookbinder, 1992; Hollar, 2004; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001; Wood, Nicholson & Findley, 1985). When looking at the expectations of the principal, Michael Fullan (1998) sums up the magnitude of the principalship, in his ad for the principalship:

Wanted: A miracle worker who can do more with less, pacify rival groups, endure chronic second-guessing, tolerate low levels of support, process large volumes of paperwork and work double shifts. He or she will have carte blanche to innovate, but cannot spend much money, replace any personnel, or upset any constituency (p. 6).

Position opening: School Principal, Anytown School District. Qualifications:
Wisdom of a sage, vision of a CEO, intellect of a scholar, leadership of a point
guard, compassion of a counselor, moral strength of a nun, courage of a
firefighter, craft knowledge of a surgeon, political savvy of a senator, toughness
of a soldier, listening skills of a blind man, humility of a saint, collaborative skills
of an entrepreneur, certitude of a civil rights activist, charisma of a stage
performer, and patience of Job. Salary lower than you might expect. Credentials
required.

Copland admits that this job description is somewhat ridiculous; however, he feels he
made his point.

While Carole Kennedy (2002, p.28) worked at the U.S. Department of Education
she found that “everyone agreed that the principal’s job was more complex, but that the
most obvious solution was for principals to simply gain additional skills and take on more
responsibility.” The principal’s role must change from a management and administration
emphasis to a leadership and vision focus (Tirozzi, 2001). Principals need to realize their
role is changing from supervising to catalyst agent for organizational change (Baughman,
1996). The underlying premise of much of the research on the principalship has been on
improving the skills of practicing principals and the preparation of aspiring principals,
not on changing the expectations of principals (Hurley, 1992).

The future of the principalship, some have suggested, requires a return to its
origin and to the role of principal teacher with expertise in curriculum and instruction
(Teitelbaum, 1990; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). It is the position of Tyack and Hansot (1982)
that management and instruction, practice and administration must merge, and that the teaching principal must motivate everyone in the school to work toward a common purpose. Teitelbaum (1990) suggested that principals should teach one class a year, and Boyer (1983) suggested that principals should teach occasionally.

Murphy (1994) identified three roles for principals in the future: “leading from the center, enabling and supporting teacher success, and extending the school community” (p. 95). The first of these, which involves sharing decision making, appears to be the most difficult and it requires that the principal develop skills in group facilitation as well as trust. The second task, supporting teacher success, requires a mutually held vision, webs of relationships, resources, information, and support for teacher growth (Cleckley, 2000; Murphy, 1994). The third function, extending the school community, confirms the importance of working with parents, community members, governing boards, and promoting the school (Murphy, 1994).

**Current Conditions**

The reality of the principal’s job and its lackluster appeal is heavily written about (Fullan, 1998; 2000; NASSP, 1998; NASSP, 2003; Pierce, 2000). A shortage of qualified administrators is also debated (Cusick, 2003; Delisio, 2006; Klempen & Richetti, 2001). There are those who argue that there are plenty of qualified candidates but that they are just not choosing to apply for the position (Cusick 2003; Delisio, 2006; Lashway, 2002). An ERS survey reported shortages of qualified school leaders (1998). Inadequate funding, continuous bad press, and district pressures on principals have caused many to leave the profession. The report of the National Association of State Boards of Education
Study Group on School Leadership (1999) identified problems that have led to this shortage: the job has become more complex, growing student populations coupled with retirements and decreasing applicants, lack of professional development and training, and a lack of coherent vision and system for developing and retaining quality principals.

Research regarding shortages in the applications of qualified applicants for the principalship has identified factors which are discouraging to practicing principals and to potential applicants. Principals who chose to leave the position internalized these negative conditions and were not able to adapt to changing expectations (Mackler, 1992). ERS (1998) found consistent responses regardless of grade level or community type which indicated salary, stress, and time were the top-ranked barriers to applicants.

“Fewer people are interested in taking on the job that many say is marked by heavy pressure, long hours, and inadequate pay” (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000). The question that remains: Will there be enough qualified candidates who will apply when 40% of the administrators leave in the next seven years (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Copland, 2001; Hammond, Muffs, & Sciascia 2001; Klempen & Richetti, 2001; Mann, 2002; Peterson & Kelley, 2001)? Cusick (2003) cited that a recent national study showed that 60% of superintendents said their districts were facing a shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship. He also indicated that a study of teachers who hold principal certification, fewer than half were willing to consider the job. Many teachers don’t feel the pay increase that they would receive to go into administration is nearly enough to make up for all the extra hours they would have to put in (Delisio, 2006; Kennedy, 2001; Price, 2004; Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). Over the past several years, while teachers have received
well-deserved salary increases, communities and school boards have been reluctant to
adjust principals’ salaries proportionately. The resulting salary encroachment has
removed a strong incentive for taking on additional responsibilities (Tirozzi, p.2, 2000).

Today’s principals have the weight of the world on their shoulders as times have
changed and society demands more services and accountability with NCLB (Kennedy,
2002). “Principal’s today are being held responsible for student achievement while
working at a job that is emotionally depleting, excessively time consuming, and defined
by ambiguous responsibilities and authority” (Langer & Schacter, 2003, p. 14). Role
ambiguity and its resultant stress are the products of tensions in the principal’s position
(NPBEA, 2001; Ripley, 1997). Ripley identified different kinds of tensions that confront
principals and pull them in different directions. They are tensions of leadership
(collaborative vs. authoritarian, masculine vs. feminine, instructional leader vs. manager,
leader vs. servant), tensions of needs (needs of one vs. needs of many, teacher as teacher
vs. teacher as whole person, teacher growth vs. student growth), and social and cultural
tensions (principal’s vision vs. communal vision, rhetoric vs. reality, stability vs. change)
(1997, p. 55-64). Balancing the tensions imposed by divergent forces is crucial to the
daily work of principals and Ripley suggests that good principals embrace these tensions,
understand them, them and then use them to make schools better.

Principals in schools today continue to be stretched in the historical tension
between management and instructional leadership (Lewis & Lee, 2000; Mertz &
McNelly, 1998; Ripley, 1997; Wolk, 1999). This tension contributes to job dissatisfaction
when principals are socialized in their preparation programs to the role of instructional
leaders, but once on the job the expectations are those of a manager (Avant & Miller, 1992; Crow & Glascock, 1995). Terrozzi (2001) also acknowledged this tension, but he reversed the issues. He contended that principals are trained to be managers, but must be instructional leaders. The conflict between the principals’ ideal role of planning, goal setting, supervision, and curriculum development and the actual role of attention to details, crisis management, monitoring of pupil behavior, and required, routine activities exemplifies the complexity of the expectations for those who lead schools (Avant & Miller, 1992; Holland, 1997). Mitchell (1990) contended that there are four dimensions of principal’s work: supervision, administration, management, and leadership, and that the school culture and personal preference determine which of the distinct elements is dominant. The alleged evolution of the principal from manager to instructional leader to transformational leader has further complicated the question of role conflict (Hallinger, 1992; Malone & Caddell, 2000).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) conducted a study in 1998, A Ten-Year Study: The K-8 Principal in 1998, and found that principals in 1998 worked at least 50% more hours than they did in 1988. In addition they found that principals “are less appreciated, have greater accountability and have little time to learn or think about how to manage competing demands and constituencies” (Pierce, 2000, p. 1). Principals basically spent their time in three major areas: staff supervision, interaction with students, and discipline/student management (Pierce, 2000). Instructional leadership doesn’t appear to be in the mix and the need for the principal to be the instructional
leader today is perceived to be greater than ever (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Glatthorn, 2000; Gupton 2003; Hurley, 2001; Shellard, 2003; Tirozzi, 2004).

Why does the principalship appear to be so unattractive? Michael Fullan (1998) states:

The metaphorical walls of the school have come tumbling down. Out there is now in here, as government policy, parent and community demands, corporate interests, and ubiquitous technology have all stormed the walls of the school. The relentless pressures of today’s complex environments have intensified the workload for principals (p. 6).

Fullan (2001) further confirms the difficulties of the job.

With the move toward self-management of schools, the principal appears to have the worst of both worlds. The old world is still around with expectations to run a smooth school, and to be responsive to all; simultaneously the new world rains down on schools with disconnected demands, expecting that at the end of the day the school should be constantly showing better test results, and ideally become a learning organization (p.138).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has added additional pressure on the principalship as it provided legislation to remove the principal if the school fails to meet new standards for adequate yearly progress (Cusick, 2003; DiPaola & Moran, 2003; Foster, 2002; Hurley, 2001; NASSP, 2001; Rayfield & Diamantes, 2003; Yerkes &
Guaglianone, 1998). Peterson & Kelley (2001) in their article *Transforming School Leadership*, also speak of the realities of the job

Principals’ daily work is characterized by hundreds of short tasks of enormous variety – one minute talking with a teacher about materials, the next coping with a student issue, followed by another dozen questions, issues and problems to be solved. Their work is constantly interrupted by the continuous stream of issues that have to be addressed, reports that have to be completed and people who want a piece of the principal’s time (p.8).

Another reason the position seems so unattractive is that principals generally felt unsupported by their districts and were burdened by politics and bureaucratic red tape. The image of an overworked, aging, underpaid principal-bureaucrat tangled in a web of administrative duties, unionized teachers, uninvolved parents, and disinterested students is not real appealing (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). “Often left out of contract negotiations that give teachers substantial decision making power, principals are still legally accountable for what occurs in their schools” (Cushman, 1992, p. 5). In addition, Portin, Shen and Williams, (1998) state:

A number of significant changes have occurred in our public schools, including shifting federal program priorities, adoption of state curriculum standards, and the implementation of site based decision making. These changes come at a time when many schools are also experiencing significant changes in the ethnic and socioeconomic composition of their student body, and when many families are
struggling to meet challenges arising from family break-up, poverty, or job
requirements that limit time available to be with their children (p.1).
The future for principals and what roles and responsibilities they will have is
complicated. Setting the tone, facilitating teaching and learning processes, providing
leadership and direction for programs and policies, mentoring new teachers, evaluating
more staff, and nurturing school environments for all students, are critical skills for
tomorrow’s principals (Tirozzi, 2001). The roles and responsibilities of future principals
will continue to be heavily impacted by the nation’s economic, societal, and political
forces (Murphy, 1998). Hausman, Crow and Sperry (2000, p. 14) further state that “the
ideal principal must be prepared to face a world of decentralized school structures,
increasing and changing environmental boundaries and roles, less homogeneous schools,
closer contact with stakeholders and a market driven view of education.” It is clear that
future principals need to be trained to be successful in an ever changing environment
(Bookbinder, 1992). If the role of the principal is to be strengthened, the bureaucratic and
legislative control must be returned to the school leader (Boyer, 1983; IEL, 2000). Boyer
(1983) recommended that principals have increased control over budgeting and staffing
with adequate funds allotted for school improvement and that hiring should done at the
school level.

**Principal Preparation**

Studies have supported the notion that the competencies needed to be a principal
in the past have dramatically changed and the reasons for the changes are many. Some of
the most significant causes include: the social climate that has been created by the decline
of public trust in schools and the weakening of traditional values, the overwhelming growth in the range and magnitude of the principal’s responsibilities, society’s expectation that public schools solve most of its problems and increased accountability (ERS, 1999, 2003, 2005; Hay, 1980; NPBEA, 2001; Portin, Shen & Williams, 1998).

Accountability has provided a whole new dimension to the principal’s job as principals are responsible for moving student achievement forward on a steady progression. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) sets achievement goals for all students and holds the principal and teachers responsible for meeting those goals. The goals for NCLB are hefty and have no additional resources attached to them. This makes the need for principals to be experts on instructional strategies and best practices even greater, as they try to move student achievement forward. Zepeda (2004) claimed that student achievement is the cornerstone of the success of principals, and teachers are a key factor in the area of student performance. If the principal’s success depends on teacher and student performance, the principal’s approach as an instructional leader is crucial to promote student achievement.

The need for training is evident. DiPaola and Moran (2003) stated that:

Instructional leaders must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance. Principals must be aware of the special needs of all youngsters and need to be aware of the latest research on learning and effective teaching strategies in order to monitor instruction and provide the necessary resources. More complex special education requirements, due to the adoption of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Chapter 504 of the American
with Disabilities Act (ADA), have compounded expectations for instructional leadership. These expectations may be difficult to meet for those principals trained before instructional leadership was such a major component of the role. It is even more difficult to meet for those people coming to the principalship from outside the field of education (p. 2).

Principals’ preparation programs cater to the role of instructional leader, however, once on the job, principals find that the reality of the job is one of management (Chirichello, 2004; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Terrozi, 2001). The principal is expected to rally the entire school community around the goal of improved student achievement/performance and also maintain a balance between all of the other responsibilities (Haar, 2004; Hollar, 2004; Lashway, 2002; Pierce, 2000). “No matter how desirable it is for principals to be instructional leaders, their managerial responsibilities aren’t going away” (Lashway, 2002, p. 1). School principals will have to acquire new and different skills in order to create a climate for excellence through continuous improvement in student performance, promoting excellence in teaching, sustaining staff development, ensuring coherent curriculum and instructional strategies, and requiring accurate assessment strategies (Tirozzi, 2001).

Haar (2004) summed up the argument for principals to be instructional leaders in order to raise student achievement in this time of accountability.

Principals who were building managers used to be good enough. It is clear today that principals must serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to
strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence. They must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and social service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses, and other community residents and partners around the common goal of raising student performance. And they must have the leadership skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to pursue these strategies (p. 20).

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, confirmed that the most important role for the principal is to be the instructional leader

Across the nation, today’s schools feed, counsel, provide physical and mental health services, and protect students while they educate and instruct. Principals must be experts on current education law and policy, and they must act as coordinators for social services and fundraisers. Their roles have evolved to include public relations consultant, security officer, technology expert, and diplomat; fulfilling these roles adequately is necessary to ensure that schools function coherently and smoothly every day. Above all, today’s principals must focus on student learning: instructional programs, curricular and pedagogical issues, and models of assessment (NCREL Policy Issues, p.1, 2003).

The role of instructional leader for principals has evolved over time as responsibilities have increased and changed. The principal has become accountable for instructional improvement, staff development, curriculum design, development and implementation of site-based decision making plans, and complex discipline and school safety issues (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2000; Glatthorn, 2000;
Gupton, 2003; McEwan, 2003). The principal is also seen as the change agent in the school. In order to meet the expectations for higher student achievement and accountability, principals must create a new culture on their campuses that encourage and promote teaching and learning. They must transform their school organization working through people and teams, while maintaining high performance standards (DiPaola & Moran, 2003; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2002).

Some have suggested that the future of the principalship requires a return to its origin, the role of principal teacher with an expertise in curriculum and instruction (Teitelbaum, 1990; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Tyack and Hansot (1982) stated that management and instruction, along with practice and administration, must merge, and that the teaching principal must motivate everyone in the school to work toward a common purpose. Researchers have suggested that principals teach a class at least occasionally (Boyer, 1983; Teitelbaum, 1990) however the majority of principals in the NASSP (2001) survey indicated that they didn’t have the time.

In a study of Virginia school administrators, DiPaola and Moran (2003) asked principals to identify the problems and issues they faced in their expanding role as instructional leaders. Principals indicated that they needed professional development in the areas of standardized testing, classroom practices, faculty and staff development, curriculum alignment with standards, effective use of instructional time and increasing staff morale. Principals also indicated that they needed training in how to use research and data to improve educational performance.
Another factor that has changed the competencies that principals of today need is an increase in local community involvement in school decision making (DiPaola & Moran, 2003; Hay, 1980; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Principals of the past made most of their decisions in an autocratic, top down management style (Cunard, 1990; Lyons, 1999). They may have received input from some key people on their staff or from outside organizations such as the PTA president, but for the most part they made decisions and staff followed (Lashway, 2002). Today principals are expected to solicit input from all stakeholder groups before making decisions. Some researchers feel that principals literally go into schools with their hands tied behind their back and must possess the skills needed to overcome all the obstacles (Cushman, 1992; Klempen & Richetti, 2001; Schmieder & Cairns, 1998; Stricherz, 2001).

A majority of principals agree that experience, not graduate school, is a key ingredient to being a successful principal and experience as an assistant principal for at least a year was essential (NASSP, 2003). According to a survey by NASSP, most principals have been teachers and hold at least a Master’s degree since most states require principals to have an advanced degree.

