

A Study of the Leadership Dimensions of
National Distinguished Principals

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Approval Page

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Abstract

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The identification and recruitment of effective school principals who can transform schools in the midst of today's chaotic economic, social, and global environments require a thorough understanding of the research on effective leadership. Current research indicates that principals who exhibit transformational leadership and, most recently, instructional leadership, are the most successful by all measures, including school climate, teacher empowerment, community support, and high student performance results.

This study focused on a sample of principals from a population who recently received the distinction of a National Distinguished Principal (NDP) to determine if a correlation existed between their leadership dimensions and that of the effective principal leadership research. The use of a 360-degree survey instrument for this study provided valuable data about each principal's leadership from multiple sources. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions?
2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves?
3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the key areas of effective school leadership established by the National Association for Elementary School Principals and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium?

The results of this study showed discrepancies among the NDPs' perceptions of their own leadership dimensions and their raters' perceptions of their NDPs' leadership dimensions. In addition, this study revealed the NDPs' leadership strengths and needs and how those differed from the national standards for principal leadership. The three leadership tasks of most need for the NDPs, according to this study, were safety and organizational management for learning, instructional leadership, and change.

This study could assist all public and private primary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions in their search, development, and retention of exemplary school principal leadership. The principal leadership dimensions identified in this study will be needed to lead the learning organizations of the 21st century and beyond.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

With the advent of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, public schools are facing ever-increasing demands for accountability. In fact, high student achievement is a modern expectation throughout the world (Williams, 2009). In the past, student achievement was primarily relegated to location and socioeconomic status; however, today, under the mandates of NCLB, all students are expected to achieve, with major scrutiny on the achievement gap (Williams, 2009). In light of this new reality, extraordinary leadership at the building level is required. It is the principal who ultimately assumes the responsibility for the school's effectiveness (Dubin, 2006; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Nettles & Petscher, 2007; Printy, 2010; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004).

Research studies strongly support the fact that the leadership of the school principal impacts directly and indirectly on the climate of the school and, in turn, on student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Norton, 2003). The leadership of a school principal is a determining factor in school effectiveness, second only to the role of a student's classroom teacher (Leithwood et al., 2008). Day, Leithwood, and Sammons (2008) found that principal leadership is the major driving force that underpins a school's increased or sustained effectiveness and improvement. That leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization.

To be successful, principals have always had to manage the demands of a range of stakeholders; however, in the 21st century, these stakeholders have more power to

influence and intervene (Day, 2007). In light of the extreme importance placed on the school leader, the pool of qualified principals in this country is in short supply. National statistics show that principal turnover may reach crisis proportions in the near future. As of 2008, 56.9% of elementary and secondary principals were age 45 or older, and the number of principal positions needing to be filled will grow by 8% between 2008 and 2018 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011a). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, reasons for the current principal shortage include (a) increasing accountability for the performance of students and teachers, with more requirements to adhere to a growing number of government regulations; (b) overcrowded classrooms; (c) safety issues; (d) budgetary concerns; (e) teacher shortages in some areas; and (f) the increase in pay for becoming an administrator is not high enough to compensate for the greater responsibilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011b).

Schools are not immune to the changes in society brought about by a volatile economy, recession, terrorism, wars, and technology. Day (2007) wrote that, in today's world, principals work in rapidly shifting political environments, which are unprecedented. Day added that principals have always had to juggle the demands of multiple stakeholders, but now these stakeholders are much more powerful and intrusive. Strong principal leadership is in demand to ensure excellent schools. Given the critical role that the school principal serves in the success of a school, and the rate at which school leaders are leaving the profession, this study contributed to the identification of the leadership dimensions of successful school principals.

The topic. With so many differences of opinions among researchers as to the leadership dimensions of successful principals and recommendations from the literature that future studies “seek the informative voice of principals regarding their

understandings of roles and sources of leadership” (Wright, 2008, p. 1) and “investigate ways in which they engage and motivate staff” (Day, 2007, p. 15), an evaluation of a unique group of principals, those designated as National Distinguished Principals (NDP), was well suited for this research. As a next step, researchers should investigate and classify in more detail the patterns of strategies principals in different schools located in different socioeconomic communities use to position their schools for improvement (Day et al., 2008). Adding to the body of research about the leadership dimensions of NDPs with this study led to a better understanding of their impact on teachers and staff and ultimately their relationship to improved student achievement.

The research problem. The problem addressed in this study was that the criteria for the NDP selection were developed in 1984. There had been few studies since that time to determine if the NDP criteria were still pertinent for effective principal skills and strategies in today’s schools. The increasing demands on the principal forced a shift from school management to school leadership and now link leadership to student achievement (Hoyle et al., 2005). Two national organizations have responded to the current leadership role of the principal with revised standards. In 2008, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 2009) identified six key areas of effective school leadership, which are currently part of the criteria for an NDP nomination. In 1996, and updated in 2008, the Council of Chief State School Officers established six Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards intended to improve principal licensure programs in response to school reform efforts (Hoyle et al., 2005).

There was conflicting information in the literature as to what constituted an effective, qualified principal. Although it was clear that principals did influence overall school effectiveness, researchers were divided about the specific skills and behaviors

associated with student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Hoyle et al., 2005; Marzano et al., 2005; Norton, 2003). Measurement of principal implementation behaviors proved difficult to researchers in educational leadership due to a lack of consensus on the definitions of leadership constructs (Nettles & Petscher, 2007). The literature on leadership rarely focused upon the work of principals in building cultures that both promoted student engagement in learning and raised students' achievement levels (Day et al., 2008).

Day et al. (2008) claimed that their data well substantiated that school leaders improved teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment, and working conditions. According to Hallinger and Heck (2010), although much recent research supported the claim that principal leadership made a difference in the quality of schools and student learning, the manner in which leadership contributed to school improvement was still a mystery.

If one were to understand what being a successful principal really means, researchers must uncover more detailed knowledge of their work in schools, which are in different developmental phases and in different social contexts (Day, 2007). Griffith (2004) noted that there was a gap in the literature and that more information was needed on leadership, organizational climate, performance, and turnover across several time periods. According to Day (2007), few studies attempted to investigate principals' lives over time or ways in which they worked to motivate and engage staff, students, and the community. Few studies sought the informative voice of principals regarding their understanding of roles and sources of leadership (Wright, 2008).

Background and justification. The NCLB strongly impacted the role of principals by requiring that school leaders make data-driven decisions and implement

programs that are research based (Linn, Sherman, & Gill, 2007). The principalship is a complex and demanding job that is critical to the success of a school. It is fueled by pressure and demands that make the job nearly untenable (Gajda & Militello, 2008). The very accountability measures being put into place to improve schools are actually harming school districts' ability to attract and retain qualified principals (Gates et al., 2006).

According to Nettles and Petscher (2007), not enough instruments are being used to evaluate the instructional leadership competencies of school principals, particularly in the area of reading. These researchers pointed out that effective leadership is critical to the implementation of effective reading programs at the school level, as it is in any school improvement effort. As such, even though a comprehensive assessment of principal leadership practices is daunting, especially in relation to student achievement, it is all the more imperative that measures be developed to measure principals' impact on the school and staff (Nettles & Petscher, 2007). To understand the makeup of a successful school leader, Day (2007) recommended that researchers must uncover more knowledge of principals' work in schools.

Deficiencies in the evidence. Accountability for results is driving school reform in the United States. Students in the United States continue to lag behind other nations in reading, mathematics, and science, as recently measured by an international test called the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (Finn, 2010). The focus on the principal as the key to school improvement has intensified in recent years. According to Northouse (2010), leadership studies showed a wide variety of theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process. In particular, this study was focused on the common leadership dimensions of successful school principals who were

nationally recognized for positively influencing organizational learning in schools.

Until 2009, no published research studies existed using a population sample of NDPs as participants. This fact was substantiated in e-mail correspondence with the executive director of the NAESP (personal communication, June 29, 2009). Within 2 years, two dissertations studying a sample of NDPs were published (Jones, 2010; Valenti, 2010). The NAESP is most interested in the results of this additional study of NDPs in order to continue providing resources and support to help principals be as successful as possible.

Audience. The results of this study provided valuable guidance for new and veteran school leaders and added to the literature for principal recruitment, training, development, and retention. It is more crucial now than ever before in history that educators are able to identify, recruit, and retain the most highly qualified leaders for U.S. schools if America aspires to have one of the top educational systems in the world. Shedding light on the leadership dimensions of a sample of recent NDPs contributed to the existing body of literature on effective school principals.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this applied dissertation, the following terms are defined.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for principal licensure. This term refers to six standards developed by the ISLLC (2010), which focus on the following school leadership dimensions:

1. Facilitating, developing, articulating, and implementing a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe,

efficient, and effective learning environment.

4. Collaborating with family and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts of schools. (p. 1)

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). This term refers to a national advocate organization founded in 1921 for the support that elementary and middle school principals need to be successful 21st century leaders.

National Association Elementary Secondary Principals (NAESP) standards for school principals. This term refers to six key areas of effective school leadership developed by NAESP (2008), which are as follows:

1. Lead schools in a way that places student and adult learning at the center.
2. Set high expectations for the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of all students.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon standards.
4. Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
5. Manage data and knowledge to inform decisions and measure progress for student, adult, and school performance.
6. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development. (p. 1)

National distinguished principals (NDPs). This term refers to elementary or middle school principals from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, a few private U.S. schools, and several overseas, international schools who are selected annually through NAESP's state affiliates and nationally recognized by the NAESP

(2010a) organization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership dimensions of a sample of NDP recipients as compared to the recent research findings about effective school principals in this era of increasing school reform and accountability. This study evaluated the leadership dimensions of a group of principals that factored into their being NDP recipients and benchmarked those leadership dimensions with the current NAESP and ISLLC standards. If one were to build on the assumption that the NDPs were, or are, successful school principals, then targeting a sample from this population for research identified valuable information for present and future school principals.

Summary

Chapter 1 established the importance of the principal to a school's overall effectiveness. Prior to conducting a study of NDPs to assess their leadership dimensions, a review of the literature about leadership was in order. A thorough understanding of the history of leadership, how and why it has evolved over time, and whether schools today benefit from a unique form of leadership provided the background needed to make generalizations about NDPs. Chapter 2 presented a framework for this study on principal leadership based on relevant theoretical literature and empirical research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Throughout history, organizations have always needed effective leaders. Certain historical world events such as wars, famines, civil strife, pandemics, and natural disasters help us conjure up famous leaders' names from the past, such as Jesus of Nazareth, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Pope John Paul II. In today's information age, different leaders' names surface, such as Nelson Mandela, Ronald Reagan, Sam Walton, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Jack Welch, Sergey Brin, Larry Page, Howard Schultz, and Mark Zuckerberg.

To survive in the midst of change, public schools should be analytical, methodical, and strategic about the principals they select for the 21st century and beyond. Fullan (2009) predicted that whole system reform is finally coming of age, and that an emphasis on leadership development in education is integral to the next wave of change. An end result could be a new system of education that would be composed of innovative learning organizations led by effective principals.