The state of Florida requires a Master’s degree with certification in Educational Leadership (Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), 2007). The state of Florida directs each of the 67 districts to develop their own principal certification program for their potential principal candidates (FLDOE). The Florida Department of Education must approve the program before it can be implemented. The program must be performance based so that each principal candidate can demonstrate competence in each of the Florida
Principal Leadership Standards which are: instructional leadership, operational leadership and school leadership (Delta School Leaders, 2007, Appendix B).

Improved and different skills for new and ever changing complex issues are needed by principals before they ever take their first job. Principal preparation programs can barely keep up with the change and are perceived as outdated. There is a general consensus among researchers and educational leaders that typical educational leadership programs are out of touch with the realities of running today’s schools (Baker, 2004; Lashway, 2003; Murphy, 2002). “Regardless of the year appointed, principals have been trained and certified as administrators through programs that are largely irrelevant to, and grossly inadequate for, the work responsibilities found in the school principalship” (NCREL, 2003, p.2). There is growing support to change leadership programs so they are more realistic and meet the job requirements. Programs can no longer be based on a business model or university model (DiPaola & Moran, 2003, Murphy, 2002). Cohort models are suggested where several individuals work together as a team to acquire the necessary skills needed to meet the responsibilities of the principalship (Lauder, 2000).

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was established in 1994 under the guidance of the Council of Chief State School Officers to help raise the bar and set standards for educational leaders and reshape the principal preparation programs. The ISLLC was a consortium that worked with 32 education agencies and 13 education administrative associations to establish an education policy framework for school leadership. The overall objective of the consortium was to create standards that
would improve the quality of prospective principal candidates. The ISLLC adopted six standards for school leadership that are currently adopted by 35 states. They are:

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

- **Standard 2** – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

- **Standard 3** – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for an safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- **Standard 4** – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the causes of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

- **Standard 5** – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

- **Standard 6** – A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The ISLLC also worked with Educational Testing Service (ETS), (best known for administering the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)), to create a comprehensive examination called the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). However, the SLLA is currently used in only 10 states (Murphy, 2002).

Potential school administrators need to be fully aware of what is expected of them and possess the tools and skills that they will need to lead schools. Principal preparation programs across the country are redesigning themselves to meet the ever changing needs
of the school administrator (Lauder, 2000; Shen & Crawford, 2003; Murphy, 2001; Lashley, 2003).

Guidance From the Field

Principals and former principals have written many articles on their perceptions on how to be successful in the principal position. One of the most critical pieces of advice is to have a vision and communicate that vision to your staff and school community. The staff and community need to know where you want the school to go and what it will take to get there (Brewer, 2001; Chapko & Buchko, 2002; Peterson, 2001). Involving your school community and realizing that parents can be your greatest allies can only help you accomplish your goals (Chapko & Buchko, 2001; Brewer 2001). Hiring wisely is another good piece of advice (Brewer, 2001; Chapko & Buchko, 2001; Schmieder & Cairns, 1998). Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great* continually talks about having the right people on board to move the organization forward. Collins feels that when you hire the right people, they will be intrinsically motivated to do a great job because it is in the best interest of the organization. Hiring the best teachers, who are innovative in the way they deliver instruction, will help to ensure that the instructional program of the school continues to move forward (Hollar, 2004). Not taking everything too personally and maintaining a sense of humor is another piece of advice (Parsons, 2001; Brewer, 2001). The job is stressful enough without internalizing things that happen. Peterson (2001, p. 21) feels strongly that it is important to “enjoy the rush.” A principal’s day is filled with hundreds of tasks, situations, actions and decisions. If you are going to enjoy your job as
principal, you need to be able to thrive in that kind of environment and get a sense of energy and satisfaction from it (Brewer, 2001; Peterson, 2001).

**Summary**

There is no shortage of literature regarding the principalship and the different ways the position has changed over the years and how it will continue to change in the future. There is a great deal of concern pertaining to the demands of the job itself and whether or not it is feasible for the principal to be the instructional leader of the school, which is cited as being the most important role the principal should have. The reality of the position as documented by NASSP, NAESP, Institute for Educational Leadership, as well as many researchers, clearly brings to light the fact that most principals spend their time keeping their campuses safe (to include lunch duty, parking lot duty, hall duty, discipline) and dealing with political issues such as parent conferences, school board mandates and litigation. Time after the school day is spent covering student activities, taking the principal, as well as his or her assistants, well into the night. It is not unusual for an administrator to work a 10 to 14 hour day, 60 to 80 hours a week, to include weekends, covering the school day and all the extracurricular activities that are associated with the school, including community events.

The literature cited in this literature review indicates an apparent shortage of qualified applicants entering the field of educational leadership. One would only have to look at the demands of the job to realize that the hours, the pay and the adverse affect all of that would have on one’s personal life doesn’t seem worth it. Teachers at the top of the pay scale, with supplements such as National Board Certification, are making close to
what administrators make in some school districts. Encroachment of the two pay scales is an issue.

With the current emphasis on administrators being the instructional leaders in schools, something has to give. A new model for school administration should be developed so that the needs of the teachers, students, and parents can be met while administrators focus their efforts on student achievement and not just discipline and hall monitoring.

A common theme in many of these articles is the growing recognition that while principals play a critical role in school success, they cannot do it alone. Merely strengthening their skills as individuals will not be enough to accomplish today’s ambitious reform agenda. The current debate over their role will help no one if it merely piles more expectations on top of already overburdened and under-supported school administrators.

This final quote from DiPaola and Moran, *The Principalship at a Crossroads: A Study of the Conditions and Concerns of Principals*, (2003) sums up the underlying message in most of the journal articles reviewed by the researcher. Dipaola and Moran conducted a study in Virginia to examine the conditions and concerns of principals. This was just one of the many articles that appeared in the special issue of the *NASSP Bulletin*, March 2003, Characteristics of the Secondary Principal, which discussed the stress and demands of the principalship.

The data in this report reveal a profession under stress. The role of the principal has been expanded to include significant responsibilities for the
instructional leadership of schools, ensuring that all children achieve to
meet high standards, and that the needs of children with special learning
challenges are met. At the same time, principals are spending more time
coping with student behavior problems. The managerial tasks of
principals have also been expanding, and principals report burgeoning
paperwork loads. Although e-mail has enabled greater communication
with parents, teachers, and the community, it has added a significant new
time demand on principals. Including numerous management tasks in the
role without sufficient resources to accomplish them does a disservice
both to principals and the schools that depend on them. It also decreases
the prospects of better school leadership. Policymakers need to recognize
the extensive responsibilities of principals and the real limitations of time.
It should be recognized that the expectations that have grown up around
the principal’s role—expectations from teachers, coaches, advisers,
parents, superintendents, and school board members—have continued to
grow even as policymakers have expanded the responsibilities of the role
(p.10).
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

“Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them.”

John C. Maxwell

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers on the changing role of middle school principal and compare with the principals and assistant principals perceptions of the changing role of the middle school principal. The researcher was very interested in the feedback from middle school teachers as the review of literature revealed that the teacher’s voice was absent regarding the secondary principal’s role.

This study used a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data were obtained from the Principal’s Role Questionnaire from three identified research groups. Qualitative data were obtained from the open ended comment questions at the end of each category of questions on the survey. This was a document analysis; no face to face interviews took place. “Document analysis includes studying excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from…open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys” (Patton, 2002, p.4). Responses (data) from the open ended comment questions in each of the three sections of the Principal’s Role Questionnaire were analyzed to determine if any themes or patterns
emerged from the different research groups concerning the changes, current role, and future role of the principal.

The proper authorizations required by the school system and the university were obtained prior to conducting the study. Institutional Review Board (Appendix E) as well as the school district’s (Appendix F) permission was obtained prior to approaching any of the middle school target groups. Dr. Rebecca Goodwin, Marshall University, gave permission to the researcher to use the Principal’s Role Questionnaire and offered advice to the researcher at the beginning of the study.

The researcher is a middle school principal in the selected district and took appropriate safeguards to make sure the survey was anonymous so that participants would feel comfortable completing the survey openly and honestly. At no time was any name asked for or any school identification required. The researcher worked with and through the Research and Accountability Department at the school district. The department informed the researcher that being an employee of the district did not automatically allow privileges to access all email addresses of teachers and assistant principals, as any researcher from any organization would not be afforded that same benefit. The attorneys for the district stated that since each middle school principal signed an authorization agreeing that their school would participate in the research study, that the researcher would have to go through the principal of the school to send out the survey to teachers and assistant principals. The researcher spoke to the middle school principals at a district meeting and explained the situation with the school district. All principals agreed that they would send the survey out to their teachers. The researcher wrote the
cover letter for all three target groups and included the live link. The researcher then emailed the cover letter and link to the principals and asked them to send it out to the appropriate groups. The researcher was permitted by the district to email the principals directly with their letter and link. The cover letter for each group can be found in Appendix G. Each principal responded by email that they had forwarded the researcher’s request out to the teachers and assistant principals. One week into the survey period the researcher asked the principals to once again send the letter and link out to the teachers and assistant principals and then again three days before the close of the survey in order to encourage a better response rate.

The researcher used the survey method in this study as it provided quantitative as well as qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained by performing appropriate statistical analysis using SPSS 14 on the responses from the Principal’s Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Goodwin, 2002) and the open ended comment questions in each section of the survey provided qualitative data. One of the researcher’s committee members had a concern that respondents may not take the time to give their thoughts for the comment request statements and wanted the researcher to make the text box, as well as the request to comment, as inviting as possible and the researcher complied. Goodwin (2002) and Duffy (2002) concluded that there are methodological issues in Internet research such as sampling, environment, confidentiality, anonymity, and response rates and researchers using this methodology need to understand how to use its strengths and also how to compensate for its limitations.
A content analysis was conducted on the responses to the questions and patterns and themes were identified. Patton (2002) refers to content analysis as any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort in which the researcher takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. The researcher first read through each category of responses in order to get a general feel for the data. Extraneous data was eliminated. Extraneous data were determined, by the researcher and a doctoral colleague, to be comments that did not address the specific area of interest. For example, “I don’t have time to complete this survey”, “Get real”, and “My principal needs to go” were comments that were considered to be extraneous. The researcher worked closely with the doctoral colleague, who has served on dissertation committees for another university, to help eliminate researcher bias to ensure that no data was discounted inadvertently. The fourth comment request concerning general thoughts about the role of the principal was given more latitude.

Data charts were developed and displayed. Key words and phrases were posted and as categories presented themselves they were listed. Comments/phrases were then listed under categories and comments that were related or had the same meaning were given check marks to indicate how many respondents had similar perceptions. The researcher then grouped items together and produced themes. The data charts and data reduction charts were scrutinized by the doctoral colleague and the thought process used by the researcher was questioned and explained. The doctoral colleague and the researcher met several times to be certain that no piece of data of relevance was discounted. Agreement was reached on the themes and the researcher continued with the analysis. Once core
consistencies and meanings were identified, the researcher conducted an inductive analysis, discovering patterns, themes, and categories in the data. Through the researchers’ interaction with the data, the findings emerged.

Research Questions

A review of the literature indicated that the voice of the teacher was scant regarding the changing role of the secondary principal. This study seeks to answer the question: Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of middle school principals, assistant principals and teachers regarding the changing role of the secondary middle school principal in an urban Florida school district?

The research questions addressed in this study were:

Question 1. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 2. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 3. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Design of the Study

Population and Sample

This study involved all 22 middle schools in an urban Florida school district. The researcher chose to include all the middle school teachers and administrators in hopes of getting a high rate of response to the Principal’s Role Questionnaire. There were
potentially 1408 participant respondents in the target groups. No other selection criterion other than middle school teacher, assistant principal or principal was used.

This urban school district is the seventh largest school district of Florida’s 67 and 23rd of more than 16,000 school districts in the nation. The district covers 280 square miles, 38 miles long and 15 miles wide at it broadest point. The population is approximately 950,000 making it the most densely populated district in Florida with 3, 315 people per square mile. Approximately 110,000 students are enrolled in the district’s K-12 program. The district is comprised of 82 elementary, 22 middle and 17 high schools as well as 49 alternative education centers. The student population is 64.0% white, 19.0% black, 8.6% Hispanic, 3.5% Asian, 4.4% multiracial and .3% American Indian. Forty-two percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The district employs approximately 11,000 full and part time teachers (Florida Department of Education, 2007).

A purposeful sampling was used in this study. According to Patton (2002, p.244) purposeful sampling “illustrates characteristics of particular subgroups of interest; facilitates comparisons.” Basha and Harter (1980) state that “a population is any set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic.” The common characteristic among the targeted groups is middle school and comparisons were made between and among the three targeted groups; principals, assistant principals, and teachers. Each targeted group had their responses compared to the other two targeted groups. The targeted groups were also considered a recruited sample. Recruited samples are used for targeted populations in internet/web surveys that require more control over
the makeup of the sample (Watt, 1997). In this study the principals, assistant principals and teachers were targeted and recruited to participate in the web based survey.

For the purposes of this study the researcher focused solely on secondary middle schools, schools serving grades six through eight, in the targeted district. All middle school principals (n=22), assistant principals (n=66), and teachers (n=1320) were asked to complete the PRQ. The researcher made a short presentation to the middle school principals at a district middle school association meeting, explained the purpose of the study, and asked for their cooperation in completing the PRQ. Principals were also asked to encourage their faculties to participate. The researcher emailed all the potential participants a cover letter that included an explanation of the purpose of the study, the link to the PRQ, the school district’s approval to conduct the study as well as Institutional Review Board approval.

The Survey

“The word survey is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals” (Ferber, Sheatsley, Turner & Waksberg, 1980). The researcher chose the survey method due to the large potential sample size, which gave every targeted employee the opportunity to be a participant. The targeted respondents had daily access to computers. Placing the survey instrument on the World Wide Web allowed for instantaneous dissemination and quick return. Scheuren (2004) described the importance of surveys:

Our society is no longer an industrial society but an information society. We require prompt and accurate flow of information on preferences, needs, and
behavior. It is in response to this critical need for information on the part of the
government, business, and social instructions that so much reliance is placed on
surveys (p.9).

In order to obtain feedback on the survey instrument (PRQ) prior to the study a
small pilot study was conducted. The researcher posted the PRQ on Surveymonkey.com
and asked six high school principals to complete it and provide feedback. The principals
were also asked to forward it to their assistant principals and several willing teachers. At
the end of the survey the researcher asked:

- How long did it take you to complete the PRQ?
- Was any question/part of the PRQ confusing?
- Please provide any comments about the PRQ that you would like to share.

A total of 40 respondents completed the pilot survey. Of the 40 respondents, 12 were
male, 27 were female and one was thrown out due to obvious erroneous comments.
Eleven respondents indicated that the survey took about 10 minutes, three indicated 15 to
30 minutes and 16 indicated five to seven minutes. No respondent felt any of the
questions were confusing. The researcher considered the feedback from the high school
pilot group and felt that the length of the survey and the time it took to complete was
reasonable. The researcher felt confident and also conscientious of the respondents’ time
when the cover letter was written for the survey that was completed in the fall semester of
2007, in estimating the length of time to complete the survey to be about 15 minutes.

The survey method used in this study provided many advantages to the
researcher: reduced cost, speed, feasibility and quality were just a few (Dedrick, 2002).
The Internet provides researchers with a tool where a questionnaire can be created, distributed, returned, and data electronically sent to statistical programs literally within hours, for minimal cost (Dedrick, 2002; Wyatt, 1997). The researcher was very conscientious of the respondents’ time and felt that the internet survey was the best option to get the most feedback. Polland (1998) suggests that the survey is an appropriate tool to gather information under three conditions: when the goals of the research call for quantitative and qualitative data, when the information sought is specific and familiar to the respondents, and the researcher has prior knowledge of the responses likely to emerge.

It was assumed for the purposes of this study that assistant principals and teachers have some expectations of their principals and have had some interactions with them. At the very least, it was assumed that they probably had some knowledge of their principals’ work in the school. The information in the Principal’s Role Questionnaire Survey should not be unfamiliar to the targeted research groups, however it is understood that the respondents may not be able to answer every question due to lack of understanding or knowledge of the particular item being addressed in each category of the PRQ.

*Principal’s Role Questionnaire*

The Principal’s Role Questionnaire (Goodwin, 2002; Appendix A) was developed and validated by Dr. Rebecca Goodwin, Marshall University and as stated earlier, permission to use the survey was obtained. Goodwin conducted a national study in 2002 to examine the changing role of the secondary principal. In the course of her study, principals from every state described the changes in the principalship, current role of the
principalship, and what the principalship of the future should or might look like.

Goodwin’s study was conducted in two stages. During the first stage, Goodwin used a Delphi technique to engage principals, who were 2000-2001 MetLife-National Association of Secondary School Principals state high school principals of the year, considered experts, in conversation. “Delphi is a multiple iteration survey technique that enables anonymous, systematic refinement of expert opinion with the aim of arriving at a combined or consensual position” (Bowles, 1999, p.32). The technique offers a number of benefits: use of an expert panel, anonymous feedback with less pressure on panel members to conform than in a committee, systematic refinement, development of consensus, easy, and inexpensive (Bowles, 1999). The Delphi research is predicated on the assumption that the informed opinions of a group of experts are likely to be correct (Goodwin, 2002). Goodwin’s study required a three round Delphi to reach consensus. In each iteration, the panel of experts were presented with three questions: (1)What changes have occurred in the role of the contemporary secondary principal? (2)What is the current nature of the role of a secondary principal? (3)What changes should occur in the role of the secondary principal?

Following round one, the researcher summarized, clarified, and restated the comments. The resulting synthesis was reviewed by an independent panel of principals and researchers to reduce the chance of researcher bias. Subsequent rounds were structured as rating iterations in which the comments of the panel in round one were presented to the experts, and they were asked to rate their confidence in the accuracy of each statement using a four point Likert scale (Goodwin, 2002). The participants were
again asked to comment on the statements. Goodwin analyzed the experts’ opinions and summarized, clarified and restated the comments which were again reviewed by the independent expert panel of principals and researchers. Consensus was established for 67% of the items after two rounds, and after the third round the Delphi was concluded and 45 descriptors for the changing role of the principal were identified (Goodwin, 2002).

The second phase of Goodwin’s study used the Principal’s Role Questionnaire, which was developed from the results of the Delphi study, to indicate a level of confidence in each of the 45 role descriptors identified by the principal expert panel. Goodwin randomly selected 375 (n=375) secondary principals, who were members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, to participate in rating each role descriptor on the PRQ. The PRQ used a Likert scale which indicated a confidence level for each of the 45 role descriptors. The responses to the PRQ were analyzed using measures of central tendency to determine consensus and level of confidence. The analysis was done using SPSS11.0. Consensus was established when the standard deviation for an item was less than .60. The mean and the mode for each item on the questionnaire were calculated to determine the respondents’ level of confidence that the statement was true. The items with a mean of 1.00 to 1.40 and a mode of 1 were considered to have a high level of confidence. The items with a mean of 1.41 to 2.00 and a mode of 1 or 2 were considered to have moderate confidence. The items with a mean greater than 2.00 and a mode of 2 or 3 were considered to have low confidence (Goodwin, 2002). The 109 (n=109) principals who participated in completing the PRQ indicated a moderate to high level of confidence for each of the role descriptors, giving the PRQ content validity. Appendix C includes
Goodwin’s data analysis regarding the 45 role descriptors used in the PRQ (Goodwin, 2002).

In summary, the PRQ was validated in three phases. First, Goodwin’s summary of the Delphi was validated by an expert panel of doctoral level researchers who are or have been practicing principals. Second, the PRQ was reviewed in paper form by a panel of experts, by the doctoral committee of the researcher and by a representative of the Institutional Review Board at West Virginia University. Third, the PRQ was validated electronically with a small group of practicing principals (Goodwin, 2002).

The PRQ (Appendix D) was created in SurveyMonkey and the universal resource locator was (url):
(www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=0VOmhiWOhniSVM1HMTCKWg%3d%3d). The survey was live from October 2, 2007 to October 16, 2007. SurveyMonkey does not allow a respondent to go back into a survey once that respondent hits the “done” key, therefore it is highly unlikely that someone would complete the survey more than once. There were no identifying characteristics in the survey in order to protect the respondents’ anonymity. Reminders to complete the PRQ were emailed to participant on two additional occasions.

*Perception*

Perception is the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting, and organizing sensory information (McMahon, McMahon & Romano, 1990, p. 107) and its importance is “well-established in the leadership, micro-politics, and organizational power literature” (Blasé & Kirby, 2000, p.132). Early researchers who studied the process of interpretation;
organizing lots of information to construct something more complete for ourselves, were called Gestalt psychologists, gestalt meaning an organized whole, shape or form (Koffka, 1922; McMahon, McMahon & Romano 1995). The respondents’ educational experiences most likely played a role in their interpretations of the principalship, as it is suggested, that as we gain experience, we change our perceptions and interpretations. “As we acquire new information our precepts shift. Perception is always a matter of interpretation and expectation” (McMahon, McMahon & Romano, 1995 p.111). Perception is our own interpretation of the way we think something should be and this in turn becomes our reality, and not necessarily the way things really are (McMahon, McMahon & Romano, 1995).

The researcher collected data on teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of the principal’s role by utilizing a survey that had open ended questions in each section for the participant to respond to. The open ended questionnaire is a useful personal document for qualitative research because it focuses on the subjective perceptions of people (Allport, 1942). A questionnaire is defined as a personal document when the research participants exercise substantial control over the content of their responses (Blasé & Kirby, 2000), which in this case they did. The researcher realizes that a limitation of this study is that the perceptions of each individual will be different based on his or her own experiences regarding the principalship. It is also the assumption of the researcher, as it was in Wulff’s 1992 study, The Changing Role of the School Principal in Washington State, that “the perceptions, opinions, and perspectives of building principals are essential to understanding their changing roles” (Wulff, 1996, p.13).
**Instrumentation**

Data were gathered electronically through a web based survey, the PRQ, which utilized a Likert rating scale for 36 principal role descriptor statements and also provided areas for comments. Data from the PRQ provided principals information regarding the way their role is perceived by assistant principals and teachers. This information could be very valuable to principals as they attempt to build trust and strong relationships within their school communities which has been cited as being essential for successful and effective schools (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Bryk, A. & Schneider, B. 2003; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan 2003; Glatthorn, 2000; Gupton, 2003; Harris, 2004; Marzano, 2003; McEwan, 2003; Murphy & Datnow, 2003; Scheurich & Skrla 2003, Zepeda, 2004). Teachers may find this information enlightening in terms of how they view the role of the principal and how similar or different the reality of the position is from their own perception based on data gathered from principals’.

**Data Analysis**

Data was entered into SPSS version 14.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics were conducted on demographic data. Descriptive statistics include frequency and percentages for nominal (categorical/dichotomous) data and means/standard deviations for continuous (interval/ratio) data.

Three composite scores were calculated for Role Changes, Current Role, and Changes that Should Occur, by averaging number of items in that section, respectively. Cronbach’s alpha tests of reliability were conducted on each of the survey subscales to
assess the consistency in which people responded to the questions. George and Mallery (2003) suggest the following rules of thumb for evaluating alpha coefficients, “> .9 = Excellent, > .8 = Good, > .7 = Acceptable, > .6 = Questionable, > .5 = Poor, < .5 = Unacceptable.”

To examine question 1, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance will be assessed; power and effect size are reported. For any significant difference revealed, a Scheffe post hoc test was conducted.

To examine question 2, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were assessed; power and effect size were reported. If a significant difference was revealed a Scheffe post hoc test was conducted.

To examine question 3, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were assessed; power and effect size were reported. If a significant difference was revealed, a Scheffe post hoc test was conducted.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is an appropriate statistical analysis when the purpose of research is to assess if mean differences exist on one continuous dependent variable between two or more discrete groups (independent variable). In other words, an
ANOVA is the appropriate test when the dependent variable is continuous and the independent variable is categorical. The ANOVA uses the F test, “which is the ratio of two independent variance estimates of the same population variance,” (Pagano, 1990, p. 329). The F test allows researchers to make the overall comparison on whether group means differ. If the obtained F is larger than the critical F, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance/covariance matrices were assessed. Normality assumes that the scores are normally distributed (bell shaped) and were assessed using the one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Homogeneity of variance assumes that both groups have equal error variances and were assessed using Levene’s test.

In addition thirty-six ANOVAs were conducted on each of the individual role descriptor statements to determine if differences exist between the three groups regarding each statement. If the ANOVA was statistically significant post hoc tests (p<.05) were conducted to determine which group (s) mean score rating was statistically significant from the others.

The first three open ended statements were made at the end of the corresponding section of the PQR for the respondents to comment about each of the categories of role descriptors and the fourth request allowed the respondent to make any general comments regarding the principalship: (1) Please comment about any of these statements regarding changes in the role of the principal, (2) Your perceptions about the current role of the middle school principal are extremely important to the future of the position. Please comment on the current role of the principal, (3) Your comments about the future of the
principalship will help the district as well as university programs. Please comment about the future of the principalship and (4) The voice of teachers and assistant principals has been overlooked when reviewing the literature about the role of the principal. Please make general comments about the role of the principal that you would like to share.

Miles and Huberman’s *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (1994), as well as Patton’s *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (2002), were used as resources for the qualitative data analysis. The research question, Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of middle school principals, assistant principals and teachers regarding the role of the principal in an urban Florida school district?, as well as the three research categories, changing roles, current role, future role, were used as a guide for analyzing the responses to the opened ended comment requests. Procedures for data collection and analysis were guided by Miles and Huberman’s sourcebook. Descriptive data relevant to understanding teachers’ and assistant principals’ as well as principals’ perspectives were collected and analyzed to generate categories, themes, conceptual understandings, and theoretical ideas.

*Professional Use*

The researcher is a middle school principal in the selected school district and has been an educator at the secondary level for twenty two years, ten of which has been as a principal. By virtue of the current position of the researcher there is a high level of understanding of the pressures of today’s administrators.. The author wanted to continue to grow professionally, and lead the school/faculty to greater success and achievement. The researcher would like to continue to build a culture of collegiality among staff and
feels it’s important to understand teacher and assistant principals perceptions of the principal’s role.

It is the intent of the researcher to use the information to help educate principals about the perceptions of the targeted research groups so that principals can possibly have better working relationships with these groups for the betterment of the school. The data will be shared at a Middle School Association Level Meeting upon completion of a positive defense and be the topic of professional discussion. The researcher also mentors new principals and would be able to share the research findings one-on-one in that capacity. In terms of the bigger picture, the researcher hopes to share the data with key school district officials to initiate a conversation about the diverse needs and roles of the middle school leaders, in hopes of enlightening those in power to effect change.

The study will add to the literature on the duties and changing role of the secondary principalship by including the teacher and assistant principal perceptions and perspectives of the principal’s role. A clearer understanding of the perceptions and expectations of each group could lead to a more collaborative working relationship and enable the principal to adjust or redefine his or her role for the success of the total school community.
Chapter Four

RESULTS

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”

Peter F. Drucker

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Chapter Four of this mixed-method study of the secondary middle school principal presents the data collected and a statistical and qualitative analysis of the data. This chapter is presented in four sections: (a) population and sample, (b) Principal’s Role Questionnaire – quantitative, (c) Principal’s Role Questionnaire – qualitative, and (d) a summary of the major findings.

Population and Sample

This study involved 22 middle schools in an urban Florida school district and included all middle school teachers and administrators in order to garner a high rate of response to the Principal’s Role Questionnaire (PRQ). There were potentially 1408 participant respondents in the three target groups. No other selection criteria were used.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher focused solely on secondary middle schools in the targeted district. Middle schools in this district are schools serving grades six through eight. All middle school principals (n=21), assistant principals (n=66), and teachers (n=1320) were asked to complete the PRQ. The researcher was a principal at one of the target middle schools and at the request of the committee chair did not complete a survey. The researcher had an overall good response rate to the PRQ, yielding 371 survey participants or 26% of the total target audience. Three hundred twenty seven teachers
participated, 25% of the teacher targeted group, 21 assistant principals, 32% of the assistant principal targeted group, and 12 principals, 57% of the targeted principal group. The “request for comment” questions did not have as good of response rate as the Likert scale PRQ survey questions. Seventy four (74) respondents or 20% made a comment for the first open ended question regarding changes in the role of the principal. Seventy eight (78) or 21% of the respondents made a comment for the second open ended question concerning the current role of the principal. Fifty nine (59) or 16% of the respondents made a comment for the third open ended question with respect to the future role of the principal and 73 (20%) of the respondents made a general comment about the role of the principal, for the final and fourth comment.

**Principal’s Role Questionnaire**

*Descriptive statistics*

A total of three-hundred and seventy one people participated in this study by completing the online survey for a response rate of 26%. The number of participants in each targeted group was: 327 teachers (n=327, 90.8%), 21 assistant principals (n=21, 5.8%), and 12 principals (n=12, 3.3%) respectively. Of the targeted groups who responded, 82 (22.7%) were male and 270 (77.3%) were female. Table 1 presents the categories of total educational experience for the three groups. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviations of participants’ age and experience in current role.
Table 1.

*Frequency and Percent of Total Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exp</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Assistant Principal</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.

*Means and Standard Deviations of Demographic and Research Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>44.66</td>
<td>11.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience current</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>9.23</td>
<td>9.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Changes</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Role</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes that Should Occur</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composite scores

Composite scores were computed for Role Changes, Current Role, and Changes That Should Occur by averaging the survey questions in that section. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for past (α=.832), current (α=.858), and future roles (α=.866) and were all considered to be of good reliability (Stevens, 1996).
Table 3.

*Means and Standard Deviations Research Variables by Position*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Asst Principals</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Changes</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Role</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes that Should Occur</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Questions*

The research questions addressed in this study were:

Question 1. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 2. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 3. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were met except for homogeneity of variance for Current role and normality for Changes that should occur. However, Stevens (1996) stated that violations of these assumptions have very little affect on the test.

To examine question 1, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The ANOVA was statistically significant, $F(2, 293) = 10.59, p < .001$ (eta=.067,
Post hoc tests (evaluated at p<.05) revealed that both Principals and Assistant principals had statistically greater mean score ratings compared to teachers (Table 3). Principals and assistant principals did not differ statistically.

To examine question 2, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The ANOVA was statistically significant, $F(2, 276) = 8.52, p < .001$ (eta=.058, power=.989). Post hoc tests (evaluated at p<.05) revealed that principals had statistically greater mean score ratings compared to teachers (Table 3). No other statistical differences were found.

To examine question 3, a univariate ANOVA was conducted to assess if differences exist on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal). The ANOVA was statistically significant, $F(2, 262) = 5.03, p < .01$ (eta=.037, power=.814). Post hoc tests (evaluated at p<.05) revealed that principals had statistically greater mean score ratings compared to teachers (Table 3). No other statistical differences were found.

Additional Analyses

Thirty-six ANOVAs were conducted on each of the principal role descriptors to assess if differences exist on each descriptor by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal) (Table 4). Fifteen of the 36 ANOVAs were statistically significant. The F-value superscript $^a$ indicates that Teachers’ scores were lower than both the Assistant Principals and Principals; $^b$ indicates that Teachers’ scores were lower than only Principals, and $^c$ indicates that Assistant Principals had lower scores than Principals. No other significant statistical differences were found. Seven of the thirty-six ANOVAs in
Table 4 were significant (as indicated by *), however, post hoc tests (p<.05) for those seven items revealed that no group’s mean score rating was statistically different from another’s group concerning that particular role descriptor, therefore no superscript is indicated.

The first research question on the survey, “What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?” consisted of 10 principal role descriptor statements, items 1-10, for the survey participants to respond to with a level of agreement: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree. Four role descriptors were statistically significant under this category. Mean score ranges for teachers, assistant principals, and principals were considered to be in agreement with scores ranging from 2.50 – 3.49 and in high agreement with scores of 3.50 – 4.00.

Research question two, “What is the current role of the secondary principal?” consisted of 14 principal role descriptor statements, items 11-24, and nine were statistically significant. Mean score ratings ranged from 2.86 – 3.41 for teachers, 3.14 – 3.67 for assistant principals, and 3.18 – 3.91 for principals.

The third research question, “What changes should occur in the future role of the secondary principal?,” consisted of 12 principal role descriptor statements, items 25-36, and only two were statistically significant in this category. Mean score ratings were 2.85 – 3.39 for teachers, 2.71 – 3.48 for assistant principals, and 3.17 – 3.82 for principals.

Findings are presented below in Table 4 for each principal role descriptor statement and an item by item summary of the role descriptors is located in appendix H.
Table 4.