To gain a better understanding of the evolution of leadership, this literature review covers the topics of leadership definitions, leading learning organizations, the elements of effective leadership, leadership theories, leadership styles, and research based principal leadership dimensions. To promote effective principal leadership development, one should have an understanding of all these aspects of leadership and what the research shows to be the most effective leadership among principals. Clawson (2009) posited that the principles of leadership that worked well for the past century are being replaced with

new principles based on new understandings about people, organizations, and change. This review lends insight to answering this study's research questions about principal leadership.

Definitions of Leadership

A review of leadership studies showed that there are a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process. To begin with a definition, Northouse (2010) described leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Yukl (2006) reminded us that a leader is not a title but a process with his definition of leadership, which is “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 8). These definitions give credence to the fact that leadership is available to everyone because it is not dependent on a certain trait or characteristic.

Leadership is similar to management, but it is also different. Northouse (2010) found that management's function is to provide order and consistency to organizations, whereas leadership's function is to produce change and movement. Darling and Heller (2009) used the term managerial leadership, indicating that the two complement one another, and both are needed for successful organizational development. Darling and Heller defined manage as to bring about, to accomplish, and to have responsibility. To lead means to influence, to guide in direction, course, action, or opinion. To be effective, organizations need both competent management and skilled leadership (Kotter, 1996; Northouse, 2010). Fullan (2001) concurred that both skills are essential, but it is leadership that is needed for problems that do not have easy answers, problems that

require people and organizations to learn in new ways.

Good leaders understand the work that needs to be done and can relate to the people who help them do the job (Northouse, 2010). One does not have to be brilliant to be a successful leader; however, one does have to deeply understand other people, how they feel, their thought processes, and the most effective ways to influence them. This fact is particularly important during today's periods of insecurity that typically prevail in organizations during this contemporary environment of socioeconomic upheaval (Darling & Heller, 2009). Collins (2001) studied leaders who, against all odds, managed to lead their organizations from good to great. He referred to them as a "Level 5 leader, an individual who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will" (p. 21). Collins discovered that these extraordinary individuals exhibited many similar personal characteristics, such as modesty, humbleness, graciousness, and personal reserve, but that they also possessed an intense determination to make their company, not themselves, successful. As Collins found, leadership does make a difference if it emanates from the right kind of leader. These good-to-great leaders were not narcissists with big egos, but were "seemingly ordinary people quietly producing extraordinary results" (p. 28).

Clawson (2009) wrote about Level 3 leadership. Level 3 leaders manage energy first in themselves and then in those around them. These leaders behave at three levels: (a) their visible behavior, (b) their conscious thought, and (c) their values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations about the way the world either is or should be (Clawson, 2009). Because leadership research has evolved so rapidly over the past few decades, there is not a clear, agreed-upon definition of the concept; the definition of leadership is arbitrary and subjective. Consequently, leaders must choose the most effective leadership theory for their organization (Black, 2010). As applied to principal leadership, success draws upon a

range of qualities, strategies, and skills and requires flexible leaders who can apply combinations of these when needed, and who can assess current needs and envision future aspirations to ensure that their schools are both morally and instrumentally successful (Day, 2007).

Cotton (2003) cited 25 categories of principal behavior and practices that positively affect student achievement that are essential for principals to effectively lead schools, but she pointed to one important skill that cannot be taught. Principals must manifest a genuine love for the students in their schools. Waters et al. (2004) found a substantial relationship in their research of 21 key areas of educational leadership practices that are highly correlated with student achievement. Waters et al. concluded that leadership makes a difference and that effective principals not only know what to do but how, when, and why to do it. Waters et al. found that principals can improve their leadership capabilities, and if they do by even one standard deviation, the average student achievement improves substantially. Leithwood et al. (2008) pointed to an analysis of the international literature that resulted in seven, research-based claims that can be made about successful principal leadership. According to Leithwood et al., there is no documented case of a school drastically improving student performance without effective principal leadership.

Leading Learning Organizations

For organizations to survive today, leadership must not be about moving followers to work on problems they already know how to solve, but to lead them in confronting problems that have never been conceived. To remain viable, organizations will have to learn better and faster and continuously transform themselves into learning organizations (Marquardt, 2002). According to Marquardt (2002), learning organizations

will be able to capture the collective genius of its people at the individual, group, and system levels. Knowledge is the key ingredient, and the job of the leader is to create the environment that allows people to increase knowledge and use it to its fullest degree (Marquardt, 2002). Senge (2006) described learning organizations as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (p. 3). Voulalas and Sharpe (2005) noted the following:

A learning organization is one that, as a corporate entity, constantly learns from its past and present experiences and its contemplation of the future, and consciously uses these learnings to continuously change and adapt in such a way as to maximize its outcomes in terms of its purpose in its constantly changing environment. (p. 196)

The strength of learning organizations is their generative capability. According to Osland, Turner, Kolb, and Rubin (2007), successful organizations and leaders focus on generative learning, which is about creating, as opposed to adaptive learning, which is about coping. Generative learning requires new ways of looking at the world, and demands the ability to see the entire system, to get at the systematic source of problems. Thus, the traditional view of great leaders, those charismatic heroes who stepped up in times of crises and made all the decisions, no longer suffices for the needs of learning organizations.

New skills are required of today’s leaders. They must have the ability to build a shared vision, to challenge prevailing mental models, and to generate more systematic patterns of thinking (Osland et al., 2007). Referred to as an adaptive leader by Heifetz, Kania, and Kramer (2004), this new leader is not expected to know all the answers and take over all the problem solving. Leadership is now an activity rather than a formal

position or personal characteristic, and it may not necessarily be accompanied by authority (Heifetz et al., 2004). Today's leaders are in charge of and responsible for continuous learning for themselves and their followers.

The idea of school as a learning organization was brought about in response to the demands for school reform (Kurland, Peretz, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2010). Leading learning organizations requires school leaders to critically analyze how they approach today's mounting challenges. Houchens and Keedy (2009) suggested that school leaders look to the concept known as theories of practice, first described by Argyris and Schon (1974). Theories of practice, as related to organizational learning, essentially explain the problem solving processes that all people use. The typical way that most people learn is through single-loop learning, in which the person's strategy does not solve the problem, so the individual tries a different strategy without questioning anything.

In double-loop learning, however, if the first strategy does not work, the person reevaluates the action and simultaneously questions all the underlying values and assumptions (Houchens & Keedy, 2009). Houchens and Keedy (2009) saw value for school principals in adapting the theories of practice framework in their work, particularly in this era of government mandated school reform. As these researchers pointed out, state and federal efforts to improve schools have done little to improve student learning so far. Therefore, Houchens and Keedy challenged school leaders to use their position to change people's norms of thinking and problem solving through principal-developed theories of practice.

According to Osland et al. (2007), the first task of this new type of leader is to build an organizational foundation of purpose, vision, and core values by which the people will live. The leader takes on the mantle of teacher, mentor, and steward who

empowers people to create new mental models of reality. Marquardt (2002) defined mental models as “the deeply ingrained assumptions that influence our views of and actions in the world” (p. 26). Senge (2006) explained, “Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (p. 8). Meadows (2008) referred to these shared ideas in the minds of society as mindsets. She argued that these mindsets make up a society’s paradigm, or deep seated beliefs about how the world works, and that these paradigms are the sources of systems.

Leaders who know how to intervene in systems at the level of paradigm have the power to totally transform those systems. Transformational leadership is not easy. According to Meadows, societies resist challenges to their paradigms harder than they resist anything else. According to Grant (2008), the key to organizational change is not to adapt to external change forces but to create the future. Hamel (2000) wrote that achieving this level of internal revolution requires leadership that can change the psychological and sociological norms of an organization that resists innovation.

For future hiring practices and possibly stronger principal retention, consideration could be given to the successful components of leadership as a basis for rating and selecting principal applicants. Principals must correctly envision future needs and empower others to share and implement that vision and be able to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership styles (Kelley et al., 2005).

Elements of Effective Leadership

Mission and vision. There is much conflicting research about the personal behaviors and leadership qualities of effective principals, those who stay in their leadership positions for a period of time and who impact student achievement. Partlow

(2007) found that “higher achievement may indicate that the principal is able to engender a culture in the school where all stakeholders have a shared mission, vision, and purpose and work toward them collectively” (p. 69). Clawson (2009) defined mission as the organization’s reason for existence. The effective leader, one who is a leader of strategic change, is one who understands the mission, can clearly communicate the vision, and can initiate changes that will have a productive impact on the organization (Clawson, 2009). Gaziel (2007) found that principals influence student learning indirectly by developing a school mission that provides an instructional focus for teachers, and this creates a school environment that facilitates student learning.

Yukl (2006) described vision as simple and appealing enough to be understood and to invite commitment, and yet believable enough to be realistic and attainable. The ability to articulate the vision is a key leadership characteristic, and this is how leaders connect with their followers and communicate the message (Yukl, 2006). In their study, Kurland et al. (2010) found that “vision is significantly predicted by principals’ transformational leadership style and is also a significant predictor of school organizational learning” (p. 19). Also, Kurland et al. discovered that how teachers perceive the vision depends greatly on school leaders who can generate enthusiasm and commitment and encourage, care, respect, support, and involve teachers in decision-making.

Marquardt (2002) wrote that vision embraces an organization’s hopes, goals, and direction for the future. Lindgren and Bandhold (2009) called vision “a positively loaded notion of a desired future,” which creates identity, guidance, and inspiration that leads to commitment (p. 82). The ideal vision is challenging but not impossible to reach. A powerful vision is always found in successful transformations; it fosters change by

helping to direct, align, and inspire action by the people (Lindgren & Bandhold, 2009). Senge (2006) noted, “If any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it’s the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create” (p. 9). Senge’s emphasis on the word *shared* when writing about vision is purposeful. Followers must rally around the leader in pursuit of a shared vision because they are genuinely inspired to do so.

In their research on practices of exemplary leadership, Kouzes and Posner (2007) found that leaders inspire a shared vision, which helps followers envision exciting possibilities of creating something new and better. Leaders cannot force a vision; they inspire it by modeling the way (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Kotter (1996) stated that vision is a central component of all great leadership and its creation is “an exercise of both the head and the heart” (p. 79). Visions deal with feelings and emotions (Lindgren & Bandhold, 2009). Leaders who inspire visions must be introspective individuals who emotionally connect with people and understand the value of collaborative team processes. Fullan (2001) wrote that relationships are paramount for leaders in today’s culture of change. Kouzes and Posner (2007) referred to this leadership quality as encouraging the heart, or leaders who genuinely care about their followers.