ANOVAs on Each of the 36 Principal Role Descriptor Statements from the PRQ Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal’s Role Questionnaire</th>
<th>ANOVA statistics</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Asst Principal</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S D</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role.</td>
<td>13.522*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including</td>
<td>7.783*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academics, finances, and safety.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Higher standard of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such</td>
<td>7.113b</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as:</td>
<td>2.932</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school and community, school and district, school and government.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.</td>
<td>5.494b</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>4.457*</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The possibility of litigation has increase substantially.</td>
<td>2.064</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and</td>
<td>2.306</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Implementation of site-based decision-making strategies transfers responsibility to the</td>
<td>3.523*</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The principal must meet the enhanced needs of a more diverse student population as a result</td>
<td>3.686*</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of legislation and social changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.</td>
<td>1.908</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The principal is the key to school success.</td>
<td>6.628b</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The principal has the power to lead change</td>
<td>1.561</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.</td>
<td>8.992*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional</td>
<td>5.647b</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development for both new and established principals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time</td>
<td>9.400*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frames.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.</td>
<td>3.327*</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have</td>
<td>10.682b</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased the importance of the principal’s role as instructional leader.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in</td>
<td>3.486*</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s Role Questionnaire</td>
<td>ANOVA statistics</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Asst Principal</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their role (achievement, student success, instructional leadership) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, social issues, management issues).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Principals are multiple program managers: facilities, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, and community relations.</td>
<td>4.961 b</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>3.29 .70</td>
<td>3.48 .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.</td>
<td>7.506 b</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>2.90 .73</td>
<td>3.25 .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Principals are responsible for the morale of the staff.</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>3.41 .71</td>
<td>3.33 .48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal's role.</td>
<td>3.847 b</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>3.33 .64</td>
<td>3.19 .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>3.20 .73</td>
<td>3.14 .73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.</td>
<td>1.740</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>3.15 .70</td>
<td>3.29 .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.</td>
<td>1.387</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>3.15 .75</td>
<td>3.24 .70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities and expertise.</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>3.10 .77</td>
<td>3.24 .77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Principals should have more training in dealing with current issues.</td>
<td>1.675</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>3.08 .71</td>
<td>2.95 .80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.</td>
<td>3.061 *</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>3.39 .59</td>
<td>3.48 .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance-learning tools to provide just-in-time curriculum and instruction.</td>
<td>2.380</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>3.13 .68</td>
<td>3.29 .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. The principal will be responsible for providing programs that meet the needs of the school’s diverse population.</td>
<td>3.925 *</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>3.16 .66</td>
<td>3.43 .60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers.</td>
<td>11.089 *</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>2.85 .85</td>
<td>3.43 .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. The principal’s autonomy should commensurate with his/her responsibility.</td>
<td>10.159 b</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>2.96 .63</td>
<td>3.24 .77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.</td>
<td>2.005</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>2.86 .75</td>
<td>2.71 .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. The principal will be responsible in bringing the school and community together.</td>
<td>3.733 *</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>2.93 .69</td>
<td>3.14 .57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena and be an active advocate for public education.</td>
<td>1.528</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>2.98 .77</td>
<td>2.86 .85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: df = 2, 312; a = Teachers< Asst. and Principals; b = Teachers< Principals; c = Asst. < Principals; * = no statistical mean score difference between groups
Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if the perceptions of current principals and assistant principals (administrators) differ significantly from teachers’ perceptions in regards to what the secondary middle school principal’s role is and what it might or should look like in the future, thus adding the teacher’s voice to existing literature. This study was modeled after Goodwin’s (2002) national research study, *On the Edge of Chaos: A Delphi Study of the Changing Role of the Secondary Principal*, where confidence levels among principals on the role descriptors contained in the Principal’s Role Questionnaire were high (67% high and 33% moderate). Goodwin’s study involved principals only and the voice of the teacher had not been addressed regarding the perceived changing role of the principal. This study adds the teachers’ viewpoint about the role of the middle school principal to the literature.

The research questions: Q1 What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?; Q2 What is the current role of the secondary principal?; and Q3 What changes should occur in the future role of the secondary principal? were statistically significant and revealed that differences did exist between teachers and principals regarding mean score ratings on the three categories (changes, current, and future) of principal role descriptors on the PRQ. The additional analyses for the 36 individual principal role descriptors revealed that principals and assistant principals had statistically greater mean score ratings compared to teachers for five role descriptor statements over the three categories (changes, current, and future). In addition, principals had statistically greater mean score ratings than teachers for nine role descriptors and
principals had great mean score ratings than assistant principals for one role descriptor. No significant mean score rating differences were found among the three targeted groups for 21 principal role descriptor statements on the PRQ, although teacher mean score ratings for all 36 PRQ items were lower than principals’ and assistant principal mean score ratings were lower than principals’ for 29 PRQ items.

Concerning changes that have occurred in the role of the principal, teachers had statistically lower mean score ratings (m=2.52/3.27) than principals (m=3.25/3.83) and assistant principals (m=3.33/3.76) regarding the principal’s primary role being one of instructional leader and that principals are held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety. Teachers (m=3.18/3.23) had statistically lower mean score ratings than principals (m=3.83/3.75) but not assistant principals (m=3.60/3.55) for the role descriptors concerning the principals’ accountability for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc., and that technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.

Regarding the current role of the secondary principal, teacher mean score ratings were lower (m=3.20) than principals (m=3.82) and assistant principals (m=3.67) concerning the complexity of the principals’ role and its current state of transition. Teachers (m=3.17) also had lower mean score ratings than both the principals (m=3.82) and assistant principals (m=3.67) regarding the principal’s role to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames. Teachers had lower mean scale score ratings than principals, but not assistant principals, for the following role descriptors: the principal is the key to school success (teacher, m=2.86, principals, m=3.64, assistant
principal, m=3.24), the changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and established principals (teachers, m=3.31, principals, m=3.82, assistant principal, m=3.57), the state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal’s role to be the instructional leader (teachers, m=3.07, principals, m=3.82, assistant principal, m=3.62), principals are multiple program managers (teachers, m=3.29, principals, m=3.91, assistant principal, m=3.48), principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students (teachers, m=2.90, principals, m=3.64, assistant principal, m=3.25), and that required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal’s role (teachers, m=3.33, principals, m=3.82, assistant principal, m=3.19). One role descriptor, “there is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role and what demands their daily attention,” had lower mean score ratings by assistant principals (m=3.00) compared to principals (m=3.73) indicating that principals rated this role descriptor higher than assistant principals.

Question three, referencing the changes that should occur in the future role of the secondary principal, teachers (m=2.85) had lower mean score ratings than principals (m=3.75) and assistant principals (m=3.43) in regards to the principal having increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers. Teachers (m=2.96) had lower mean score ratings than principals (m=3.75) but not assistant principals (m=3.24) regarding the principal’s autonomy commensurate with his/her responsibility.
**Principal’s Role Questionnaire Comment Request Responses**

Miles and Huberman’s (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook,* was used as a guide for the qualitative data analysis. Miles and Huberman’s data analysis model (Figure 1) was used to analyze the data collected as the model serves as a tool to help ensure that “the qualitative researcher doesn’t jump to hasty, partial, unfounded conclusions” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.21).

![Figure 1. Miles and Huberman’s Data Analysis Model](Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Linacre (1995, p.405) states that Miles and Huberman’s model is productive and useful for “researchers who care about their research.” Linacre (1995, p.405) continues to point out that the “iterative process of analysis does require more thought, and take more time, than off-the-shelf quantitative analysis, but is more likely to lead to useful and defensible findings.” Data display is a key element in Miles and Huberman’s qualitative methodology and better displays are a major avenue to valid qualitative analysis. “All
displays are designed to assemble and organize information in an immediately accessible, compact form, so that the analyst can see what is happening” (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.21). The researcher then can either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next-step analysis which the display suggests may be useful. Qualitative data gives us a sense of what is happening in real life (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and in this study the perceived role of the principal was examined.

The major challenge in qualitative research is data reduction as everything seems to look important and the researcher must take a lot of information and reduce it to a short report (Linacre, 1995). Numbers are not totally left out of the qualitative analysis as the researcher identifies patterns or themes in the data. Patterns or themes are identified when the researcher isolates something that happens in the data a number of times and that consistently happens in a specific way. Linacre (1995) sums up the essence of qualitative data and points out that no two observers may see things in the same light.

“Qualitative data are words rather than numbers and words describe and explain. Words suggest new perspectives. Conclusions expressed as words seem more convincing than pages of numbers. But words are also ambiguous and difficult to compare objectively. It is never clear how much of a verbal description of one instance carries over to other instances. One observer’s description, however precise, may not concur with another’s” (p.406).

*Changes in the Principal’s Role – Teacher Responses*

As stated earlier, the researcher was particularly interested in the teacher responses, as there is an absence of literature regarding their perceptions, in terms of the role of the
principal. Qualitative data were sought through open-ended questions at the end of each section of the PDQ. Participants were asked to comment on changes in the role of the principal, the current role and the future role of the principal.

Comment request #1, “Please comment about any of these statements regarding changes in the role of the principal,” produced 74 responses, 65 were teacher responses. The overall perceptions of the 65 teacher respondents support the statement that the principals’ role has changed. Their remarks also supported the notion that although the perception is that the principal’s role has changed, the reality is that the traditional managerial roles are still present. Some supportive key terms and phrases regarding changes in the principal’s role were: “human resource manager,” “sets the attitude,” “more political than educational,” “disciplinarian,” “decision maker,” “technology/technician,” “less time,” “too many requirements,” “instructional leader is only one role,” and four comments included referenced the principal’s role as a “communicator.” Several comments suggested that student discipline takes too much time and therefore principals are unable to spend time in more important roles. Another comment suggested that the role has changed, but the person in the position has not.

Some teacher comments emphasized that the principal position requires attention to many operational issues or responsibilities that may keep principals in the “managerial” mode of running a school, instead of a change agent or instructional leader. Comments also indicated a perception that the principal is limited in his or her scope of work because of top down directives and that site based decision making has been de-emphasized as evidenced by these comments:
“Principals are not allowed to run schools as they should be run due to mandates.”

“Principals are limited because of directives”

“Site based decisions have been deemphasized”

Another perception is that principals are more interested in looking at the bottom line, consumed with test data. “Principals are more interested in looking at the numbers.” This comment goes hand in hand with accountability issues principals are facing with NCLB and Florida’s A++ plan. Technological changes are also perceived to have impacted the principalship and a sense that principals need to be experts on the technology aspect of the job was broached. The comment, “Technology has increased – limited face to face approach,” implied that technology has made the principal’s position less personal which may affect teacher and staff morale.

Current Role of the Principal – Teacher Responses

Comment request #2, “Your perceptions about the current role of the middle school principal are extremely important to the future of the position. Please comment on the current role of the principal,” generated 78 responses, 71 of which were teachers’. One theme that emerged was the issue of morale and the principalship. Staff morale and the principalship produced the most related comments indicating that it is of high importance to teachers. Teachers expressed this sentiment in key comments below.

“Knowing your leader cares about you”

“They need to work to improve teacher morale”

“Support staff and staff morale”
“Keeping up morale for all staff”
“Get to know the staff better”

Staff morale falls under human resource management and is clearly a role that was supported in the literature review (Katz, 1974; Mathews & Crow, 2003; Portin, 2003; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001). It was evident that teachers in this study wanted to feel supported and appreciated by their principals and that it should be a key role for principals.

The data analysis also revealed that teachers recognized the principals’ role regarding politics, safety, increased paperwork, and following policy. One comment suggested that principals should minimize procedures and stress which suggests that principals need to make sure unnecessary work isn’t being demanded of teachers thus increasing their heavy workload which in turn increases teacher stress.

“Safety is more a result of increased litigation.”

“Principals should work very hard to minimize procedures and stress.”

“Required documentation has increased paperwork.”

“Politics, legislation, and the demands of the community often get in the way of the principal’s true passion.”

“Principals today seem to be more of a watchdog; the role is one of policy following and safety concerns.”

“They appear to be little more than political puppets for the superintendent.”

Meeting the diverse needs of the particular school community was an observation of teachers for the current role of the principal. The perception that the school
community/population is ever changing just as society is ever changing also emerged from the teacher comments and has been documented in the literature (Copeland, 2001; ERS, 2000; Goens, 1998; Harris, et al, 2000; Holland, 1997; Murphy, 1994; Portin, 2003; Shellard, 2003; Shen, Rodriguez, & Rincones, 2000; Stronge, 1993; Tirozzi, 2001).

Representative comments from teachers were:

“We are expected to meet the needs of an ever changing population and an ever changing society.”

“The role is constantly changing because of the diversity of students and district mandates.”

“You cannot have achievement, student success and instructional leadership if you do not attend to the needs of parents, students, staff, and the school society as a whole.”

A perception that emerged for the current principalship role was that there are too many responsibilities and roles for the position. As one respondent put it “Principals have so many irons in the fire that I sometimes wonder how they get it all done.” Another stated: “The job will allow you to work 24/7 if you choose.” The perception that the many expectations on principals hindered success was suggested and the lack of time to get everything done also surfaced in the following teachers’ comments.

“Too many expectations on the principal create a work environment in which it is impossible to be successful.”

“Principals must deal with so many variables – education, assessment, budget, special needs, safety and crime, and litigation – it’s tough.”
“Not enough time in the day to do a good job of everything.”

“Principals no longer have time and resources necessary to run their schools to the best of their ability.”

**Future Role of the Principal – Teacher Responses**

Comment request #3, “Your comments about the future of the principalship will help the district, as well as university programs. Please comment about the future of the principalship,” generated 59 responses from research participants, 56 were from teachers.

Technology was the top comment from respondents in regards to the future role of the principal. Four of the 56 comments dealt specifically with the need for principals to be up to date and trained on the latest technology. Two representative comments were: “The role of principal will be heavily influenced by the development of new technologies,” and “The future of the principalship will require more technical training.”

Teachers also asserted that being a good collaborator was an important role for the principal with three specific comments. As one teacher shared:

“The role of future principals should be that of a collaborator. They should work together with each of the different stakeholders and form leadership committees to take on some of the responsibilities and be part of the decision making process.”

Other teacher comments were similar to the principals’ role expectations expressed by Mathews and Crow (2003) and Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003) that the principal should be visible in the community and take a more active political role to advocate for public education. One comment suggested that the principal’s role must
move toward being academic in nature and not just one of disciplinarian, “Administrators have to get out of the discipline business and into the curriculum business if we are to move forward.”

General Comments Concerning the Role of the Principal

Comment request #4, “The voice of teachers and assistant principals has been overlooked when reviewing the literature about the role of the principal. Please make any general comments about the role of the principal that you would like to share,” provoked 73 participant responses, 67 were teachers. Two main themes emerged from the data analysis: What the principal should not do and what the principal should do. There were several extraneous remarks in the data that were eliminated in this section because the remarks were irrelevant to the research. A few examples of those remarks were: “I really like our current principal”, or “My principal needs to go”, “You need to get real” and “what a ridiculous word – principalship.”

The Principal Should Not

There were six survey responses that dealt with the perception of what the principal should not do. The comments from the teachers suggested that the principal should not have favorites (in regards to staff), should not delegate everything and should not have too much power. Some examples are:

“One individual with too much power can cause a great deal of damage, not the least of which is driving well-qualified teachers from the profession.”

“The assistant principals carry out many of the duties of the principal…it is important for the principal to be an active part of the team.”
“A good principal doesn’t have favorites.”

The Principal Should

Thirty three survey responses provided data concerning the perceptions of what principals should do. Responses ranged from being a good manager and disciplinarian to being a politician; an advocate for public education and his or her school. The perception that the principal should be a morale builder had the most specific responses with six.

Four representative comments follow:

“Teachers will go the extra mile when they are thought of as professionals who are competent in their field and provided the appropriate respect and authority to do their jobs well.”

“Emphasis has been placed on student success, but the teachers well being is greatly overlooked.”

“A good leader needs to have the ability to make their staff feel valued.”

“The principal is very important in keeping the morale up at a school.”

Comment request #2 elicited similar data as far as the importance of the principal’s role regarding staff morale.

The principal should also be a good communicator as evidenced by these comments from teachers:

“Principals that are in direct communication with their teachers execute their policies better.”

“A principal needs to be well versed in many areas—particularly communication and people skills”.
“Lack of tact, lack of communications skills, favoritism, and over all indifference can kill a classroom and thus a school population.”