Empowerment. In addition to inspiring a vision and mission for the organization, exemplary leaders also challenge the process and empower others (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). To challenge the status quo needed for generative learning organizations, leaders must be risk-takers. According to Clawson (2009), leaders cannot accomplish organizational transformation without followers, and yet employees cannot help if they feel powerless. Information is changing so fast that now the power revolves around the employees who can acquire and analyze the data and respond to challenges more quickly

than previous bureaucratic organizations would allow (Clawson, 2009). Leaders who share power create greater motivation, increased trust and risk taking, and a stronger sense of community and efficacy among their followers (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Kotter (1996) advocated that the job of the leader is to remove the barriers to the implementation of the change vision, whether those barriers consist of structures, skills, systems, or supervisors. A visionary leader, according to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2004), sets people free to innovate, experiment, and take risks. Kouzes and Posner (2007) called on leaders to challenge the process by “shaking things up” (p. 164). Leaders must awaken others to new possibilities and to seek innovative ideas from outside their zones of familiarity (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Marquardt (2002) referred to bureaucracy as the “bane of any organization” (p. 223). Marquardt stated, “Employees must be empowered with the necessary freedom, trust, influence, opportunity, recognition, and authority as well as enabled through the necessary skills, knowledge, values, and ability so that they can contribute to the organization at their optimal levels” (p. 220). Learning organizations encourage people to experiment, innovate, and get out of the habit of asking for permission. Effective leaders understand that taking risks is essential for organizations to acquire and sustain competitive advantages in today’s environment. Making mistakes must be allowed and valued because allowing people to fail can result in new ideas and new ways of thinking (Marquardt, 2002). Marquardt also wrote that technology and globalization have led to an economy based on knowledge, so the job of today’s leaders is to create an environment that allows workers to increase knowledge and act on it.

Diversity. The role of today’s leader has shifted away from the top-down, authoritative, bureaucratic type who made all the decisions to one who is leader of the

organizational culture. Now the leader is responsible for clarifying and aligning the shared vision, enriching the culture, inspiring the people, and promoting an understanding of quickly changing events, in other words, “unlocking the organization’s human asset potential” (Grant, 2008, p. 459). Clearly, this role requires a different kind of leader than the traditional White males of previous decades. According to Grant (2008), the diversity needed for today’s leader has shifted from attributes once traditionally attributed to males, such as strong decision making, driving strategy, command voice and presence, to more feminine qualities, such as listening, relationship building, and caring. Cotton (2003) found that female principals tend to be more successful than male principals due, in large part, to their establishment of supportive climates, their stronger interpersonal skills, and their more participatory leadership style.

Leaders of learning organizations understand the value of different views and styles of working and see this as a source of richness, not conflict (Marquardt, 2002). Diversity throughout the organization is important and necessitated by today’s mobility of workers. According to Searby and Tripses (2006), women and minorities struggle to gain access and entry into leadership positions, in particular, educational administration positions. Often, the lack of professional networks and a lack of mentors are the barriers to women and minorities moving into leadership positions (Jackson, 2006; Schoening, 2009; Searby & Tripses, 2006). As a result of decades of predominately White, male leadership, women and minorities have a more difficult time being perceived as leaders in nearly every business, governmental, political, military, and educational organization; what is needed more than ever in leadership positions are people who exhibit the leadership characteristics particularly associated with females and minorities (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008).

With the changing demographics of society across the country resulting in a more diverse, multiethnic population, organizations, particularly schools, should not ignore the need for more women and minorities in leadership positions because of the way they relate to adults and students; they positively contribute to the development of positive, multicultural learning environments (Haar & Robicheau, 2009). This country's very existence as a viable, competitive global nation is at risk if organizations do not identify, mentor, and position women and minorities into top leadership positions (Friedman, 2007). According to Friedman (2007), to keep a competitive edge in a global world, it will take teams of people who can work well with others and who know how to speak to people, to explain, and to inspire. These are skills that are most often associated with women and minorities.

Current leaders need to be aware of another diversity dynamic in the workplace in addition to ethnicity and gender. As people live longer and want to work longer, the age makeup of the workforce is changing dramatically. Leaders will be expected to attract, understand, and retain multigenerational employees, consisting of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Soon, the Millennium Generation will join forces in the workplace. For the first time in our nation's history, as many as five generations may be working together by the year 2050 (Hankin, 2005). Effective leaders must be sensitive to the varying needs and expectations of all these generations of workers who have been uniquely shaped and influenced by their history and culture.

Clawson (2009) wrote that to become an effective leader in today's world requires a fundamental shift in management thinking and modes of leadership. Society must rid itself of its existing basic assumptions about leadership to be prepared for the third wave, paradigm shift into the emerging Information Age world. According to Clawson, the

effective leaders of tomorrow will focus more on listening and empathy, will value cooperation and teamwork, will embrace change and diversity, will be adept at intercultural understanding and communication, and will respect the individual regardless of age, race, gender, or religion.

Passion and trust. The leadership ability to rally followers around a vision and lead them into the unknown requires passion and trust. Day (2004) advocated that passion is essential to all successful leadership because passionate leaders can generate energy, conviction, and commitment in their followers. The term *passion* covers a wide range of meanings. Day discovered six areas of passion, including (a) a passion for achievement, (b) a passion for care, (c) a passion for collaboration, (d) a passion for commitment, (e) a passion for trust, and (f) a passion for inclusivity. Day posited that passion is not a quality possessed by just a few principals; it is essential to all successful leadership. It takes passion to continue to lead and learn over time, particularly under the challenging conditions with which leaders are faced today. Not unlike the “I Have a Dream” speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which spiritually moved a generation of listeners, passionate leaders can inspire their followers and give life to visions through powerful, emotional, symbolic communication (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Many leaders have a magnetic effect on people, often referred to as having charisma. In studying this elusive quality in terms of behavior, social scientists found that charismatic people are more animated than others; they smile more, speak faster, pronounce words more clearly, and move their heads and bodies more often; in other words, they exude energy and expressiveness (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). A charismatic personality can be a double-edged sword and should be observed carefully. According to Babiak and Hare (2006), in some psychopathic personalities, people may on the surface

appear to be normal, sociable, and quite likeable, but, in reality, they may have huge egos and suffer from a warped sense of self-importance. With their lack of empathy for other peoples' feelings and underdeveloped sense of morals and ethics, these people do more harm than good to any organization and should never be put in leadership positions (Babiak & Hare, 2006).

According to Fullan (2001), charismatic leaders inadvertently often do more harm than good because, at best, they provide "episodic improvement followed by frustrated or despondent dependency" (p. 1). Yukl (2009) found another disadvantage to charismatic leadership. Even though charisma can increase the leader's influence with followers, this influence may actually stymie the followers' collective thinking and prevent them from challenging the leader with new risk taking ideas.

Leithwood et al. (2008) wrote that successful school leaders exhibit a few common personal traits, other than charisma, that explain much of their effectiveness. Those traits include being (a) open minded and willing to learn from others; (b) flexible rather than dogmatic; (c) persistent, particularly in pursuit of high expectations and achievement for all; (d) resilient; and (e) optimistic.

Fullan (2001) referred to making a positive difference in the lives of people as leading with a moral purpose. According to Fullan, moral purpose is about how people evolve over time, particularly in how they relate to one another. Consciously or unconsciously, leaders influence, for better or worse, a moral purpose in their own organizations. Leaders in a change culture understand that moral purpose and sustained performance are mutually dependent (Fullan, 2001). Day (2004) wrote that school leaders need passion to continue to believe in one's moral purposes and not to be discouraged and to default under pressures when outside forces dictate new school practices which

seem to favor bureaucracy at the expense of teaching. As Day concluded, what being a successful principal really means is to have a passion for teaching and learning and for teachers and learners.

According to Cosner (2009), scholars have empirically identified principals' cultivation of collegial trust among staff as a social resource that is an important element of school capacity. Cosner defined school capacity as organizational resources that support school reform efforts, teacher change, and the improvement of student performance. Principal leadership is crucial at the building level for establishing and developing the climate of trust among teachers, particularly in cultivating positive strategies for dealing with conflict. Trust emanates from shared leadership, and when the power differential between principals and teachers is lessened, instruction and student achievement improve (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Sergiovanni (2005) found a moral aspect of trust. Without trusting relationships in schools, the capacity for collaboration and learning is broken, hindering chances for school success.

Recognition, reward, and communication. For all employees to understand a great vision, the leader must be an exceptional communicator through figurative language and visibility throughout the organization (Clawson, 2009). Kotter (1996) stated, "Nothing undermines the communication of a change vision more than behavior on the part of key players that seems inconsistent with the vision" (p. 10). Marquardt (2002) found that creating vision is not sufficient; organizational leaders must be able to articulate the vision and also be engaged in its hands-on implementation. According to Darling and Heller (2009), successful leaders today create strategic meaning through effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders of the organization. In order to help people adapt to change and develop new patterns of behavior, the leader

must deeply understand and care about his employees and find the most effective ways to influence and communicate with them. To accomplish this, successful leaders generally share four similar strategies: (a) attention through vision, (b) meaning through communication, (c) trust through positioning, and (d) confidence through respect (Darling & Heller, 2009).

Exemplary leaders understand the importance of recognizing and rewarding their followers. Kouzes and Posner (2007) referred to this leadership quality as “encouraging the heart” (p. 277). Successful leaders have high expectations of themselves and of their followers. Leaders can bring out the best performance from their people by supporting and encouraging them along the way toward the vision. People need clear goals and feedback, particularly through personal recognition (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). According to Kouzes and Posner, to make recognition meaningful and to show that the leader genuinely cares about his followers mean that the leader must spend time being visible and getting to know his employees. Recognition and rewards do not necessarily have to be monetary; people appreciate a simple pat on the back and a thank you for a job well done (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

In today’s globalized economic environment, winning organizations do not have unhappy and disempowered employees (Kotter, 1996). Organizations that encourage the growth of their employees increase their personal mastery. Senge (2006) wrote that personal mastery is the cornerstone of the learning organization in that its people are committed to their own lifelong learning with the highest aspirations for self and others.

Ethics. Leaders do not operate in isolation; they work with people. According to Clawson (2009), the relationship between leader and follower always contains moral and ethical aspects. Sergiovanni (2005) referred to the virtues of leadership. He wrote that

“leadership as moral action is a struggle to do the right thing according to a sense of values and what it means to be a human being” (p. 115). In that leadership involves the use of power and influence, every workplace situation is an ethical one. Without a genuine and honest interest in the well-being of others to help them achieve their goals, the leader will come across as self-serving and uncaring, which could undermine his/her ability to influence (Clawson, 2009).

Johnson (2009) wrote about the moral aspect of power. He pointed out that leaders take on a unique set of ethical burdens, which includes issues of power, privilege, information, and responsibility. Power is the foundation for influence attempts; the more power leaders have, the more likely others will comply with their requests and the greater the potential for abuse. Brown (2000) defined ethics “as the process of deciding what should be done” (p. 2). Weston (2008) defined ethics as “a concern with the basic needs and legitimate expectations of others as well as our own” (p. 5). It is the responsibility of the leader to help followers discover the difference between right and wrong by providing them the tools such as a well communicated and enforced code of ethics and the process of ethical reflection (Brown, 2000). Effective leaders not only act morally in their own positions, but they also set a high ethical standard for their followers (Johnson, 2009). Wise leaders must resist the dangers of possessing too much power and ensure that followers are not corrupted by having too little (Johnson, 2009).