Other comments from teachers were in direct alignment with previous researchers’ work (Boyer, 1993; Fullan, 1998; Hill, 2003; Hollar, 2004; Mathews & Crow, 2003; Murphy, 1998; Portin, et al., 2003; Terrozi, 2001) indicated the role of the principal should be: a good listener, assistive and supportive, disciplinarian, manager, delegator, community representative, human resource manager (hiring, recruiting, retaining) and should also be visible. Comments supporting these perceived roles were:

“A principal’s power lies in the perception of their level of service to their shareholders. Staff must feel as though the principal is their primary facilitator that enables their success.”

“The principal should be more involved with the community.”

“The most important role of the principal is hiring. Putting the best possible teachers in the front of the students is more important than the role of instructional leader.”

“The principal should listen to the voice of the teachers about literature since we have to teach and we know more about the needs of the students.”

“I believe principals need to be seen on campus frequently.”

“The ability to communicate and delegate well are always the most important qualities needed in any manager.”

“Discipline needs to be a focus for every school.”

“A principal should first of all be a good listener.”
“Principals should get out into the classrooms on a much more regular basis.”

Administrator Responses

Principals’ and assistant principals’ responses to the open ended questions were somewhat more focused on the substance of the question, which makes sense because they are administrators and have more experience with the different roles being addressed, whereas many of the teacher’s comments were focused on their role as teacher and their frustration with the system as a whole, making the comments more personal in nature to them. Twenty one assistant principals and twelve principals completed the survey, however only nine assistants and eight principals made comments to the opened ended questions.

It was evident in the comments that the perception regarding the perceived desired change in the role of the principal, from one of manager to instructional leader, was real; however, the respondents commented that the operational/managerial tasks of running a school made that role change challenging. Serving a diverse population with many needs and having to answer to many different stakeholder groups were also perceived as a key changes in the role of the principal. The lack of site based management also emerged as the participants’ perception was that there has been a return to the top down management approach. The lack of time and the inability to get everything done to serve all the stakeholder groups well also emerged as a perception of principals and assistant principals. Some administrator responses that were representative of these perceptions were:

“The principal answers to so many groups now that I think it is becoming
increasingly difficult for him or her to focus attention on any one area of need. It is almost an impossible job to do well.”

“Principals must meet the needs of diverse populations.”

“Site based decision making with limited true and effective control of resources is the other area that has not been addressed in this transfer of responsibility.”

“Although the role of the principal has shifted to that of instructional leadership, the traditional management responsibilities are also still evident. The job is becoming increasingly more difficult to master.”

“The role of curriculum leader is desired, but the daily grind makes that difficult.”

“Site based decision making is very limited.”

“Principals today have many responsibilities that detract from being the movers of instruction. Operational tasks constantly pull me away from the classroom.”

There were six individual responses, listed below, regarding the perceptions of the current role of the principal and they clearly indicate that time, litigation, and safety are key concerns for the role and also that principals must be able to multi-task.

“The principals’ role is to set the tone for the school’s climate. Principals are multi-tasking, multi-role people.”

“Too much to do for administrators and teachers. Not enough time in the day to do a good job of everything.”

“The role of the middle school principal is transformational, instructional and managerial in nature.”
“Nearly every decision must now be weighed against the possibility of litigation.”
“Safety is more a result of increased litigation.”
“Principals no longer have time and resources necessary to run their schools to
the best of their ability.”

As far as the future, only three administrative survey participants responded in this
category. One comment dealt with technology and the need for training as well as
assistance (as in a full-time technology person) in keeping it all running. Two comments
suggested that the principal needs to be more of a politician and advocate for his or her
school and public education.

The last comment request in the PRQ regarding any general thoughts on the
principalship elicited only six individual responses from administrative participants.
Collaboration, team builder, understanding human being and people person were skills
mentioned in the comments regarding the future role of the principal. One comment listed
below painted a bleak future for the principalship while another suggested that principals
should have more decision making authority.

“In reality, the future of the principalship is doomed for failure. The added roles,
tasks and responsibilities require additional resources. This comes at a time
when the resources are drying up as the budget is cut again and again.”
“The role of the principal should be enhanced to include more decision making
authority over core curriculum issues. Too often, elected officials and state or
district personnel are dictating initiatives that are to occur at the school level
without thinking through the impact of those initiatives. It leaves the principal
trying to figure out how to meet the requirements of the mandate without sacrificing student or staff time or resources on wasted initiatives.”

Teachers had similar principals’ role perceptions regarding technology, being an advocate for education, and collaboration as indicated by these comments:

“The role of the principal should be more collaborative than autonomous.”

“If a principal’s people skills are lacking, he or she will be an ineffective leader.”

“It is important for principals to be understanding, people persons.”

Summary

The qualitative and quantitative data reflect similarities as well as differences in role perception of the principal between teachers and administrators. Although the overall ANOVAs for the three major research questions were statistically significant, indicating a difference in mean score ratings for each category of principal role descriptors between the three groups, individually there were only 15 role descriptor statements that were statistically significant. Teachers, principals, and assistant principals had similar mean score ratings for 21 principal role descriptors, indicating that teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions regarding the different principal role descriptors, were more similar than different indicating that the three groups are more in agreement with each other than the overall research questions suggest.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

(Summary, Discussion of Findings, and Recommendations)

“Probably the most important
-and the most difficult-
job of the school based reformer
is to change the prevailing culture of a school.
Ultimately a school’s culture has far more
influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse
than the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board,
or even the principal can ever have.”

Roland Barth

Chapter Five includes a review of the purpose and methods of the study and a
synthesis of the findings and their relationship with the professional literature. The
implications and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for further study,
are also discussed.

Summary of the Study’s Purpose and Procedures

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of teachers on the
changing role of middle school principal and compare with the principals and assistant
principals perceptions of the changing role of the middle school principal. The lack of the
teacher’s voice in the literature concerning their perceptions regarding the role of the
principal was the catalyst that prompted the researcher to conduct the study. Part of the
process required investigating the literature regarding the changing role of the secondary
principal over the past 10 years. The research questions for this study were:
Question 1. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Role Changes by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 2. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Current Role by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Question 3. Are there significant differences in participants’ perceptions on Changes that Should Occur by Position (Teacher vs. Assistant vs. Principal)?

Synthesis of Findings and Conclusions

Methodology

*The American Heritage College Dictionary* (1997) defined methodology as “A body of practices, procedures, and rules used in a discipline or an inquiry; a set of working methods; the study or theoretical analysis of such working methods” (p.858). The analysis of the procedures of inquiry in this research study provided intriguing questions and interesting possibilities for future methodological research.

This study used a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was obtained from the Likert scale Principal’s Role Questionnaire survey (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) and qualitative data was captured from the open ended comment requests at the end of each category of role descriptor statements. Mean score ranges for teachers, assistant principals, and principals were considered to be in agreement with scores ranging from 2.50 – 3.49 and in high agreement with scores of 3.50 – 4.00. Each open ended comment request was related to the set of principal role descriptors in each category (changes, current, future) on the PRQ. The last open ended
comment request allowed respondents to add general comments about the role of the principal. The comment requests were as follows:

1. Please comment about any of these statements regarding changes in the role of the principal.
2. Your perceptions about the current role of the middle school principal are extremely important to the future of the position. Please comment on the current role of the principal.
3. Your comments about the future of the principalship will help the district as well as university programs. Please comment about the future of the principalship.
4. The voice of teachers and assistant principals has been overlooked when reviewing the literature about the role of the principal. Please make any general comments about the role of the principal that you would like to share.

*The Principal’s Role Questionnaire*

The Principal’s Role Questionnaire (PRQ) (Goodwin, 2002) was used in this study with slight modification as approved by the researcher’s doctoral committee. The PRQ was developed and validated by Rebecca Goodwin, Marshall University, in 2002. Permission to use the PRQ was obtained by the researcher in February of 2007. The questionnaire had three sections of principal role descriptor statements that addressed the changing role of the principal, the current role of the principal and changes that should occur in the principal’s future role. Goodwin’s PRQ was developed and used for existing principals after expert principals created and agreed on principal role descriptor
statements through several iterations during a Delphi technique research process. The survey was originally developed for principals, not teachers, however the researcher felt that teachers would be able to rate the role descriptor statements based on their school based experience.

**Principals’ Roles**

Matthews and Crow (2003) suggest that there are primarily seven different roles principals have and that most everything a principal does falls into one of the seven categories. The roles are: mentor, supervisor, leader, learner, manager, politician and advocate encompass just about everything a principal does. Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003) had similar findings and concluded that regardless of school type, schools need leadership in seven critical areas: instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development and micro-political. Goodwin (2002) summarized these roles using the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards for advanced programs in education administration (NPBEA, 1995) into these four categories: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and political and community leadership. These four categories encompass the seven roles and seven leadership types described by Matthews & Crow (2003) and Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003) and provided the framework to analyze the data and draw conclusions regarding the data presented in this study.

Twelve principal role descriptor statements from the PRQ referred to the role of instructional leadership for the principal (curriculum, ensuring quality of instruction,
ensuring quality of teaching resources, supervision, and the learning environment;
professional development and human resources, and student personnel services), thirteen
principal role descriptors were categorized as referring to organizational leadership
(organizational management, interpersonal relationships, financial management and
resources allocation, and technology and information systems), six principal role
descriptors fell under strategic leadership (professional and ethical leadership,
information management and evaluation, promoting vision, mission and goals), and five
principal role descriptors were categorized under the political and community leadership
role of the principal (community and media relations, educational law, public policy and
political systems, developing capital, buffering and mediating internal as well as external
interests) (Goodwin, 2002; Mathews & Crow, 2003; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond &
Gundlach, 2003). There was also an opportunity for respondents to comment about any
aspect of the role of the principal at the end of the survey. The voice of teachers was
lacking in the literature and this study contributed to the literature by capturing the
teachers’ voice regarding the changes, current status and future role of the principal.

The electronic survey (Appendix D) was created and placed on
surveymonkey.com and was live from October 1, 2007 through October 16, 2007. The
initial letter of invitation was sent out to research participants along with two additional
reminders to complete the PRQ. The researcher had a 26% response rate, which was
better than the researcher initially anticipated, however lower than the 30% considered as
a minimal response rate for electronic surveys (Bourque & Fielder, 2003).
Overall, teachers, assistant principals, and principals agreed on all 36 role descriptors presented in the PRQ based on the mean score ranges of 2.50 – 3.49 for agreement and 3.50 – 4.00 for high agreement. There was no mean score rating less than 2.52 for any descriptor statement. Teacher mean score ratings were less than principals’ for all 36 PRQ items and less than assistant principals for 31, however all mean score ratings were over 2.52 and considered to be in agreement as they fell in the agreement range. Assistant principals were in high agreement for 12 role descriptors on the PRQ based on mean score ratings of 3.50 and above and in agreement for the other 24 PRQ items. It is not surprising that assistant principals had higher overall mean score ratings than teachers and that they were more in alignment with principals as both groups are considered administrators and most likely have also been teachers; having experienced the work of teachers. It was assumed, on the other hand, that teachers probably haven’t been administrators and therefore haven’t experienced the work of an administrator first hand, which is a possible reason for the overall lower mean score ratings on the PRQ.

*Instructional Leadership*

Changes that have occurred in the role of the secondary principal for instructional leadership produced two role descriptor statements that had similar mean score ratings between teachers, assistant principals, and principals. Those were: the principal must be an expert on teaching and learning; and, principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.

Under the category of current role of the secondary principal for instructional leadership there was one role descriptor statement that teachers, principals and assistant
principals had similar mean score ratings for: special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.

The category of future role of the secondary principal for instructional leadership yielded three role descriptor statements that had similar mean score ratings between the three groups which were: principals should have more training in dealing with current issues; principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the needs of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance-learning tools to provide just-in-time curriculum and instruction; and, the principal will be responsible for providing programs that meet the needs of the school’s diverse population.

Teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals and assistant principals on one principal role descriptor regarding changes that have occurred for principals under instructional leadership: being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role. Teachers mean score ratings were lower than principals but not assistant principals for the role descriptor statement: higher standards of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such outcomes as test scores, drop out rates, suspensions, etc.

Concerning instructional leadership and current role descriptors, teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals but not assistant principals for the following three role descriptor statements: the changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and established principals; the state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the
importance of the principal’s role as an instructional leader; and, principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.

Summary

Teachers’ data indicated the need for the principal to be experts on good teaching and learning. It was evident that teachers understood that principals are dealing with a more diverse student population in terms of cultural, physical, psychological, social, economic, and academic backgrounds. Meeting the needs of today’s student population, as well as future populations, requires principals to stay abreast of research based instructional delivery models that will meet the needs of their students. Teachers indicated that technology does and will continue to play a key role in education and principals need to be technologically literate not only to keep up with technological equipment, but also virtual classrooms, and help teachers get the technological training they need.

Some teachers in this study did not see the principal’s primary role as the instructional leader, as it was the lowest rated score of the 36 PRQ items. The teachers’ mean score of 2.52 was still considered in agreement with the statement however it was not as high as the principals’ (3.25) or assistant principals’ (3.33) mean score rating. Teacher (3.07) scores were also lower than principals’ (3.82) concerning the role statement: the state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability has increased the importance of the principals’ need to be the instructional leader; however both mean score ratings were over 3.0 and considered in agreement. For the purpose of this study, an instructional leader is defined as the person who ensures the
quality of instruction and teaching resources, models teaching practices, and supervises
curriculum (Portin, 2003). Teachers and principals in this study were in agreement with
mean score ratings of 2.96 and 3.42 that principals should be experts on teaching and
learning. Teachers had a lower mean score than principals’, 3.18 and 3.83 respectively,
regarding the principals’ accountability for student achievement and discipline but were
still in the agreement range. The possibility for the lower score ratings could be that
traditionally in this school district assistant principals deal with discipline and teachers
feel the weight of test score accountability as being on their shoulders as they are the ones
in the classroom teaching the students. The principal may not have a direct hand in
disciplining students or teaching a child for the purpose of taking a test, however research
reflects that the principal is held accountable for the data that the school produces
whether it is disciplinary statistics or test scores.

Teachers also had lower mean scores than principals concerning continual
professional development for principals yet they agreed that principals need to meet the
needs of a diverse, high speed/high technology society, which appears to be
contradictory.

Strategic Leadership

There were no principal role descriptor statements under changes that have
occurred in the secondary role of the principal that were classified under strategic
leadership however, there were two principal role descriptor statements under current role
that teachers, assistant principals and principals had similar mean score ratings on. They
were: the role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school and the principal has the power to lead change.

Teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals but not assistant principals regarding the principal’s strategic leadership role descriptor under current role: the principal is key to school success. Teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals and assistant principals regarding the descriptor statement: the role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity. As far as the future role of the principal under strategic leadership, the teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals but not assistant principals regarding the role descriptor: the principal’s autonomy should commensurate with his/her responsibility.

Summary

Teachers, assistant principals, and principals perceived that as the leaders of the school, principals should set the tone at the school and establish the mission, vision, and the goals to meet them. Teachers as well as principals and assistant principals indicated that they felt the principal does have the power to lead change and that the role of the principal is complex and in transition, which is in agreement with the literature. Some teachers did not want to see the principal’s autonomy increase to match the level of responsibility of the principal, as indicated by almost a point difference in mean score ratings, teachers 2.96, principals 3.75, however, they were still considered in agreement with the item. Other responses on the PRQ indicated all three groups want to work collaboratively together and teachers indicated that principals have the power to lead change, so it could be inferred that the “power to lead change” comes from collaboration.
Operational Leadership/Managerial

Teachers, assistant principals, and principals had similar mean score ratings for the principal role descriptor: implementation of site-based decision-making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal, under changes that have occurred in the role of the secondary principal.

The current operational leadership role descriptors for the principals generated similar mean score ratings between teachers, assistant principals and principals for the role descriptor: the role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.

The changes that should occur in the future role of the secondary principal yielded four role descriptor statements that teachers, assistant principals, and principals had similar mean score ratings: increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance; increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance; there should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities and expertise; and the principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.

Teachers had a lower mean score rating than principals and assistant principals under operational changes in the principal ship role for the role descriptor: the principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety. Teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals but not assistant principals for the role statement: technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.
The operational difference between teachers, who had lower mean score ratings than assistant principals and principals, under current role was: the role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames. Teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals but not assistant principals for the following two role descriptors: principals are multiple program managers: facilities, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, and community relations; and, required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal’s role. Teachers indicated their need for more clerical assistance however they did not see the paperwork aspect of the principal’s job as having increased.

Under operational leadership, for the future role of the principal, teachers had lower mean score ratings than principals and assistant principals for the role descriptor: the principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers.