Team learning or culture. Marquardt (2002) wrote that it is crucial for leaders to identify as many ways as possible to reward not only the individual but also team learning. Marquardt compared teams’ value to organizations to the family’s role in a community in that both are the basic learning units in learning organizations. According to Goleman (2000), the leadership demand for team skills in the coming years is

increasing with the advent of global organizations, virtual organizations, and work that will become so complex that no one individual has all the skills to solve them. Senge (2006) wrote that there has never been a greater need for teamwork in organizations, and that teams are becoming the “key learning unit” in organizations (p. 219). Senge described team learning as “the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire” (p. 218).

If teams are aligned, which means creating synergy as a whole, a shared vision emerges, which propels the organization forward. According to Senge (2006), there is no organizational learning just by individuals; however, team learning can become a microcosm for learning throughout the organization. Team learning involves mastering the practice of strategic dialogue, in which team members must deeply listen to one another and suspend their own views while creatively exploring complex issues (Senge, 2006). Using the highest quality of collective thinking, strategic dialogue has the capacity to transform new knowledge into action.

Leaders must understand the importance of culture to an organization. Kotter (1996) stated, “Culture refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people” (p. 148). In any organizational transformation effort, if the changes are not aligned with the present culture, regression will occur. In fact, Kotter named culture as the biggest impediment to creating change in a group. Only after the leader has successfully changed people’s behavior and only after people see the connection between the new behaviors and the vision will the culture change. Of importance to school leaders is that schools with strong organizational cultures produce the highest student achievement (Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006). According to Saphier et al. (2006), an improved professional school culture occurs when leaders develop the capacities of

teacher teams to work on shared beliefs, academic focus, and productive professional relationships.

Systems thinking. To be a leader who can affect change within organizations is having the ability to understand the high interdependence of all the elements within a system. Kotter (1996) explained the challenge of bringing change to organizations because if the leader changes one element in the organization, ultimately, everything in the system has to be changed. Meadows (2008) described a system as “an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something” (p. 11). She wrote that a system is more than the sum of its parts; it can be adaptive, dynamic, goal seeking, and sometimes evolutionary. The function of nearly every system is to ensure its own perpetuation. Information holds systems together and is crucial in determining how they operate. Systems have the ability to self-organize, and leaders who intervene in systems at the level of paradigm can reach a leverage point of total transformation (Meadows, 2008).

Systems thinking is crucial for organizational transformation because effective leaders help everyone understand the overall vision and strategies and the way each project fits into the whole. This ability to be a systems thinker is what Senge (2006) referred to as “the fifth discipline” (p. 12). Senge found that true learning organizations consist of five crucial disciplines: (a) systems thinking, (b) personal mastery, (c) mental models, (d) shared vision, and (e) team learning. Senge referred to systems thinking as the fifth discipline because it integrates all the other disciplines into a unified whole, preventing organizational fragmentation. As related to the systemic relationships within education, Hallinger and Heck (2010) noted that leadership and school improvement are part of the whole, and that focusing on one without attending to the others will not likely

bring about long-lasting improvement.

Leadership Theories

Leadership theories have evolved over the past century, in large part due to their historical circumstances. From approximately 1900 to World War II, leadership was defined by psychological and trait characteristics. From the end of World War II through the 1960s, leadership took a behavioral approach with an emphasis on what leaders did. Beginning in the 1970s, leadership definitions considered the leader's environment, so situational and contingency theories emerged (Black, 2010). The past 2 decades have brought globalization, technology, economic uncertainty, social upheaval, and increased women and minorities in the workplace. These forces necessitate new leadership for the 21st century. Prior to analyzing the constructs of this new leadership, a historical context of leadership traits and theories is discussed.

Trait theory. One of the oldest leadership theories to be studied is the trait theory, commonly known as the great man theory because it assumes that great people are born with certain traits that make them great leaders (Northouse, 2010). According to Northouse (2010), these leadership traits are as follows: (a) intelligence, (b) self-confidence, (c) determination, (d) integrity, and (e) sociability. Northouse wrote that five personality factors are related to leadership. Extraversion, or the tendency to be sociable and assertive and to have positive energy, ranks as the most strongly associated with leadership. The other four personality factors in descending order are (a) conscientiousness, (b) openness, (c) low neuroticism, and (d) agreeableness (Northouse, 2010).

Even though the trait theory of leadership has a century of research behind it, its distinct disadvantage is the assumption that leaders are born, not made and that most

theories about leadership were based around the White, male model. In their examination of 24 leadership theories, Irby, Brown, Duffy, and Trautman (2001) discovered that the great man leadership models excluded the female experience, contained sexist language, and females were not expected to have the same career aspirations as males.

Additionally, no trait theory of leadership incorporated feminine-attributed approaches to leadership, such as collaboration, employee empowerment, inquiry group problem solving, qualitative analysis of data, nurturance and celebration of diversity, reflection on practice, and community building (Irby et al., 2001).

Another disadvantage of the trait theory is that it focused on the leader and ignored the followers and the situation. Fullan (2001) wrote about the value of aspiring leaders being able to hone their leadership skills, as opposed to being born with them, and to build leadership capacity in their followers. With increasing reform efforts presently being demanded in education, schools need a plethora of well-trained leaders, not those born with certain traits. The findings of Kirby, Paradise, and King (1992) refuted the leaders-are-born-not-made thinking and advocated that developing skills in educating and challenging teachers should be a major focus in principal leadership training. Cotton (2003) wrote that numerous leadership development programs for principals are available to help veteran, new, and aspiring principals acquire the knowledge and skills needed for effective leadership.

Emotional intelligence theory. Considering the role that emotional intelligence plays in leadership is a theory that is gaining wide acceptance among scholars. In his research, Goleman (2000) found that effective leaders are alike in that they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence (EI). In fact, without EI, a person can have the best training in the world and possess the most intelligent, analytical mind, but he still may

not make a great leader (Goleman, 2000). Those who are skillful in dealing with emotions are referred to as having high emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined EI as an ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action.

Goleman (2000) found that the components of EI included (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skill. His definition of emotional intelligence was that leaders understand their own and other people's emotional makeup well enough to move followers in the direction of accomplishing the company's goals. Leaders not skilled in dealing with such resistance and emotions will experience much personal stress and not be able to sustain or endure their position (Moore, 2009). Leaders with a high EI could mean the difference between a high performing and a low performing organization. There is sufficient evidence that leaders high in emotional intelligence are more effective and demonstrate more transformational leadership behaviors (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000).

Research has indicated that EI can be developed and learned, so, unlike traits and personality, organizations have the opportunity to train future leaders with this important quality of emotional intelligence. Schmidt (2010) argued that school leaders need to be trained emotionally as well as cognitively in light of the incredible pressures under which they work. She found that today's principals are increasingly at risk of anxiety, stress, and professional burnout. In addition to the traditional responsibilities of school leaders, principals are now expected to "manage the marketplace, curriculum change, and governance factors with an increased emphasis on accountability, marketability, and globalization, often at the expense of their primary role as educators" (Schmidt, 2010, p. 627).

Schmidt (2010) pointed out that these global forces have the capability of diminishing the role of principals as prime leaders, leading to increased principal frustration, retirements, and resignations in an era with few qualified people to replace them. School leaders need emotional intelligence to help withstand the power and politics that are creating fear within schools. Leaders strong in EI have the skills necessary to support, calm, and guide their followers in the face of so much uncertainty. According to Moore (2009), leaders not skilled in dealing with followers' resistance and emotions will experience much personal stress and will not be able to sustain or endure the change process; leaders equipped with emotional intelligence can make the difference between a high performing school and a low performing school.

Skills-based theory. The skills-based theory of leadership is a leader-centered perspective on leadership, which, like emotional intelligence, can be learned and developed (Northouse, 2010). Unique from traits, which are leaders' innate characteristics, Northouse described leadership skills as the ability to use one's knowledge and competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objectives. According to Northouse (2010), the three essential skills required of leaders include (a) a human skill or the ability to work with people, (b) a technical skill or proficiency in a specific type of work or activity, and (c) a conceptual skill or the ability to work with ideas and concepts. At the heart of the skills model are problem solving, social judgment, and knowledge.

The skills model also advocates that career experiences can positively affect the individual characteristics of leaders (Northouse, 2010). Given the fact that leadership is a complex process to understand, the skills theory is expansive with many variables that can capture many of the complexities of leadership not found in other models. According to Northouse, even though leadership traits rather than leadership skills have been the

focus of research for the past 100 years, a shift is occurring, and leadership skills are now receiving far more attention by researchers. Leadership skills are learned competencies and can give leaders the capacity to influence others (Northouse, 2010).

Leadership Styles

Various leadership styles emphasize the behavior of the leader and focus on what leaders do and how they act. In his findings about the style approach, Northouse (2010) described two kinds of behaviors: task behavior and relationship behavior. The style approach explained how leaders combine these two kinds of behaviors to influence employees to reach a goal. Those who exhibit high task and high relationship tend to be more effective leaders than those who score low in these areas (Northouse, 2010).

According to Northouse, many studies have shown that the more styles a leader exhibits, the better. The most effective leaders switch flexibly among the leadership styles as needed. Few leaders have every proven leadership style in their repertoire. Once they understand which competencies are inherent in the styles they are lacking, they can work on those areas, plus they can surround themselves with diverse team members who manifest the styles the leader lacks (Goleman, 2000).

Situational leadership style. Situational leadership focuses on leadership in situations. To be effective leaders, individuals must adapt their style to the demands of different situations. Similar to the high-task, high-relationship skills, the situational leader includes both directive and supportive behaviors. Leaders cannot use the same style in all contexts and must adapt to the situation (Clawson, 2009). The basic principle underlying situational leadership depends on the followers' level of maturity, based on their willingness and ability to perform a specific task. The effective leader is skilled in all four styles of (a) telling, (b) participating, (c) selling, and (d) delegating and knows when to

employ each style (Marzano et al., 2005). This style of leadership requires a high degree of flexibility on the part of the leader. Situations clearly matter for principals. The principal might have all the attributes for effective leadership, but in the absence of a supportive environment, these attributes might never manifest themselves (Sternberg, 2003).

Distributed leadership style. Another leadership style mentioned in the literature is distributed leadership. Wright (2008) supported distributed leadership, in which principals share the leadership with teachers and staff so that the principal is not required to be the sole expert in all areas of student achievement. Day et al. (2008) found that principals, referred to as head teachers in their research, draw on the same range of qualities, strategies, and skills, but the combinations will vary as will the way they are applied since this relates closely to their personal qualities and traits, and this accounts for the different ways in which they distribute leadership among staff. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) wrote that shared leadership and professional communities create resilience in schools, suggesting that when the power differential between principals and teachers is lessened, instruction is positively affected even in the midst of change.

According to Williams (2009), if schools are to improve, reliance on the principal as the sole leader is no longer sufficient. Today, schools need to establish leadership capacity, which is about creating the conditions for growth and self-renewal and the distribution of leadership throughout the organization. Wright (2008) cautioned against the misuse of distributed leadership. Simply delegating administrative tasks among the follower ranks does not serve as an authentic form of distributed leadership. Skillful leadership requires that principals hire good people, help them see the school as part of a whole system, and involve them in decision making using research-based information,

collaborative teams, and reflective thinking (Williams, 2009). Professional development and collective inquiry are critical components for leading change as school staffs try to navigate technological, societal, economic, and political dynamics (Williams, 2009). Leaders who can build leadership capacity throughout the organization help to sustain lasting school improvement.

Authentic leadership style. One of the newest areas of leadership research is authentic leadership brought about by economic fear and uncertainty. People are desperate for leadership they can trust and for leaders who are ethical and honest. According to Northouse (2010), authentic leadership focuses on qualities within the leader, such as self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept, and, fortunately, authentic leaders can learn and develop these behaviors over a lifetime. Sergiovanni (1999) wrote that authentic leaders have character and can be trusted to be morally responsible in the organizations they lead. Authentic leaders know themselves well and have a genuine desire to serve others (Northouse, 2010). Johnson (2009) wrote about the strong moral component of authentic leadership. He stated that authentic leaders accept the ethical responsibilities of their position and produce followers who mirror the leader's high ethical standards. According to Johnson, even though they occupy positions of authority and power, ethical leaders take care of their employees by treating them fairly and by expressing care and concern. Principals who exhibit authentic leadership are open and honest and set high standards for teachers that they follow themselves.

Servant leadership style. Authentic leadership is very closely aligned to servant leadership. The term servant leadership is attributed to Robert Greenleaf (1991), who believed that people will follow leaders who serve them first and then lead them to higher goals through clear vision and encouragement. It is the leader's vision, belief, and trust in

others that can make a vision happen. In his research on the behaviors of caring leaders, Greenleaf found that they (a) love life, (b) have a good sense of humor, (c) lead with love for others, (d) empower others to do their jobs, (e) give them opportunities for growth, (f) are master communicators and listeners, and (g) never give up on their vision.

Rather than being considered a comprehensive theory of leadership by itself, servant leadership has more to do with the position of the leader within the organization (Marzano et al., 2005). The servant leader is in close contact with all people in the organization rather than primarily interacting at the high levels of the hierarchy. As such, the servant leader possesses strong human relations skills such as (a) understanding workers' personal needs, (b) being skilled at resolving conflicts, (c) developing and empowering workers, and (d) being an effective listener (Marzano et al., 2005). Twenty-first century scholars portrayed the servant leader as a person who has moved beyond being transformational due to his or her ability to transform those served to grow personally and professionally (Black, 2010).

The central feature of servant leadership is nurturing those within the organization and, like authentic leadership, contains a moral dimension (Marzano et al., 2005). Leadership is not about power; however, leaders who have developed a capacity for caring do hold power over others, a power of admiration and respect and an image of well-being, strength, and energy in those who care for the welfare of others (Hoyle, 2007). Black (2010) found a positive correlation between servant leadership and school climate, which ultimately contributes to improved student achievement. Principal servant leadership fosters healthy schools in which the principal is seen as positive, supportive and friendly to staff and students and in which teachers work well with colleagues and like their students and their jobs. Everyone has high expectations for one another (Black,

2010).

Adaptive leadership style. The traditional view of leadership has been displaced in recent years by a subtle social change in which people and institutions that lead are not expected to know all the answers. This approach is known as adaptive leadership in which leadership is viewed as an activity rather than a formal position or personal characteristic. Instead of holding all the power, adaptive leaders create conditions through which stakeholders take responsibility for tackling tough problems (Heifetz et al., 2004). The problems that require leadership are adaptive challenges, those that the experts cannot solve, unlike technical challenges that experts can solve. Most social problems are adaptive; they lie in the heart, and to solve them, leaders must change people's values, beliefs, habits, ways of working, or ways of life (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004).

Significant leadership often comes from the margins of society, without authority; leadership defines itself through action. According to Heifetz et al. (2004), adaptive leadership is defined as the activity of mobilizing people to do the adaptive work necessary to achieve progress. Leaders need to be aware that trying to move people in the same direction may result in conflict across racial, cultural, or socioeconomic lines. Adaptive leadership means refereeing and becoming comfortable with such conflicts (Heifetz et al., 2004). The reality is that change is essential for progress. Whenever values, traditions, and power are at stake, change will inevitably produce heat, but that heat can also be the energy source that ignites the creativity needed to solve the deep, entrenched problems (Heifetz et al., 2004).

The beauty of adaptive leadership is that it engages tough issues in a way that leads to a broadening of perspectives, the shifting of values, the changing of behavior, and the accomplishment of progress (Williams, 2004). According to Williams (2004),

although the study of adaptive leadership is a relatively new field of research, it is well suited for principals who work under current highly accountable pressures. In contrast to the descriptive leadership theories that explain what great leaders do and their respective traits and characteristics, the adaptive approach focuses on how leadership can be used to solve the real, substantive, bureaucratic problems of today's schools rather than just getting the followers to follow (Williams, 2004).

Transformational leadership style. A powerful leadership style that is widely supported in current research on principal leadership is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them (Bass, 2000; Kotter, 1996; Marquardt, 2002; Northouse, 2010; Senge, 2006). Bass stated that the future educational leaders of learning organizations will be transformational, and that the transformational principal will be directive or participative as needs dictate within the school. Even though new models of shared leadership and teacher empowerment have broadened leadership responsibilities, the principal still remains the sole individual at the center of school leadership given the increasing complexity of schools (Bass, 2000).

In contrast to transactional leadership, which focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers, transformational leaders engage with others and create a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2010). In short, transactional leadership is defined as trading one thing for another, whereas transformational leadership is more focused on change (Marzano et al., 2005). Four factors characterize the behavior of transformational leaders: (a) individual consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence, often referred to as the Four Is of transformational leadership

(Bass & Avolio, 1994; Sosik & Dionne, 1997).

The most successful organizations begin with a vision, mission, and strategies, but strategies only take on value when committed followers energize them (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The kind of leadership that moves people to this level of action is transformational leadership. This type of leadership has a moral dimension in that it raises the level of ethical aspirations of both the leader and the followers, creating a transforming effect on both (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Johnson (2009) wrote that transformational leadership has a clear ethical foundation in that the transforming leader will raise the level of morality in the organization.

An important dimension regarding transformational efforts is that the leader must create a sense of urgency within the organization. Without that sense of urgency, followers will not make the sacrifices needed for change and will cling to the status quo (Kotter, 1996). Senge (2006) referred to this sense of urgency as creative tension, which is caused when followers see the gap between where they want to be (i.e., vision) and where they currently are. Rather than waiting for the mounting problems to force the organization to change, the motivation behind creative tension is intrinsic, which is generative learning at its best (Osland et al., 2007). In relation to educational leadership, Stewart (2006) wrote that transformational leadership is very consistent with the trends in educational reform, such as teacher empowerment, distributed leadership, and organizational learning. Stewart posited that this leadership model values the organization's capacity to transform itself through a shared vision, a shared commitment to school change, and to support changes in teaching and learning.

Instructional leadership style. A style of leadership that is uniquely suited for educational leadership, and which is linked to transformational leadership, is instructional

leadership (Marzano et al., 2005). According to Printy, Marks, and Bowers (2009), the two models of principal leadership, instructional and transformational, have dominated the research in the current reform era. Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four roles of an instructional leader:

1. A resource provider who ensures that the teachers have all the resources needed to fulfill their jobs.
2. An instructional resource by supporting, modeling, and participating in day-to-day instructional activities.
3. A communicator by setting clear goals and articulating such to faculty and staff.
4. A visible presence by being actively involved in classrooms and being highly accessible to staff, students, and community. (p. 9)

By combining instructional with transformational leadership, Leithwood et al. (2008) developed the model of transformational leadership in education. By adapting the Four I's of transformational leadership developed by Bass and Avolio (1994) to the field of education, Leithwood et al. wrote that the school leader must (a) give individual consideration to each staff member, (b) intellectually stimulate teachers to think in new ways, (c) inspire and communicate high expectations for all, and (d) be an idealized model for teachers through personal character and accomplishments.

Stoll and Temperley (2009) added a creative element to instructional leadership. They defined creative leadership as (a) an imaginative response to challenging issues, (b) a way of thinking and doing things differently, (c) actively scanning the horizon for challenges, and, most importantly, and (d) removing the obstacles and providing the conditions for staff to be creative. Manasse (1984) indicated that effective principals more closely resemble leaders of high-performing, learning organizations than they do their less successful counterpart principals. Leading the collective learning within the

school is a hallmark of instructional leadership, as found by Gaziel (2007). Manasse wrote that the effect of instructional leadership on student achievement is indirect, by principal behaviors that directly affect teachers and school culture and thereby indirectly impacting student achievement.

Principals in the Role of Transformational and Instructional Leaders

Griffith (2004) supported the idea that principal leadership might be modeled as transformational leadership. Griffith found that schools in which principals were perceived as transformational leaders showed a strong, positive, and significant relation to the school staff job satisfaction, which in turn showed a positive and significant relation to the school achievement progress. Additionally, Griffith discovered that principals who displayed characteristics of transformational leaders had more beneficial effects on student achievement in schools having more disadvantaged students and showed the achievement gap narrowed in those schools. Another study validating the positive impact on schools of transformational leadership found this leadership style is more likely to increase teachers' on-the-job challenges and support their initiatives and, in doing so, increase their job satisfaction (Nir & Kranot, 2006).

Cotton (2003) found strong correlations in the research to support effective principals and transformational leadership. As opposed to transactional leadership, which Cotton described as when the principals are bureaucratic and use strategies with staff to convince them to do their bidding, a transformational principal leads staff to transcend their self-interest to concentrate on their students' best interests. As such, according to Cotton, student achievement is positively related to transformational leadership.

Printy et al. (2009) found that schools achieve when principals and teacher leaders integrate transformational and instructional leadership. Principals who are

transformational leaders set the stage by establishing the school as an intellectual environment. When teachers share in this transformational leadership, they exhibit the qualities of professional educators, show more caring for colleagues, and help inspire everyone to achieve their best. Teacher learning is facilitated when transformational principals not only motivate them, but also stay collaboratively engaged with the teachers as they make instructional decisions (Printy, 2010). Printy et al. emphasized the importance of the integration of the principal's transformational leadership and the teachers' instructional leadership before the shared leadership can emerge.