Summary

Teachers did perceive that if a site based management model was being used at the school level more responsibility would fall on the principal. All three groups perceived school security as an important issue and that it has required principals to focus more time and attention to it. Teachers also indicated that with all the paperwork requirements placed on schools that there is a need for more clerical assistance, as well as the need to increase professional assistance to deal with all the requirements, responsibilities, and needs of students, teachers, and staff. Teachers’ mean score ratings (3.15) were lower than principals’ (3.50) regarding increased paperwork and clerical
tasks for the principal, however, their scores were still in agreement range. Skills that teachers and principals also agreed on for the principal were the ability for the principal to get people to collaborate and cooperate and both indicated the need for principals to develop these skills in teachers and students based on their mean score ratings of 3.39, teachers and 3.82, principals.

Teachers and assistant principals had lower mean scores regarding principals being held to higher standards of accountability in academics, finances, technology, and safety with scores of 3.27, 3.76, and 3.83 respectively but once again all three scores fell in the agreement range with assistant principals and principals in high agreement. It appeared that some teachers did not want principals to have more responsibility concerning resource (human and financial) management, including hiring and firing teachers due to their lower mean score rating of 2.85 on the item compared to principals’ 3.75, however both scores fell in the agreement range.

*Political and Community Leadership/External Development Leadership*

Under changes, principals, assistant principals and teachers had similar mean score ratings for the role descriptor statements: the principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government and that the possibility of litigation has increased substantially. Under the category of future role of the principal there were three role descriptor statements that teachers, assistant principals and principals had similar mean score ratings: the future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals; the principal will be responsible in bringing the school and
community together; and principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena and be an active advocate for public education.

Summary

Teachers did perceive that the principal is a liaison between many different stakeholder groups and that one role of the principal needs to be to bring the school and school community together to reach educational goals. Being an advocate for education and being vocal and visible in that arena was an accepted role that teachers expressed for the future of the principal.

Summary of All Responses

The literature clearly acknowledges the impact principals have on schools they lead, as they are considered the keystone of effective schools (Educational Research Service (ERS), 2000; Fullan, 2002; Olson, 2000; Portin, 2003; Shellard, 2003). It is the principal’s office that is singled out when speaking of school success or failure which is why the position has been said to be the key position in American public schools (Blasé & Kirby 2000; Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Bloom, 1999; Chirichello, 2004; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; ERS, 2000; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Kennedy, 2002; Harris, 2004; McEwan, 2003; Olson, 2000; Stronge, 1993; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2001). In this study, teacher responses to the descriptor: the principal is key to school success were lower than principals, however, they were still considered in agreement with a 2.86 mean score rating. It is possible the wording of the statement caused the item to get lower ratings from teachers because it may have led teachers to believe that the principal was the only factor to be
considered for a school’s success. The research has shown that successful schools have effective principals, which is just one piece of the puzzle when looking at the total school picture.

Since the 1980s, it has been generally recognized that the primary role of the principal should be that of instructional leader (Goodwin, 2002; Hallinger, 1992) and this study confirms that principals acknowledge the instructional leadership role. However, there was not strong agreement between principals and teachers concerning the principal’s primary role being the instructional leader based on the mean score ratings on the PRQ. Comments for this role indicator varied from teachers. Some suggested that principals should just let the teachers teach and leave them alone, while others suggested that principals are unable to be instructional leaders due to all the other responsibilities they have, making it difficult to focus or devote much time to that particular role. Instructional leadership is an area that the literature suggests principals should be spending most of their time, but studies have shown that principals spend their time in three major areas: discipline/student management, staff supervision/needs, interaction with students in general (Pierce, 2000) and comments in this study lend support to that notion. Teachers did indicate that the future role of the principal should be more instructional in nature and particularly that principals should know what good teaching and learning is and looks like in the classroom.

The significance of the principal to the school community has been well established in the literature (Boyer, 1983; Edinger & Murphy, 1995; ERS, 2000; Goodwin, 2002; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Holland, 1997) and this study supports the
importance of the principal’s role in the community. Teachers, as well as principals, see
the need for the principal to be a role model in the community and to be more involved in
advocating for their school and public education in general.

The principals’ authority and ability to make decisions were both key issues that
surfaced in the discourse regarding the perceived principal shortage (Cusick, 2003;
Delisio, 2006; ERS, 1998; Fullan, 1998; Kennedy, 2001; Kimball & Sirontnik, 2000;
Lashway, 2002; NASSP, 1998; NASSP, 2003; Pierce, 2000; Price, 2004). Researchers
found that potential principal candidates were not applying for principal jobs because of
the perception was that the principal is responsible for everything but lacks the authority
to make decisions (Cushman, 1992; Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Hill, 2003; Langer &
Schacter, 2003). The lack of decision making power was just one reason the job was
unappealing to potential candidates and this sentiment was expressed by principals in the
literature as well as in this study. As Hill (2003, p.8) stated “when principals lack the
authority to choose teachers or adapt methods and schedule, they become mere middle
managers…they can easily be put in a double bind of being responsible for everything
while lacking the authority to decide anything.” Bryk and Schneider (2003) reference the
principals’ ability and authority to change staff who are not on board with the school’s
mission and vision as being key to developing relational trust and collaborative working
environments cite cases where principal’s without that authority have been unsuccessful
in bringing about the desired changes needed for school reform. Goodwin’s (2002) study
also confirmed the principals’ erosion of authority and the need to increase the autonomy
of the principal. School boards need to empower principals and give them the authority
they need to make and implement decisions (Boyer, 1983, Chmelynski, 2001; ERS, 1999; Goodwin, 2002; Kennedy, 2000; Mallone & Caddell, 2000). High agreement did not exist for PRQ items that suggested increasing the principal’s authority, autonomy, responsibility, or hiring and firing power, as they were the lowest rated items on the PRQ with the exception of the principal as the instructional leader.

Katz’s (1974) human skill, the ability to work effectively with others, is key to a principal’s success and clearly teachers throughout this study emphasized the need for principals to be very in touch with the morale of the staff and to make collaboration a way of work in their schools. Interestingly enough, teachers and principals agreed in this area as indicated by comments from teachers and principals and their responses on the PRQ.

Complexity of the principal’s role has been well researched in the literature (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Fink & Brayman 2006; Fullan, 1997; Goodwin, 2002; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Pierce, 2000; Portin & Shen 1998; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach, 2004) and this study supports previous findings. Role tension adds to the complexity of the principal position. Ripley (1997) identified different kinds of tensions that confront principals and pull them in different directions. Tensions of leadership (collaborative vs. authoritarian, masculine vs. feminine, instructional leader vs. manager, leader vs. servant), tensions of needs (needs of one vs. needs of many, teacher as teacher vs. teacher as whole person, teacher growth vs. student growth), and social and cultural tensions (principal’s vision vs. communal vision, rhetoric vs. reality, stability vs. change)
(1997, p. 55-64) all add to the complexity of the role. This tension is magnified by the many programs the principal manages as confirmed by principals in this study.

Conclusions

The Changing Role of the Secondary Principal

The plethora of research reporting shortages in applicants for the principalship has brought much popular and professional attention to the principalship and the principal’s perceived role(s), as well as the conditions in which principals’ work. Overall, this study supports the findings of other reports, studies, and articles in terms of principal perceptions of the principals’ role (Educational Research Service, 1999; Goodwin, 2002; Institute for Educational Research, 2000; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2001; National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, 1987; Public Agenda, 2001; and United States Department of Education, 2000). These studies, including this research, indicated that the principalship has become more complex and that changes in society and in education have contributed to this complexity. Teachers in this study did not have high agreement (m=3.20) that the principalship is more complex, which leads the researcher to postulate that there may be a disconnection between the principal’s work and the many different roles encompassed in the position, and what teachers want or see the role of the principal to be. This study did not address specifically what role or roles teachers want principals to have or fulfill however, through their comments, teachers did indicate that the roles of collaborator and educational advocate were important.
Principals in this study agreed (m=3.25) that being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role. Principals scored higher (m=3.82) on the role descriptor that emphasized that accountability has increased the importance of the principal to take on the role of instructional leader. This indicates that principals do see the instructional leadership role as important however comments principals made on the PRQ indicated that other demands and responsibilities of the position may prevent them from giving the role the attention needed, thus not making it a primary role. Teachers on the other hand rated this item the lowest of all 36 role descriptors with a mean rating score of m=2.52, indicating that they did not highly agree that instructional leadership was the principal’s primary role. Teacher and administrator comments indicated that there are many demands occupying the principal’s time and that could explain the lower score for that particular item. One comment a teacher made indicated that although the role has changed the person in the position has not. This comment may suggest the possibility that a principal takes on or continues the role that he or she feels most comfortable with or that he or she is not willing to change.

It is refreshing to see that teachers and principals are more on the same page than not when you consider that there was no significant statistical difference on 22 of the individual principal role descriptors and no PRQ item had a mean score rating below a 2.52, indicating agreement on all 36 PRQ items. While the findings in this study did not reveal any new or unexpected insights into the principalship or principals’ roles, it did reinforce previous studies and confirm the complexity and non-linearity of the principal’s job. It also raises a question about what teachers want from their principals and what
roles they see as important to them. Teachers’ mean score ratings for all 36 PRQ role descriptor items were lower than principals’ and none had a mean score rating of 3.50 or higher, which was the score needed for high agreement between teachers and principals. Since most principals have come up through the ranks having been teachers and know the scope of teachers’ work, some level of agreement was expected. It was expected that teachers’ lack of experience as administrators would affect their responses to the PRQ and there were statistically significant mean score ratings for 14 of the role descriptors between principals and teachers.

The PRQ data showed no high level of agreement between teachers and principals which led the researcher to postulate that much work must be done to bring school staffs together for the common good of the students and community they serve, in order to achieve success with their student population. Previous research indicated schools that are successful have an effective principal and staff that works collaboratively together and have a strong sense of collegiality (DiPaola & Moran, 2003; ERS, 2000; Mathews & Crow, 2003; Murphy, 1994; Portin, et al., 2003; Shen & Crawford, 2003; Shen & Rodriguez, 2000; Tirozzi, 2001; Wanzare & DaCosta, 2001). Teachers in this study indicated they wanted a collaborative work atmosphere and creating that type of environment with large staffs would be one of the challenges for current and future principals. Bryk and Schneider refer to an ideal school size of about 350 students, small, in order to establish a trusting, collaborative school environment, further stating that the larger the school the less face to face interaction occurs and more bureaucratic relations
exist. Unfortunately in large school districts such as the one in this study, most schools are 3 to 6 times that size.

Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, talks about having the right people on the bus in order to make things happen. Bryk and Schneider (2003) suggest that in order for the principal to reshape the school community, he or she should hire strong people into staff vacancies and counsel out those whose practice remains inconsistent with the school’s mission and values. “The inability of the principal to remove a few problematic teachers undermined trust (p.43)” and the faculty of the school mentioned were unsuccessful in their attempts to collaborate and the academic environment did not improve. Teacher data in this study indicated that some teachers do not want principals to have the authority to hire and fire, control over resources, or have the autonomy that is commensurate with their responsibility, based on their mean score ratings for all these items being below 3.0. This puts principals in a precarious position as ultimately the principal is charged with the responsibility for improvement of student achievement, as well as the safe and effective running of his or her school. In order to remove problematic employees, principals must go through due process, which can take years. The researcher understands the need for due process however believes the process takes too long and damages the overall culture of the school.

An “us and them” attitude cannot exist between principals and teachers if school staffs are truly to get anything done and overcome the many obstacles that may prevent the accomplishment of the goals established in education. Unfortunately, this study’s teacher comments confirms that there is still a perception of an underlying tone of “us
and them” on school staffs; “us” being the teachers and “them” being the administrators. In order to make headway in our schools, teachers and administrators need to work collaboratively, creating a collegial school environment that promotes high expectations for all students as well as all staff. The continuous work to bring people together, to work collaboratively, is clearly laid out for principals.

Bryk and Schneider (2003) postulate that relational trust must exist in order for there to be meaningful school improvement. During their 10 year study of 400 Chicago elementary schools they found that relationship trust among teachers, parents, and school leaders improves the routine work of the school and was the key resource for them. Survey results on school trust were linked to evidence from the schools’ academic productivity as measured by student assessment in reading and mathematics to assess its’ influence on student achievement. According to Bryk and Schneider (2003) there are four key elements for relational trust: respect, personal regard, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity. Listening to what each person has to say and valuing it in the decision making process is the first element, respect. Having a willingness to do more than the job requires, more than the minimum is the second element, personal regard. The third element, competence in core role responsibilities has to do with competence; having the skills and qualifications to do your job and the last element, personal integrity, is about keeping your word and doing what you say you are going to do. Bryk and Schneider (2003) further state that relational trust is much more than just making everyone feel good.
Relational trust entails much more than just making school staff feel good about their work environment and colleagues. A school cannot achieve relational trust simply through some workshop, retreat, or form of sensitivity training, although all of these can help. Rather, schools build relational trust in day-to-day social exchanges. Through their words and actions, school participants show their sense of their obligations toward others, and others discern these intentions. Trust grows through exchanges in which actions validate these expectations (p.43).

Goodwin’s (2002) Delphi study generated many interesting responses from principals concerning their many roles. When asked to indicate what those roles were, one principal responded eloquently with the following quote that sums up the research quite well.

“Accountant, acrobat, advisor, arbitrator, buffer, business manager, change agent, cheerleader, child advocate, coach, communicator, confidant, consultant, coordinator, counselor, curriculum designer, curriculum leader, damage controller, decision maker, delegator, disciplinarian, door mat, encourager, evaluator, facilitator, facility engineer, financial planner, fire marshal, foundation, friend, housekeeper, historian, human resources expert, initiator, innovator, instructional leader, leader, liaison, manager, mediator, mentor, motivator, negotiator, orator, organizer, politician, public relations specialist, pacifier, pastor, peacemaker, problem solver, psychologist, researcher, risk-taker, role model, scheduler, servant, supervisor, surrogate parent, target, teacher visionary. This has always reminded me of the scope of our jobs. However, I still believe our main
two roles are establishing a vision to bring about improvement in student achievement and keeping a tent over the circus” (Goodwin, 2002, p.178).

Roles listed are many and varied, as the response clearly explicates the magnitude and importance of the principal position. The principal, through these many roles, attempts to keep the show running smoothly, hoping that by doing so the tent stays over the circus, allowing the school operation to go on effectively and efficiently everyday for the students we serve.

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in one urban school district in Florida restricting sample size to 22 middle schools. Based on the sample size, nationwide generalizations are limited. The structure of the principalship in this particular district could have possibly influenced the responses from the participants as it may be the only administrative experience of the participant.

The study used a single instrument, the online Principal’s Role Questionnaire survey, for a very complex issue; therefore, no answer to “why” participants responded the way they did was sought or given, which would be very helpful for future studies of the principalship. The wording of the principal role descriptor statements was possibly a limitation of the study as each statement could have been interpreted differently and not as intended. The PRQ was originally designed for principals and may not have been considered teacher friendly. The survey itself was a limitation as there is no way of knowing if respondents accurately reflected their positions, experience, and age. The survey response rate of 26% was also considered a limitation. Bourque and Fielder
(2003) state that a 30% response rate is minimal, however they also acknowledge that you get what you can get when conducting mail or internet surveys.

The researcher was also a principal in the selected district which presented an advantage as well as a limitation for the study. Researchers must prepare to understand the subjects being examined; having background knowledge is key to successful inquiry (Patton, 2002). The researcher had been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal in the district and had both knowledge and first hand experience regarding the expectations of each of those roles. Patton (2002) states that the human factor in a qualitative inquiry and analysis is both a great strength and a fundamental weakness. Each qualitative study is unique and the analysis will depend on the “skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer (p.433).” The researcher attempted to limit bias and predispositions by soliciting an independent doctoral colleague to review the data several times during the research process; making sure each reduction of the data didn’t eliminate anything significant.

Research Implications

The research literature indicates the importance of the principal position to schools and this study may be of value to those persons who establish the expectations for the principalship and who regulate schools, as it is evident that there is only so much one person can humanly do given the level of authority and span of control of the principal’s position.

The study may be of use to accrediting agencies who establish standards for school administration programs. It can also inform professors of school administration on
the complexity of the principalship as they consider both theory and practice for prospective principals in order to keep learning both academic and practical.