Respectful relationships among principals and teachers, as well as a common focus on high student achievement, are found in schools with highly integrated transformational and instructional leadership. Principal transformational leadership fosters school staffs who are more satisfied with their work and, as a result, show greater student achievement progress (Griffith, 2004). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found school leader efficacy to be a strong link that joins successful leadership practices with student learning. School leader efficacy building is most closely associated with transformative organizational redesign, such as building collaborative cultures. Of note to school district leadership is that the efficacy of school principals evolves from the aligned and supportive nature of their organizational working conditions (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010) found that three important attributes of school leadership (e.g., instructional leadership, shared leadership, and trust) are all necessary to affect teachers' classroom practices and their interactions with one another and to contribute to student achievement. Louis et al.'s analysis showed that leadership variables are positively related to student learning and that shared and instructionally focused leadership complement one another. The element of principal-teacher trust is

linked to shared leadership, and high-trust schools exhibited more collective decision making with demonstrated improvements in student learning.

Williams (2009) wrote that school leadership capacity is about creating the conditions within the school that foster growth, self-renewal, and the development and distribution of leadership throughout the organization. Hallinger and Heck (2010) concurred and cited that collaborative school leadership, not just leadership solely from the principal, paves the way for more sustainable school improvement. Bass (2000) predicted that the future educational leaders of learning organizations will be transformational by being democratic with teachers and students, by being change agents in dealing with 21st-century school challenges, and by converting mandates into challenges and opportunities.

Although it is clear that principals do influence overall school effectiveness, researchers have yet to agree upon valid methods of assessing leadership behaviors, as leadership is a multifaceted and contextually based construct (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). With more current research into the leadership dimensions of successful principals, student achievement might be improved through the hiring of more effective principals. A compelling reason for school districts to be able to identify and hire the best principals is that they make more significant changes within the first five years after taking the position, and that more experienced heads of successful schools are more likely to focus on embedding change and maintaining the improvements already achieved (Day et al., 2008). With the strong correlation between principal transformational leadership and effective schools, strong consideration should be given to using the components of transformational and instructional leadership as the basis for rating and selecting applicants for principal positions to ensure greater success for principals and

their schools.

Reform-Driven New Principal Standards

America's public schools continue to fail in regard to the federally mandated NCLB achievement standards. Under NCLB, all public schools must make adequate yearly progress in raising student achievement, culminating in 100% of students, including students with special needs, learners of English as a second language, and students living in poverty, reaching proficiency in 2014. In its 2011 report, the Center on Education Policy indicated that nearly half of this country's 43,000 public schools did not make adequate yearly progress. This statistic marks the highest national percentage of schools ever to fall short, and it represents an increase of nine percentage points from the previous year (Center on Education Policy, 2011). As an acknowledgment of the failure of the federal NCLB mandates to improve schools, on February 9, 2012, President Barack Obama authorized 10 states to ignore key provisions of the NCLB law and granted them the power to design their own school accountability systems (Banchero, 2012).

As public accountability of schools has increased, so has the demand for effective school leadership. However, many school districts struggle to find qualified candidates to fill vacant principal positions. The time demands of the job and job stress associated with greater accountability are often cited as reasons why administrators are not interested in pursuing school leadership (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). Additionally, these demanding times require a new type of principal: one with the attributes, skills, and abilities beyond what is required to earn an administrative principal credential (Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011). Cotton (2003) captured the complexity of the principalship by making the following statement:

If there is one overall conclusion we would offer based on the past two decades of study of beginning principals in America, it would be that the job has become increasingly complex, more difficult, and with intense and unreasonable pressures to solve a broad menu of education, social, and personal problems. At this time, the demands for accountability, maintaining a safe environment, and serving all the needs of children (and many needs of their parents) means that in reality no one person can do it all. We also are very concerned about how long they can survive in the pressure cooker that the principalship has become. (pp. 2-3)

Two national organizations, NAESP and the Council of Chief State School Officers, have responded to the current leadership role of the principal with revised standards for principals. The ISLLC standards are the only common set of standards developed by a national body of state departments of education, originally 23 states, and 12 national leadership organizations that were designed for all school leaders of schools that served students in prekindergarten through Grade 12 (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

As of 2006, 43 states now include some reference to the ISLLC standards in their respective principal licensing criteria (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008). Standards for school leaders evolved amidst decades of controversy over school achievement in the United States. The 1983 report called *A Nation at Risk*, from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, portrayed a dismal state of affairs for education in this country. The report served as a call to reform schools, which in turn has led to standards-based approaches to reform school leaders (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

In 2008, NAESP updated its standards for principals. The catalyst for those revisions was the belief that one cannot have a successful school without effective school leadership, and that school leaders need to exhibit more than charisma and good management skills (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). Annually, NAESP recognizes approximately 60 principals from schools across the country and overseas as

NDPs, partially based on the 2008 NAESP principal standards. Nevertheless, public school achievement continues to decline in this nation.

Dimensions in Principal Leadership

Jones (2010) investigated the leadership practices of a sample of National Distinguished Principals, which created and sustained productive change in their schools. Jones found common leadership practices that were consistent with the domains of leadership performance as found by Schwahn and Spady (2010). The domains were described as authentic, visionary, cultural, quality, and service. The principals focused on the leadership performance role of change and led the conditions within their schools to help the school staff, students, and community get past their fear of change. Through visionary leadership, they were willing to make the necessary changes to get desired results, and they influenced the school's professional development program in order to realize a preferred future (Jones, 2010).

Valenti (2010) also studied a sample of NDPs to determine which of the 11 principal leadership responsibilities identified by Waters et al. (2003) significantly improved student achievement. The study found that the three most important leadership responsibilities when guiding complex change and improving student achievement were (a) establishing strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students, (b) monitoring the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning, and (c) fostering shared beliefs and sense of community and cooperation.

The core of any principal leadership program should be its standards for what the leader should know and be able to do (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). The impetus for the updating of the NAESP standards was the belief that excellent schools must have excellent leaders and, consequently, NAESP tied their standards to their

indicators of quality schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005). According to the Institute for Educational Leadership (2005), the field of school leadership in the United States recommended the use of the ISLLC standards for principal training and evaluation. Babo and Ramaswami (2011) called for a national level principal evaluation system that reflects the ISLLC criteria.

The ISLLC and NAESP school leadership standards have some similarities, but they also contain differences. The NAESP standards lack any reference to the important leadership task of vision. Both sets of standards refer to the facilitation by leaders of student and adult learning. The ISLLC standards use the term *vision*, which is lacking in the NAESP standards. Both sets of standards refer to the leader's role in establishing a strong instructional program for high student achievement.

Both sets of standards mention the importance of school culture for continuous learning and progress toward goals. Different from the ISLLC standards, the NAESP standards speak not only to the leader's responsibility to the academic, but also to the social, emotional, and physical development of students.

The NAESP standards specifically mention the importance of using data to inform decisions and progress. The ISLLC standards do not mention data management, but rather management of the organization for a safe, effective learning environment. Neither set of standards refers to the importance of the leader sharing these responsibilities. Both sets of standards reinforce the importance of school leaders involving the entire school community in the education of their students.

The ISLLC standards include two standards that are not mentioned in the NAESP standards. The ISLLC standards establish the important leadership attributes of ethics, integrity, and fairness. The second standard mentioned in the ISLLC standards but not in

the NAESP standards is the importance of leaders' understanding about the outside forces that greatly impact education and the school. These forces include the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts of schools.

Babo and Ramaswami (2011) found that, when school superintendents referred to the ISLLC standards as a guide for principal evaluation, they indicated that Instruction was the most important. Their research findings determined that the five most important principal functions when superintendents evaluated principals were as follows: (a) be an advocate for children, (b) model principles of ethical behaviors, (c) promote and protect the welfare and safety of students, (d) nurture and sustain a culture of learning, and (e) implement a plan to achieve the school's goals. Those ISLLC standards that superintendents consistently ranked at the bottom of the list of important functions for principals' evaluation were (a) collaborating with the community and (b) understanding the larger context of school. Babo and Ramaswami concluded that their findings supported the recent emphasis in the field on the need for today's building principals to be instructional leaders.

Summary

Effective leadership is essential to the successful functioning of virtually any organization, not just schools. For centuries, scholars have attempted to understand what leads to success in leadership. To this day, effective leadership continues to elude people and organizations. Leadership experts differ greatly on which precise leadership theories, styles, traits, behaviors, or approaches garner the most positive results. According to Goleman (2000), leaders with the best results do not rely on only one leadership style; they use most of them in a given week, fluidly and in various quantities, depending on the situation. Hallinger and Heck (2010) cautioned that no single approach to leadership will

suffice to improve all schools given that leadership styles and strategies are highly contextualized.

A primary factor that will no doubt prevent the achievement of success for many organizations in today's era of change is that they often tend to be over managed and under led (Darling & Heller, 2009). Leading organizational change requires transformational leadership at the helm to turn traditional, bureaucratic institutions into learning organizations. The state of the public education system in America is competitive, chaotic, and complex, requiring exemplary leadership skills to change outdated thinking. Today's school leaders are required to perform in traditional institutions amid unpredictable and highly politicized social and economic conditions.

The strength of learning organizations is their generative capability, which requires new ways of looking at the world and demands the ability to see the entire system, to get at the systematic source of problems. Today's leaders must have the ability to build shared vision, to challenge old ways of doing business, and to generate more systematic patterns of thinking (Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Osland et al., 2007).

Twenty-first century leaders are responsible for continuous learning of the entire organization. In schools in particular, principals have the dual responsibility of developing students' capabilities while socializing them to meet society's needs and expectations (Dubin, 2006). This fact is a responsibility that requires nothing less than extraordinary leadership. By studying the existing leadership research, aspiring leaders can blend what has worked well in the past with what is needed for the future. Those who are in a position to be leaders of learning organizations know that they do not run the place; they are cultivating leadership in others. If done well, the organization will

outgrow them (Fullan, 2001).

Perhaps, the benchmark by which future generations will rate effective leaders will not be by theories or styles or traits or approaches, but rather by the legacy they leave in the advancement of new leadership fostered in their followers. When specifically considering the leadership of school principals, the research strongly supports the role of transformational leadership, combined with instructional leadership, as the major influences in leading a new culture of learning in today's schools. Studies of transformational leadership, which do affirm the importance of the principal's role in the change process, have not focused on improving curriculum, teaching, and learning (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998).

According to Marks and Printy (2003), when instructional and transformational leadership approaches are integrated, principals can improve schools and student performance. Marks and Printy asserted, "When transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievements of its students, is substantial" (p. 370). Effective school leadership is essential for today's schools, leadership that "generates thought and movement, participation and engagement, focus and purpose, and a problem-solving capacity that leads to the attainment of worthwhile local, state, and national objectives" (Williams, 2004, p. 37). The current research on effective principal leadership, to which this study contributed, gives promise that this new generation of school leaders can be selected and trained to lead the change efforts so desperately needed by this nation's schools.