Teaching potential principal candidates the skills to overcome the obstacles presented will be very useful to them for their future role. Although this is a local study, it may be useful to the principals’ professional organization, The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), as they further study the secondary principalship in the future. This study provides useful information for teachers and teacher unions as well as local school boards and districts. As professional organizations plan conferences and professional development they can address these issues with their constituent groups. National organizations like NASSP could provide more information and research through their publications and websites. National, state, and local boards of education would be better educated and informed when handing down additional mandates, expectations, responsibilities and requirements for schools and principals if they took the time to read and understand the research that this study, as well as all the aforementioned studies, provides.

The high level of agreement between administrators and teachers on the PRQ regarding increased clerical, professional, as well as administrative help, should be of interest to legislators who establish budgets and determine categories for the allocation of monies to school districts. Additional resources are needed to change staffing ratios in order to meet the needs of the school population. Legislators will have further use of the study as they establish the parameters and procedures for school accountability understanding the constraints placed on principals.
State and local boards of education are charged with developing policies to provide direction for the operation of schools and are charged with implementing these policies. This study may be of use to these governing boards as they consider the role and function of the principal and devise regulations regarding certification, administrative and clerical staffing, length of employment, pay, professional development, recruitment and evaluation of principals. The results may be of further value when the boards create policies affecting the relationships of principals with staff and community and as they consider policies and mandates that place more demands on the principals’ time. This study may be of value to those organizations as they plan professional development for teachers and principals and publish professional literature to their respective local groups.

Ultimately, the study will be of value to principals as they plan for school improvement and personal as well as professional growth. The qualitative as well as quantitative data analysis could help increase the principals’ understanding of their role, as well as validate what they may be feeling or experiencing, by more clearly explicating the challenging, complex, nonlinear role they have. The results may also assist principals in understanding the importance of building relationships, trust, and collaboration as they work to create a climate of collegiality and teamwork in their schools. In addition this study will be beneficial to those who work with aspiring principals or who mentor new principals, in order to provide them with a better understanding of the stakeholders they serve as well as the challenges they may encounter in the position.
Recommendations for Further Study

This study adds to previous research conducted regarding the principals’ perceptions of their changing roles, duties and responsibilities (Delisio, 2006; Fullan, 2001; Goodwin, 2002; Kennedy, 2001; NASSP, 1998; 2000; 2001; 2003; Pierce, 2000; Tirozzi, 2000; 2001; 2004). Further research should be conducted regarding teachers’ perceptions about principals in general and of utmost importance is to find out why teachers responded the way they did. Studies should include what teachers’ expectations are of principals and what they want their role(s) to be. Another interesting study might be to find out how teachers think principals spend their time and another might focus on the principal’s power and authority and how it differs in each state or district. Larger studies should seek to find out if teacher perceptions regarding the principal’s role across the nation are similar in findings. If principals are to lead teachers, then it is important to know what the teacher role perceptions of principals are and how those role perceptions and the reality of the position can come together for and in the best interest of schools.

Recommendations

It appears, based on this study, that there is somewhat of a disconnection between teachers and principals regarding the principals’ role and what principals are responsible and accountable for based on lower mean score ratings for all 36 PRQ role descriptor statements and no high agreement on any item. Unfortunately in this time of fiscal uncertainty and accountability it seems that the underlying tone on school staffs is becoming more “us and them” instead of “we”. It is the researchers’ opinion that there are many reasons for this breakdown; however, the move away from site based
management may have precipitated this relationship erosion. Teachers at one time were empowered to make decisions based on the needs of the school and be creative in school improvement planning. However, the challenges of implementing NCLB have caused the school district in this study, and possibly others, to return to a top-down management approach and mandate what each school will do. Fortunately this prescriptive scenario is just a sign of the times and no conspiracy appears to exist on the part of the local school boards or school administration to take the teachers’ voice out of the equation. What I know as a principal is that in order to be successful, the faculty and staff must believe that all students can learn and that everyone is in their position for the children. We must change our instructional approach to meet the needs of our changing student population, which means we have to be willing to grow professionally ourselves. Having the right people on the bus (Collins, 2001) is essential to school success and when the right people aren’t on board, infighting occurs, negativity spreads like cancer, and nothing moves forward. It takes years to bring school staffs together and create trusting, collaborative working environments (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Murphy’s (1994, p.95) suggestion to “lead from the center” takes time and unfortunately in this era of accountability, and the urgency of it all, time is not on our side. It is a disheartening to the researcher to think that it would take so much time to bring people together, and that some people may not be in the profession to meet the needs of all students, no matter what it takes. School and district leaders must make conscientious efforts to repair the damage that has been done and rebuild relationship with school staffs. It is also the researcher’s position that they
should also put processes in place to get the right people on board and give principals the authority they need to do their jobs.

**Professional Use**

The researcher is a middle school principal in the selected school district and has been an educator at the secondary level for twenty two years, sixteen as an administrator, ten of which has been at the principal level. By virtue of the current position of the researcher, a keen understanding of the pressures of today’s administrators, as well as teachers, exists. The frustration is building with and among all stakeholder groups. The researcher wants to continue to grow professionally and lead the school/faculty to greater success and achievement by continuing to build a culture of collegiality among staff and feels it is important to understand teacher perceptions of the principal’s role.

It is the intent of the researcher to use the information to help educate principals about the targeted groups’ perceptions regarding the principal’s role so that principals can have a better understanding of the staffs they lead. As a result, principals can make conscientious attempts to create better working relationships, conditions, and overall school climates, which ultimately will lead to more effective, successful, schools. The data will be shared and be the topic of professional discussion at a Middle School Association Level Meeting upon completion of a positive defense. The researcher mentors new principals and would be able to share the research findings, one-on-one, in that capacity. In terms of the bigger picture, the researcher hopes to share the data with key school district officials to initiate a conversation about the diverse needs and roles of the middle school leaders, in hopes of enlightening those in power to effect change by
providing principals with the resources, authority, support, and autonomy they need to procure results.
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APPENDIX A
THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The 2001 Principals of the Year in the National Association of Secondary School Principals/McLure
Recognition Program recently participated in an electronic discussion about the changing, complex role of the
secondary principal. They reached consensus and indicated confidence in the statements in the Principal's Role
Questionnaire. As a practicing principal of a school with grade 12, you were selected from the NASSP membership to
validate the conclusions of the Principals of the Year.

Part A: Demographic Information

Part A has 11 questions and requests certain demographic information about you, your school, and your
school community. Please circle the correct answer or fill in the blank as indicated.

Question 1: My sex is:
1. male
2. female.

Question 2: My age is _______ years.

Question 3: My total administrative experience (e.g.: assistant principal, superintendent, etc.) is _____ years.

Question 4: Exclusive of other administrative jobs (e.g.: assistant principal, superintendent, etc.), my total
number of years of experience as a principal is _______ years.

Question 5: I have been principal at my current school for _______ years.

Question 6: The number of persons in the community in which my school is located is:
1. Less than 10,000 persons
2. Between 10,000 and 20,000 persons
3. Between 20,000 and 50,000 persons
4. More than 50,000 persons

Question 7: The total number of all public and private schools in my district is:
1. 1 to 5 schools
2. 6 to 49 schools
3. 50 or more schools
Question 8: My school is:
1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural

Question 9: The percentage of students receiving USDA free or reduced lunches at my school is ____%.

Question 10: The official number of students currently enrolled in my school is ____.

Question 11: The grades included in my school are:
1. 7-12
2. 9-12
3. 10-12
4. Other

Part B: What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?

Part B is a series of 13 multiple choice items in which you are asked to indicate your level of confidence that the statement is a true answer to the question “What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?” Please indicate your level of confidence in each statement as follows:

(1) Very Probable 75-99% confidence of being right
(2) Probable 50-74% confidence of being right
(3) Improbable 25-49% confidence of being right
(4) Very Improbable 0-24% confidence of being right

The 14th item is an opportunity for you to comment on the question. Please circle the number of the indicator that represents your best professional judgment.

1. Being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

2. The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety than previously.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable
3. Higher standards of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

4. The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

5. Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

6. The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

7. The possibility of litigation has increased substantially.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

8. Principals must meet the enhanced needs of more diverse students as a result of legislation and social change.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

9. Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

10. Implementation of site based decision making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

11. Changes in society's attitudes toward education as a profession have resulted in fewer well educated persons becoming educators.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

12. Rebellion against taxes means principals must deal with less resources.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

13. Due to Title IX and community expectations, the expansion of the athletic program has created time management issues for principals.

(1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

14. Comments about changes in the principalship:
Part C: What is the current role of the secondary principal?

Part C is a series of 14 multiple choice items in which you are asked to indicate your level of confidence that the statement is a true answer to the question “What is the current role of the secondary principal?” Please circle the number of the indicator that represents your level of confidence as before:

1. Very Probable 75-99% confidence of being right
2. Probable 50-74% confidence of being right
3. Improbable 25-49% confidence of being right
4. Very Improbable 0-24% confidence of being right

The 15th item is an opportunity for you to comment on the question.

15. The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

16. The principal is the key to school success.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

17. The principal has the power to lead change.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

18. The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

19. The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and practicing principals.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

20. The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

21. The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable

22. The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal’s role as instructional leader.
   (1) Very Probable   (2) Probable   (3) Improbable   (4) Very Improbable
23. There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role (achievement, student success) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, management issues).
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

24. Responsibilities such as security, fund raising, politics, and social issues interfere with the primary role of instructional leader.
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

25. Principals are multiple program managers: facility, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, community relations.
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

26. Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

27. Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal's role.
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

28. Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.
   (1) Very Probable (2) Probable (3) Improbable (4) Very Improbable

29. Comments about the current role of the secondary principal.

Part D: What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?

Part D is a series of 18 multiple choice items in which you are asked to indicate your level of confidence that the statement is a true answer to the question “What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?” Please circle the number of the indicator that represents your level of confidence as before:

(1) Very Probable 75-99% confidence of being right
(2) Probable 50-74% confidence of being right
(3) Improbable 25-49% confidence of being right
(4) Very Improbable 0-24% confidence of being right

The 19th item is an opportunity for you to comment on the question. The 20th item is an opportunity for you to make
any comment relevant to the changing role of the secondary principal.

30. There should be better compensation for principals.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

31. Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

32. Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

33. There should be an administrative team with the principal providing leadership to the team.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

34. There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

35. An administrative team should be used to reduce school size by creating houses or schools within schools in order to increase personal contact with students.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

36. Principals should have both expectations and opportunities for training and professional growth.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

37. Principals will need to understand the growing field of brain research.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

38. The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

39. Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance learning tools to provide just in time curriculum and instruction.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable

40. The principal will be responsible for developing a curriculum that is standards based and meets the needs of all students.

   (1) Very Probable  (2) Probable  (3) Improbable  (4) Very Improbable
41. The principal must be a leader in developing standards for curriculum and for accountability.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

42. The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring teachers.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

43. The principal's autonomy should be commensurate with his/her responsibility.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

44. The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

45. The principal will be responsible for an increase in community involvement and for cohesiveness between the school and community.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

46. Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political area.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

47. The principal must be an active advocate for public education.

(1) Very Probable    (2) Probable    (3) Improbable    (4) Very Improbable

48. Comments about the future of the principalship

49. General comments about the role of the principal
Florida Principal Leadership Standards

Florida’s school leaders must possess the abilities and skills necessary to perform their designated tasks in a high-performing manner. The school leader, commensurate with job requirements and delegated authority, shall demonstrate competence in the following standards:

Instructional Leadership

High Performing Leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program, and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.

Managing the Learning Environment

High Performing Leaders manage the organization, operations, facilities and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment.

Learning, Accountability, and Assessment

High Performing Leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment, align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance, and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process.

Operational Leadership

Decision Making Strategies

High Performing Leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous school improvement.

Technology

High Performing Leaders plan and implement the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research, and communication responsibilities.

Human Resource Development

High Performing Leaders recruit, select, nurture and, where appropriate, retain effective personnel, develop mentor and partnership programs, and design and implement comprehensive professional growth plans for all staff – paid and volunteer.

Ethical Leadership

High Performing Leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.
School Leadership

Vision
High Performing leaders have a personal vision for their school and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop, articulate and implement a shared vision that is supported by the larger organization and the school community.

Community and Stakeholder Partnerships
High Performing Leaders collaborate with families, business, and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, work effectively within the larger organization and mobilize community resources.

Diversity
High Performing Leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school and the local community.

SBE Rule 6B-5.0012, Approved April 19, 2005
APPENDIX C
### Consensus Results of Expert Principals' Opinions Concerning Contemporary Changes in the Role of the Secondary Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being an instructional leader has become the principal's primary role.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety than previously.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher standards of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of litigation has increased substantially.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must meet the enhanced needs of more diverse students as a result of legislation and of social changes.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of site based decision making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in society’s attitudes toward education as a profession have resulted in fewer well educated persons becoming educators.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion against taxes means principals must deal with less resources.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Title IX and community expectations, the expansion of the athletic program has created time management issues for principals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.89*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** * This item was below the consensus range but was included due to high level of confidence.
Findings for Question Two: What is the current role of the secondary principal?

Participants reached consensus with a high or moderate degree of confidence on 14 items in response to research question two. Thirteen items had a mode of 1; one had a mode of 2. The means ranged from 1.00 to 1.60 and the standard deviations from 0.00 to 0.55. The item summary of role descriptors is presented in Table 3.
## Consensus Results of Expert Principals’ Opinions Concerning the Current Role of the Secondary Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal is the key to school success.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal has the power to lead change.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and practicing principals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal’s role as instructional leader.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role (achievement, student success) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, management issues).</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities such as security, fund raising, politics, and social issues interfere with the primary role of instructional leader.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals are multiple program managers: facility, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, community relations.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal’s role.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings for Question Three: What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal? Participants reached consensus with a high or moderate degree of confidence on 18 items in response to research question three. Eighteen items had a mode of 1. The means ranged from 1.00 to 1.60 and the standard deviations from 0.00 to 0.89. The item summary of role descriptors is presented in Table 4.
### Consensus Results of Expert Principals' Opinions Concerning the Preferred Future of the Secondary Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be better compensation for principals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be an administrative team with the principal providing leadership to the team.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include people with a variety of responsibilities.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An administrative team should be used to reduce school size by creating houses or schools within schools in order to increase personal contact with students.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals should have both expectations and opportunities for training and professional growth.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals will need to understand the growing field of brain research.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance learning tools to provide just in time curriculum and instruction.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will be responsible for developing a curriculum that is standards based and meets the needs of all students.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be a leader in developing standards for curriculum and for accountability.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring teachers.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal's autonomy should be commensurate with his/her responsibility.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will be responsible for an increase in community involvement and for cohesiveness between the school and community.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.89*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be an active advocate for public education.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * This item was below the consensus range but was included due to the level of confidence.
Stage Two: The Principal’s Role Questionnaire

Stage two of this study was conducted electronically and anonymously using a dedicated World Wide Web page on the Marshall University server. Because of the low return rate, a paper copy of the survey was also mailed to the randomly selected sample of secondary principals. The survey instrument, the Principal’s Role Questionnaire (PRQ), was developed from the consensus role descriptors in the Delphi study. The PRQ had four parts: (1) Demographics, (2) Research Question One: What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal? (3) Research Question Two: What is the current role of the secondary principal? and (4) Research Question Three: What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal? The purpose of the PRQ was twofold: to answer the three primary research questions and to validate the findings of the Delphi study. Therefore, in addition to examining the findings related to the aforementioned research questions, the following questions were also examined:

Q4. What is the level of agreement on the contemporary changes that have occurred in the role of a secondary principal between identified expert principals and a random selection of secondary principals who are members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals?

Q5. What is the level of agreement on what is the current role of a secondary principal between identified expert principals and a random selection of secondary principals who are members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals?

Q6. What is the level of agreement on the changes that should occur in the future in the role of a secondary principal between identified expert principals and a random selection of secondary principals who are members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals?
Q7. What is the relationship, if any, between identified demographic factors and the level of agreement between the panel of experts and the sample population?

*Findings for Stage Two: The Principal’s Role Questionnaire*

*Procedures.* Each item on the questionnaire was analyzed using measures of central tendency to determine consensus and level of confidence. Consensus was established when the standard deviation for an item was less than 0.60. The Likert scale rating asked principals to indicate their level of confidence in each item. Those items with a mean of 1.00 to 1.40 and a mode of 1 were considered to have a high level of confidence. Those items with a mean of 1.41 to 2.00 and a mode of 1 or 2 were considered to have moderate confidence. Those items with a mean were greater than 2.00 and a mode of 2 or 3 were considered to have low confidence.