Research Questions

The literature review revealed what research studies have documented about

principal leadership, but it also suggests gaps and points to much of what is still to be discovered. The following research questions were established to guide this applied dissertation:

1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions?
2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves?
3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

This study was quantitative in design with an option for participants to include qualitative comments. Creswell (2008) wrote that, in quantitative research, “the researcher decides what to study; asks specific, narrow questions; collects quantifiable data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics; and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner” (p. 46). The target population for this study included 158 NDP recipients from the past 3 years: 2008, 2009, and 2010. For principals to receive this distinction, they must undergo a rigorous nomination and selection process that targets principal leadership effectiveness as documented by self and others. A description of the NDP program and the merits of the NDP award taken from NAESP (2010b) are as follows:

The National Distinguished Principals program was established in 1984 as an annual event to honor exemplary elementary and middle-level principals who set the pace, character, and quality of the education children receive during their early school years. Recognition as an NDP is not only a prestigious accomplishment, but it is also the highest praise a principal can receive from his or her peers in the profession. (para. 1)

The population from which the sample was drawn was demographically diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, number of years of experience as a principal, and the socioeconomic status of the principals' schools. Specifically, in the NDP class of 2008, there were 61 principals who were honored. This group of principals represented all 50 United States, the District of Columbia, four private schools in four different states, and three international schools. This class of 2008 consisted of 43 females and 19 males. In the class of 2009, there were 63 recipients, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two international schools. As to gender, this class

consisted of 42 females and 21 males. In the NDP class of 2010, there were 62 principals, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five private schools in five different states, and three international schools. This class was composed of 39 females and 23 males. The age distribution of the target population varied. According to the NAESP nomination guidelines, a nominee must have been a principal for a minimum of 5 years to be considered for the award.

Names and e-mail addresses of the target population were obtained from the NAESP website. The NDPs were contacted by an e-mail participation letter and asked to participate in this study. The participation letter was a written presentation of the study, which addressed the following points: (a) introduction of myself, (b) the purpose of this study, (c) what would be done with the results, (d) how participants were selected, (e) any possible benefits and risks to the participant, and (f) the promise of confidentiality and anonymity to participants and their school districts (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006).

A random sampling procedure was applied to select the sample of participants. By studying a sample of NDP principals, generalizations about the target population were made. It was assumed that some principals who were within a 3-year window of having received their distinguished award were still excited about their honor, which may have motivated them to volunteer to participate in this study. The fact that the request to participate in the study came from a fellow NDP might also have enhanced their willingness to be involved and have a more personal interest in the results.

Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study was the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, owned and developed by Edge Training Systems, Inc. This instrument measured the leadership behaviors of randomly selected NDPs. The Edge 360 for

Educational Leadership was chosen as the survey instrument for this study because it was current and its items were aligned with the ISLLC standards, which were developed from the recent research in the area of effective principal leadership. Permission to use the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership for this research study was granted by the president of Edge Training Systems.

The purpose of the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership was to provide specific, 360-degree feedback to principals as rated by self and others. This instrument quantified principals' perceptions of themselves on a Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 6, and it further mitigated subjectivity by having from five to seven outside raters assess each principal. The Edge 360 for Educational Leadership defined seven discrete leadership tasks. These tasks were qualitative in nature, but the assessment tool broke them down into 74 specific performance behaviors that were observed and measured. The findings were benchmarked against national standards for desired principal leadership behavior. These standards are qualitative; therefore, determining the leadership strengths and weakness of the study group was an effective way to quantify conformity to the desired leadership behaviors.

According to Dyer (2001), the power of 360-degree feedback is that, by receiving feedback from multiple sources, educational leaders can reevaluate their skills, assess their weaknesses, and become more valuable leaders to their schools. Dyer acknowledged the difficulty for school administrators who are mired in the day-to-day challenges of running a school to develop the requisite skills and knowledge required for effectively leading schools in today's challenging times of change and school reform. As such, school leaders rarely have the opportunity to receive honest, constructive feedback that enables them to gauge whether or not they are acting in ways that are consistent with their

intentions. Also inherent in positions of leadership are power and authority.

Consequently, peers, subordinates, and others may offer less than candid feedback on a leader's performance when asked directly.

The Edge 360 for Educational Leadership was anonymous and confidential and was delivered online in an easy-to-use survey environment. The main advantages of using the expertise of an established company such as Edge Training Systems and their assessment tool, the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, were as follows: (a) ease and efficiency of use and administration, using an online platform; (b) detailed, comprehensive feedback reports, which were computer generated by the Edge Assessment Center; and (c) timely delivery of results delivered to all participants.

Reliability and validity. All 74 items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership instrument were aligned with the six ISLLC standards for chief state school officers (H. Saunders, personal communication, January 10, 2011). The ISLLC standards were developed in 1996 by the Council of Chief State School Officers in response to the increasing demands on the principalship, with the intent to drive change in principal preparation programs. The ISLLC standards indicated a shift from management to leadership and to link leadership to student achievement.

According to the president of Edge Training Systems, the content validation of this instrument (e.g., what competencies to assess, how they are defined, and behavioral statements that anchor feedback) was apparent by the rater feedback received by his company. The company has collected 2 years of performance data on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership and has test retest performance for many principals who have taken the instrument twice, but the company cannot publish the data because it belongs to their clients.

The Edge 360 for Educational Leadership is currently being used by a large school district in Virginia, student enrollment of 58,000, for selection of their Level II Principals of Distinction state endorsement (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). The fact that (a) the fourth largest school district in the state of Virginia uses the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership to help identify and select their Principals of Distinction, (b) this district uses this instrument for principal training and development, (c) the instrument measures what the district wants to measure, and (d) the items on the instrument are aligned with the ISLLC standards all pointed to the reliability and validity of using the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership for this study. An internal consistency reliability index of .978 for the 74 items on the survey instrument used for this study was calculated using the Cronbach's alpha.

Individual 360-feedback reports. Comprehensive, individual 360-feedback reports were provided to each NDP participant from the Edge Training Assessment Center shortly after completion of the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership assessment. Each principal was provided a multirater picture of his or her performance as perceived by self and others in the form of a detailed, 360-feedback report. The individual report was a collection of six different types of reports, each of which looked at the information collected in different ways. For this final report, only group aggregate data were reported in the results. A summary of the six reports is as follows:

1. Task Summary Report, which was an overall view of the leader's assessment results showing how frequently he or she performed 74 specific leadership behaviors, which were linked to seven discrete leadership tasks.

2. Gap Analysis Report, which showed how the principals rated themselves in each of the leadership tasks compared to how others rated the leader. These reports

highlighted the gaps, which may be unseen strengths or blind spots if the ratings differ from one another.

3. Importance Rankings Report, which showed the overall importance rankings given for each of the leadership tasks and how each group of raters ranked the importance of each leadership task,

4. Importance or Performance Grid, which set up a four-quadrant view of the principal's performance ratings compared to the overall importance rankings given by the raters.

5. Strengths or Needs Report, which listed the principals' 20 highest rated and 20 lowest rated of the rated behavior items.

6. Task Detail Report, which provided the most comprehensive look at the assessment results. For each of the leadership tasks assessed, the principals saw how each of the rater groups rated their leadership, and the leaders viewed each behavior item that contributed to this task score and the detailed ratings report for each item.

The format of the reports consisted of easy-to-read bar graphs indicating the range of percentage correct scores from lowest to highest and the group's overall mean scores. The percentile rank score was based on a comparison of the participant's performance to that of all participants who completed this assessment. A written comment section followed the 74 multiple-choice items. All raters were invited to add written feedback on the following three questions: What does the person do that should be continued? What could this person do to be more effective? What does this person do that should be stopped?

Procedures

A random sampling procedure from the target population was employed to locate

the sample. First, the names of the eight NDPs from international schools were eliminated because they may have experienced unique cultures, regulations, policies, and standards from their NDP counterparts in the United States. A recruitment letter and participation letter was emailed to the remaining 158 NDPs. A sample was established from the group of NDPs who responded with an interest in participating in the study. All NDP responders and their status for the study were kept informed by this researcher. The advantage of using this sampling method was that any individual had an equal probability of volunteering, and any bias in the population was equally distributed. Additionally, the sample was representative of the population and, as such, generalizations could be made to the total population (Creswell, 2008).

The justification for selecting the sample was to investigate how a group of principals had successfully led their schools in these recent, demanding times to such an extent that they were nationally recognized. The 360-degree aspect of this instrument added to the trustworthiness and triangulation of the data-collection phase of this study. According to Creswell (2008), triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection. This ensured credibility to the study because the information drew from multiple sources of information from multiple individuals (Creswell, 2008).

Once the sample of NDPs was identified, the participants logged into the Edge Training Systems' website for registration and electronic administration of the survey. To register, each participant was provided with login information consisting of a confidential user identification number and a password. Participant confidentiality was assured in that no participant names or identification of schools or school districts were used in this study's findings. Each participating principal received a confidential, individual report of

their 360-feedback assessment results. This study's results were reported only as group aggregate data.

Once registered, the participants completed their online assessment, which consisted of 74 items regarding leadership behaviors. The participant rated how frequently a given behavior was performed, or how frequently the raters observed the behavior, using a 6-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*almost never*) to 6 (*almost always*). The Edge 360 for Educational Leadership assessment could be completed in approximately 30 minutes; participants also had the option of partially completing the assessment, logging out of the website, and returning at a later time to complete the survey. Participants accessed the software from any web browser via a user-friendly interface. The Edge Assessment Center supported the technology by providing customer support and technical assistance if needed.

Data collection. The projected time line for this study was fall of 2011 as principals returned to their schools to prepare for the 2011-2012 school year. The data needed to answer the research questions were collected as follows:

1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions? Questions 1 through 74 on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership provided the information necessary for this investigation. To specifically divide the questions into the seven discrete leadership tasks as measured by this instrument, the following information was provided. Questions 1 through 8 addressed change. Questions 9 through 19 addressed professionalism. Questions 20 through 28 addressed diversity. Questions 29 through 40 addressed communication and community relations. Questions 41 through 51 addressed instructional leadership. Questions 52 through 63 addressed planning and assessment. Questions 64 through 74 addressed safety and organizational management for learning.

2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves? Group aggregate data reports compiled by the Edge Training Assessment Center provided data to analyze through statistical inference.

3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership? The data were benchmarked against two sets of national standards to quantify conformity to desired leadership behaviors.

Data analysis. An online survey was used to collect the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership assessment data. The instrument described 74 specific leadership behaviors. The participants were asked how frequently the principal being assessed exhibited each of these behaviors. Participants had to quantify their perceptions on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 6 (*almost always*). Participants had the option of selecting "not sure" if they did not have enough knowledge about the item. The participants were also asked to rate four of the seven discrete leadership tasks or skills as most important.

The collected data were coded on a 7-point scale that was identical for each of the 74 described behaviors. The survey items were structured such that the frequency of performance scale in the survey translated directly to a 6-point need and strength scale used to compile and report the survey results. For this study, weakness and need were considered synonymous, and weakness was generally used to describe results because it more appropriately communicated the intent of the study.