*Findings for Question One: What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?* Participants indicated a high or moderate degree of confidence on all 13 items in response to research question one. The means ranged from 1.13 to 1.92, and 12 items had a mode of 1; one had a mode of 2. The standard deviations ranged from 0.39 to 0.85, and the participants reached consensus on eight of the 13 items. The item summary of role descriptors is presented in Table 5.
Table 5

Results of Sample Principals’ Opinions Concerning Contemporary Changes in the Role of the Secondary Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety than previously.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher standards of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as school and community, school and district, school and government.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of litigation has increased substantially.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must meet the enhanced needs of more diverse students as a result of legislation and of social changes.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of site based decision making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in society’s attitudes toward education as a profession have resulted in fewer well educated persons becoming educators.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion against taxes means principals must deal with less resources</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to Title IX and community expectations, the expansion of the athletic program has created time management issues for principals.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings for Question Two: What is the current role of the secondary principal?

Participants indicated a high or moderate degree of confidence on all 14 items in response to research question two. The means ranged from 1.12 to 1.49, and all 14 items had a mode of 1. The standard deviations ranged from 0.35 to 0.68, and the participants reached consensus on 13 of the 14 items. The item summary of role descriptors is presented in Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal is the key to school success.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal has the power to lead change.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and practicing principals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal's role as instructional leader.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role (achievement, student success) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, management issues).</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities such as security, fund raising, politics, and social issues interfere with the primary role of instructional leader.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals are multiple program managers: facility, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletic, community relations.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal's role.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Findings for Question Three: What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?** Participants indicated a high or moderate degree of confidence on all 17 items in response to research question three. The means ranged from 1.22 to 1.86, and 14 items had a mode of 1; three had a mode of 2. The standard deviations ranged from 0.44 to 0.81, and the participants reached consensus on 11 of the 17 items. The item summary of role descriptors is presented in Table 7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Descriptor</th>
<th>Level of Confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There should be better compensation for principals.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be an administrative team with the principal providing leadership</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An administrative team should be used to reduce school size by creating houses</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals should have both expectations and opportunities for training and</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals will need to understand the growing field of brain research.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will be responsible for developing a curriculum that is standards</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be a leader in developing standards for curriculum and for</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal's autonomy should be commensurate with his/her responsibility.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal will be responsible for an increase in community involvement and</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal must be an active advocate for public education</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
Appendix D

Principal’s Role Questionnaire

Part A: Demographic Information

1. My present position is:
2. My gender is:
3. My age is:
4. My total experience in my present position is:
5. My total experience in all my educational positions is:

Part B: What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary middle school principal?

Please indicate your level of agreement for each statement that follows:
A – strongly agree  
B - agree  
C – disagree  
D – strongly disagree

1. Being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role.
2. The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety.
3. Higher standard of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.
4. The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government.
5. Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.
6. The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.
7. The possibility of litigation has increase substantially.
8. Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.
9. Implementation of site-based decision-making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.
10. The principal must meet the enhanced needs of a more diverse student population as a result of legislation and social changes.

Please comment about any of these statements regarding changes in the role of the principal.
Part C: What is the current role of the secondary middle school principal?

1. The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.
2. The principal is the key to school success.
3. The principal has the power to lead change.
4. The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.
5. The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and established principals.
6. The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames.
7. The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.
8. The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal’s role as instructional leader.
9. There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role (achievement, student success, instructional leadership) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, social issues, management issues).
10. Principals are multiple program managers: facilities, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, and community relations.
11. Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.
12. Principals are responsible for the morale of the staff.
13. Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal’s role.
14. Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.

Your perceptions about the current role of the middle school principal are extremely important to the future of the position. Please comment on the current role of the principal.
Part D: What changes should occur in the future role of the secondary middle school principal?

1. Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.
2. Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.
3. There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities and expertise.
4. Principals should have more training in dealing with current issues.
5. The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.
6. Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance-learning tools to provide just-in-time curriculum and instruction.
7. The principal will be responsible for providing programs that meet the needs of the school’s diverse population.
8. The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers.
9. The principal’s autonomy should commensurate with his/her responsibility.
10. The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.
11. The principal will be responsible in bringing the school and community together.
12. Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena and be an active advocate for public education.

Your comments about the future of the principalship will help the district as well as university programs. Please comment about the future of the principalship.

The voice of teachers and assistant principals has been overlooked when reviewing the literature about the role of the principal. Please make any general comments about the role of the principal that you would like to share.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project.
Dawn Coffin

1. **Demographic Information**

1. My present position is
   - Teacher
   - Assistant Principal
   - Principal

2. My gender is
   - Male
   - Female

3. My age is

4. My total experience in my present position is (in years)

5. My total experience in all my educational positions is
   - 0-3 years
   - 4-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16+ years
2. What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?

1. Being an instructional leader has become the principal's primary role.
2. The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety.
3. Higher standard of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.
4. The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government.
5. Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.
6. The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.
7. The possibility of litigation has increase substantially.
8. Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance.
9. Implementation of site-based decision-making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.
10. The principal must meet the enhanced needs of a more diverse student population as a result of legislation and social changes.

2. Please comment about any of these statements regarding changes in the role of the principal.
3.

1. What is the current role of the secondary principal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal is the key to school success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The principal has the power to lead change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and established principals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>7. The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.</td>
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<td>8. The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal's role as instructional leader.</td>
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<td>9. There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role (achievement, student success, instructional leadership) and what demands their daily attention (parent issues, student issues, social issues, management issues).</td>
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<td>10. Principals are multiple program managers: facilities, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, and community relations.</td>
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<td>11. Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.</td>
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9/26/2007
12. Principals are responsible for the morale of the staff.

13. Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal's role.

14. Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal.

2. Your perceptions about the current role of the middle school principal are extremely important to the future of the position. Please comment on the current role of the principal.
4.

1. **What changes should occur in the future role of the secondary principal?**

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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1. Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance.
2. Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance.
3. There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities and expertise.
4. Principals should have more training in dealing with current issues.
5. The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.
6. Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance-learning tools to provide just-in-time curriculum and instruction.
7. The principal will be responsible for providing programs that meet the needs of the school’s diverse population.
8. The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers.
9. The principal’s autonomy should commensurate with his/her responsibility.
10. The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.
11. The principal will be responsible in bringing the school and community
together.

12. Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena and be an active advocate for public education.

2. Your comments about the future of the principalship will help the district as well as university programs. Please comment about the future of the principalship.

3. The voice of teachers and assistant principals has been overlooked when reviewing the literature about the role of the principal. Please make any general comments about the role of the principal that you would like to share.
September 26, 2007

Dawn Coffin
P.O. Box 4424
Clearwater, FL 33758

RE: Exempt Certification for IRB#: 106154
Title: The Changing Role of the Secondary Principal

Dear Ms. Coffin:

On September 26, 2007, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets USF requirements and Federal Exemption criteria; research involving the use of educational tests survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in a manner reported in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF IRB policies and procedures.

Please note that changes to this protocol may disqualify it from exempt status. It is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to implementing any changes.

The Division of Research Integrity and Compliance will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter or for three years after a Final Progress Report is received. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond those periods, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification Request form at least 30 days before this exempt certification ends. If a Final Progress Report has not been received, the IRB will send you a reminder notice prior to end of the five year period; therefore, it is important that you keep your contact information current with the IRB Office. Should you complete this study prior to the end of the five-year period, you must submit a Final IRB Progress Report for review.

Please reference the above IRB protocol number in all correspondence to the IRB c/o the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance. In addition, we have enclosed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Quick Reference Guide providing guidelines and resources to assist you in meeting your responsibilities when conducting human subjects research. Please read this guide carefully.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-9345.

Sincerely,

Paul G. Stiles, J.D., Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

Enclosures: IRB Quick Reference Guide

Cc: Various B. Menzel, USF IRB Professional Staff
Darlene Bruner, EdD

SB-EXEMPT-0602
APPENDIX F
September 25, 2007

Dawn Coffin
1938 Sever Drive
Clearwater, Florida 33764

Dear Dawn:

I received your request to conduct research in Pinellas County. Your study, "The Changing Role of the Secondary Principal" proposal number 090708-05 has been reviewed and the research has been approved.

Allow me to make it clear that this permission letter does not obligate schools, teachers or administrators to participate in your study; the participation is totally voluntary.

You may contact school’s principal, and ask for their willingness to participate in this study. Refer to the procedure outline in the packet for the appropriate next steps.

As a public school district, we have to comply with the "Jessica Lunsford’s Act." According to this law any person who has access to school ground when students are present or has direct contact with students is required to meet level 2 screening requirements. For additional information regarding the Jessica Lunsford Act and level 2 screening requirements please visit our website, at http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/.

I would also like to reinforce our practice on monetary rewards to school board staff and students; the school board staff may not be paid for work performed related to this study during working hours and students may not be rewarded money for participating in a study. All monetary rewards shall be given to school(s) participating in the study.

Once the research is completed please forward a copy of the results to my office.

If there are any questions or if additional information is needed, please contact our Research & Accountability Department at (727) 588-6253.

Once the research is completed please forward a copy of the results to my office.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Behrokh Ahmadi, Ph. D.
Director, Program Evaluation

BAjr
APPENDIX G
Oct. 1, 2007

Dear Teachers:

My name is Dawn Coffin and I am the principal of Oak Grove Middle School. I am also a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am currently conducting a study on the Changing Role of the Secondary Middle School Principal as part of my dissertation process. Teacher perceptions of the principal’s role are very limited in the literature and this is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Please take a moment and complete the Principal’s Role Questionnaire at (web address). The questionnaire is anonymous, voluntary, and only takes a few minutes of your time. It has also been approved by Pinellas County Schools (#090708-05) and the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (#106154). The questionnaire is a simple “click and go” so that hopefully it is not cumbersome. There are three categories of questions:

1. What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?
2. What is the current nature of the role of the secondary principal?
3. What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?

At the end of each section there is an opportunity for you to make comments if you wish. The web address is live so all you have to do is double click on it to start.

I know how busy each and every one of you is and I appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions please email me directly, coffind@pcsb.org. Thank you and have a great school year.
October 1, 2007

Dear Assistant Principal:

My name is Dawn Coffin and I am the principal of Oak Grove Middle School. I am also a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am currently conducting a study on the Changing Role of the Secondary Middle School Principal as part of my dissertation process. Assistant principal perceptions of the principal’s role are very limited in the literature and this is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Please take a moment and complete the Principal’s Role Questionnaire at (web address). The questionnaire is anonymous, voluntary, and only takes a few minutes of your time. It has also been approved by Pinellas County Schools (#090708-05) and the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (#106154). The questionnaire is a simple “click and go” so that hopefully it is not cumbersome. There are three categories of questions:

1. What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?
2. What is the current nature of the role of the secondary principal?
3. What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?

At the end of each section there is an opportunity for you to make comments if you wish. The web address is live so all you have to do is double click on it to start.

I know how busy each and every one of you is and I appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions please email me directly, coffind@pcsb.org. Thank you and have a great school year.
October 1, 2007

Dear Principal:

As you are aware I am a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am currently conducting a study on the Changing Role of the Secondary Middle School Principal as part of my dissertation process. Principal perceptions of the principal’s role are very important and this is an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Please take a moment and complete the Principal’s Role Questionnaire at (web address). The questionnaire is anonymous, voluntary, and only takes a few minutes of your time. It has also been approved by Pinellas County Schools (#090708-05) and the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (#106154). The questionnaire is a simple “click and go” so that hopefully it is not cumbersome. The survey will be up from October 2nd through October 16th. There are three categories of questions:

1. What contemporary changes have occurred in the role of the secondary principal?
2. What is the current nature of the role of the secondary principal?
3. What changes should occur in the future in the role of the secondary principal?

At the end of each section there is an opportunity for you to make comments if you wish. The web address is live so all you have to do is double click on it to start.

I know how busy each and every one of you is and I appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions please email me directly, coffind@pcsb.org. Thank you and have a great school year.
APPENDIX H
Individual PRQ Role Descriptors

1. *Being an instructional leader has become the principal’s primary role.* Teachers mean score ratings were lower for this role descriptor than both the assistant principals and principals indicating that the principals and assistant principals rated this item higher than the teachers.

2. *The principal today is held to higher standards of accountability in many areas including academics, finances, and safety.* Teachers mean score ratings were lower for this role descriptor than both the assistant principals and principals indicating that principals and assistant principals rated this descriptor higher than the teachers.

3. *Higher standard of achievement exist for students, and principals are accountable for such student outcomes as test scores, drop out rate, suspensions, etc.* Teacher and assistant principal mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean score ratings indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

4. *The principal is required to serve as a liaison between different constituencies such as: school and community, school and district, school and government.* There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

5. *Technology has increased both responsibility and accountability for the principal.* Teacher and assistant principal mean score ratings were lower than
principals’ mean score ratings indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two target groups.

6. **The principal must be an expert on teaching and learning.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principals, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

7. **The possibility of litigation has increase substantially.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

8. **Principals must cope with social and economic issues that impact student behavior and performance** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

9. **Implementation of site-based decision-making strategies transfers responsibility to the principal.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

10. **The principal must meet the enhanced needs of a more diverse student population as a result of legislation and social changes.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.
11. The role of the principal is to establish the vision and purpose for the school.

There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings for this role descriptor.

12. The principal is the key to school success. Teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

13. The principal has the power to lead change. There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

14. The role of the principal is in transition and is increasing in complexity.

Teacher mean scores were lower for this role descriptor than both the assistant principals and principals indicating that the principals and assistant principals rated this item higher than the teachers.

15. The changing role of the principal requires a commitment to continual professional development for both new and established principals. Teachers mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean score ratings but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

16. The role of the principal is to fit more complex expectations into old budgets and time frames. Teachers mean score ratings were lower for this role descriptor than both the assistant principals and principals indicating that the principals and assistant principals rated this item higher than the teachers.
17. **The role of the principal is more focused on school security since Columbine.**

There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principals, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

18. **The state and national emphasis on standards, assessment, and accountability have increased the importance of the principal’s role as instructional leader.**

Teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

19. **There is a disconnect between what principals believe is important in their role and what demands their daily attention.** Assistant principal and teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than both groups.

20. **Principals are multiple program managers: facilities, personnel, finance, safety, food service, fund raising, athletics, and community relations.** Teachers mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

21. **Principals are responsible for the academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of students.** Teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.
22. Principals are responsible for the morale of the staff. There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

23. Required documentation has increased the paperwork and clerical aspect of the principal’s role. Teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

24. Special education regulations have greatly complicated the role of the principal. There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

25. Increased responsibilities must mean increased professional assistance. There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

26. Increased paperwork requirements must mean increased clerical assistance. There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

27. There should be an increase in administrative staffing to include persons with a variety of responsibilities and expertise. There was no statistical difference in the
mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

28. **Principals should have more training in dealing with current issues.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

29. **The principal must have skills in collaboration and cooperation and must develop these skills in teachers and students.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

30. **Principals will have to facilitate a system of instructional delivery that meets the need of a high speed/high technology society including virtual classes, interactive classrooms, and other distance-learning tools to provide just-in-time curriculum and instruction.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

31. **The principal will be responsible for providing programs that meet the needs of the school’s diverse population.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

32. **The principal should have increased responsibility for resource management to meet school goals, including hiring and firing teachers.** Teacher mean score
ratings were lower for this role descriptor than both the assistant principals’ and principals’ indicating that the two groups rated this item higher than the teachers.

33. **The principal’s autonomy should commensurate with his/her responsibility.**
Teacher mean score ratings were lower than principals’ mean scores but not assistant principals indicating that the principals rated this role descriptor higher than the other two targeted groups.

34. **The future of the principalship depends on the ability of the community to focus on educational goals.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

35. **The principal will be responsible in bringing the school and community together.** There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.

36. **Principals must accept an enhanced role in the political arena and be an active advocate for public education.**
There was no statistical difference in the mean score ratings for teachers, principals, and assistant principal, indicating similar ratings among the three groups for this role descriptor.
About the Author

Dawn Elizabeth Coffin received a Bachelor’s Degree in 1988 and an Educational Specialist Degree in 2002 from the University of South Florida. She started teaching in 1987 and became an Assistant Principal in 1993 and Principal in 1999. She received the PTA Principal of the Year Award in 2000 and LMS Principal of the Year Award in 2002. She was also the Middle School Association President in 2005. Earning the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies was a personal and professional goal.