Each of the principals being assessed was asked, in addition to self-reporting, to select from five to seven observers, ideally consisting of four subordinates, one

supervisor, one peer, and one other (e.g., parent or community member), to take the online survey. The Edge Training Systems electronically tracked, distributed, and returned surveys and advised participants if their observers had not completed their online assessments.

The raw data collected from the assessment surveys was grouped into five distinct observation categories as follows: (a) self, (b) supervisor, (c) subordinates, (d) peers, and (e) customers. The raw data were then compiled in several different ways and reported in six basic formats as follows: Task Summary Report, Gap Analysis Report, Importance Rankings Report, Importance or Performance Grid, Strength or Needs Report, and Task Detail Report. All personal and professional information gathered by Edge Training Systems was strictly confidential, and the company will not provide any information or data from this study that can be used to identify the participants or observers.

The methodology used to compile the data was consistent for each of the six basic reporting formats. The participants' responses for each of the 74 leadership behaviors and the 7 discrete leadership tasks were averaged and reported as a single point on the 6-point scale. This process resulted in noninterval rankings (e.g., 4.8) that showed the relative placement (e.g., *weak*, *average*, or *strong*) on the scale. Each average value was plotted inside a bar graph that showed the associated variance, which was either the range of average values or the range of actual scale values, depending on the specific finding being reported.

The Task Summary Report, Gap Analysis Report, Importance Rankings Report, and Importance or Performance Grid all summarized findings under the category named Seven Discrete Leadership Tasks. Each of these discrete tasks included a subgroup of the 74 performance behaviors described in the survey. The average scale value for each of

the seven discrete leadership tasks was calculated by averaging the scale values in the associated performance behavior subgroup. The data from all five of the observation categories (e.g., self, supervisor, subordinates, peers, and customers) were combined to compile the Task Summary Report and Importance Rankings Report but were kept segregated for compiling the Gap Analysis Report and Importance Rankings Report.

The Strength or Needs Report and Task Detail Report differed from the above in that they reported results for each of the 74 specific performance behaviors. The Task Detail Report was of primary importance because it provided summary data from each of the five observation categories for each of the 74 specific performance behaviors. It also graphically displayed the actual frequency distribution of all data collected for each of the 74 performance behaviors along with the number of null responses.

The Task Detail Report was scrutinized to ascertain that (a) central tendency could be determined with sufficient accuracy to make valid comparisons with NAESP and ISLLC standards, (b) the number of null responses did not significantly affect the frequency distribution, and (c) the average value of data from all observed categories was not significantly biased by data from the categories of self, supervisor, and peers. The summary data (i.e., all data from all observation categories) could have been biased by the perceptions of one's self, supervisors, and peers. This study was more weighted on assessments made by subordinates (e.g., teachers and support staff). This was a group that was more directly impacted by their respective principal's leadership behaviors.

All data from the Task Detail Report were analyzed to show a frequency distribution that might have be expected for each of the 74 performance behaviors, using the mean scale value to further refine central tendency by reducing the influence of outliers. It was anticipated that the assessment results would have data distributions that

showed central tendency that could be analyzed and discussed as such. The possibility existed that data collected under one or more of the 74 performance behaviors would not have been suitable for use in this study. For example, a distribution with data points more or less equally spread across four or five intervals would not have had an identifiable central tendency, and the average of the data would have been meaningless for comparative purposes. In that case, the specific behavior in question would have been removed from the comparative analysis. In the end, this particular situation did not occur.

Anticipated Outcomes

Given the increasing demands and accountability on today's school principals, combined with the shift in leadership from school management to leadership linked to student achievement, one outcome of this study was the degree to which NDP leadership conformed to the current principal standards developed by two national organizations. Benchmarking the results of a sample of NDPs using 360-degree assessment feedback with the ISLLC and NAESP standards revealed areas of similarity as well as gaps in the national principal standards. After publication of this study, the results will be shared with both national organizations. Potentially, this study's findings will strengthen the NDP selection process as well as provide current principal effectiveness research to those organizations charged with the responsibility of recruiting, training, and hiring future school principals.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview of the Setting and the Participants

This study was conducted from September 29, 2011, through November 5, 2011. This time frame was chosen because the new school year was at least a month underway, and principals had completed all of the beginning-of-the-year duties and feasibly had more time to participate in this study. On September 29, an e-mail recruiting flyer, with an attached participation letter, was sent to 158 NDPs from the 2008, 2009, and 2010 classes. Of that population, 48 NDPs were eliminated from a combination of 30 aborted e-mails and 18 NDPs who responded that they could not participate in the study because they were no longer a principal or had retired. Of the remaining population of 110 NDPs, 25 responded affirmatively that they would participate in the study. That sample of 25 NDPs was provided with an identification number and a password and instructions on how to log in online to the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership assessment located at Edge Training Systems, Inc.

The survey window opened on October 1, 2011, and remained open through November 4, 2011. Participants received weekly computer-generated reminders to complete their surveys and to encourage their raters to complete their surveys. Of the 25 NDPs who indicated that they would participate, 19 started the process by logging on, completing the demographic information, and partially completing the assessment survey. When the window closed on November 4, 2011, eight NDPs had completed their self-rated assessment and also had an average of at least five outside raters who had completed their assessment about their NDP. One NDP completed a self-assessment but had no raters, so this NDP was eliminated from the sample. The final sample of participants for this study consisted of eight NDPs with a total of 47 outside raters.

Demographically, this sample consisted of seven females and one male. Regarding age, one participant fell into the 60-plus age bracket, five participants were between 51 and 60, and two participants were between 41 and 50. Regarding years of experience as a principal, three participants had 21-plus years of experience, four participants had 11 to 15 years of experience, and one participant had 6 to 10 years of experience. The number of years of experience in the school in which they were a principal when they won their NDP honor was as follows: One participant had 11 to 15 years of experience, three participants had 6 to 10 years of experience, and four had 0 to 5 years of experience.

Regarding the location of the schools, two NDPs described their schools as urban, and six NDPs described their schools as suburban. The student enrollment of the schools varied as follows: One school had 0 to 249 students, three schools had 250 to 499 students, one school had 500 to 749 students, and three schools had 750 to 999 students. The percentage of students on free or reduced lunch at the eight schools was as follows: One school had 0% to 10%, four schools had 31% to 40%, one school had 51% to 60%, one school had 61% to 70%, and one school had 71% to 80%. Geographically, the eight schools were located in the following eight states: Georgia, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia.

Overview of the Research Instrument

To eliminate the personal bias inherent in an individual principal's self-assessment, this study implemented a 360-degree assessment instrument, the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, published by Edge Training Systems, Inc. As a result of the choice of this web-based instrument, the study's results reflected the feedback not only from the NDPs themselves, but also from a number of outside raters from the NDPs'

school communities. By analyzing feedback from multiple sources and not solely the self-perception of each NDP, the results data were perhaps more honest and realistic. Additionally, at the end of the survey, all participants and their raters were invited to add additional written comments about the NDPs. This qualitative piece to the instrument added to the richness of the quantitative data.

Study Findings Correlated to the Research Questions

This study was undertaken to answer three research questions related to the dimensions of principal leadership:

1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions?
2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves?
3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership?

Research Question 1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions? The findings for this research question were analyzed based on the data from two different cumulative group data sets. In the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, the NDPs were asked to specify which of the seven leadership tasks were the most important to the their job. The importance of each leadership task to the NDPs was categorized into one of three areas (e.g., important, very important, and critical) using a scale score of 0 to 2 (see Appendix A). Important leadership tasks were change and diversity. According to the NDPs, very important leadership tasks were communication and community relations, professionalism, and safety and organizational management for learning. The NDPs ranked instructional leadership and planning and assessment as critical.

A second data set showed a total of 74 specific leadership behaviors grouped according to one of the seven leadership tasks. The results showed the overall importance rankings given for each of the leadership tasks based on the NDPs' responses on the assessment instrument. Each of the seven leadership tasks corresponded to the 74 items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership assessment. Each item detail was given an average on a 1- to 6-point scale. Of note is that the NDPs' answers to the 74 items on the assessment instrument did not correlate with the NDPs' self-rankings of the seven leadership tasks. Even though the NDPs self-ranked instructional leadership and planning and assessment as critical tasks to their leadership, their responses on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership rated professionalism at the top (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Average of Responses to Assessment Items
Grouped by Leadership Tasks*

Category	Average rank
Professionalism	5.73
Instructional leadership	5.34
Change	5.31
Planning and assessment	5.28
Diversity	5.28
Safety and organizational management for learning	5.25
Communication and community relations	5.23

In addition to answering the 74 items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership,

the NDPs were invited to add written comments (see Appendix B) to the following three questions: What things done by the NDP should be continued? What could the NDP do to be more effective? What does the NDP do that should be stopped? Many of the NDPs' raters responded to these questions, but few of the NDPs added written comments. One NDP wrote a comment to the first question, as evidenced from the use of a first person pronoun. This NDP indicated putting instructional leadership first. This leadership dimension was not mentioned in any of the other written comments in this section about what the NDPs should continue doing. Given that the data from this study showed that instructional leadership ranked as an area of need for the NDP group, it is possible that this NDP may believe that instructional leadership is an area of strength for him or her, but it may in truth be a blind spot for this individual.

Four NDPs were willing to add personal comments to the second prompt about how to be a more effective principal. Written comments by the NDPs indicated that they were well aware of areas that needed self-improvement. The NDPs' comments included the following responses: "I need to be more willing to confront issues without worrying about negative interactions; I am too nice when people need to change behaviors to be more effective in their jobs." "There is no time left in my working day to make major changes, such as improving community involvement and reducing the achievement gap, which are needs for our school." "I need to organize resources, prioritize initiatives, limit the number of organizations, meetings, and out-of-school responsibilities; I should spend more time informally visiting classrooms." "I must work on time management, adhering to a schedule that allows me to put first things first without working 80-hour work weeks."

Only one NDP responded to the third question, and the response reflected the

current level of pressures and demands placed on the job of the principal. The NDP's response was as follows: "Perhaps I allow too many interruptions in my anticipated day. It's quite different this year with so many more teacher observations required. I would like to stop being at school 12 hours every day and one weekend day."

Research Question 2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves? The outside raters for the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership instrument were described as (a) supervisor, (b) subordinates, (c) peers, (d) and customers. In analyzing the data, the NDPs and their outside raters did not rank the seven leadership tasks as having the same level of importance (see Appendix A).

The one leadership task that the NDPs and all four rater groups agreed on and all self-ranked as critical was instructional leadership, with a total average of 1.75 of a scale score of 0 to 2. Under communication and community relations, the NDPs and three of the rater groups (e.g., supervisor, peers, and customers) ranked this leadership task as very important. Subordinates, however, ranked this leadership task as critical. The NDPs, the supervisor, and the peers ranked the task of planning and assessment as critical. However, customers ranked this task as very important, and subordinates ranked it as important.

Under professionalism, the NDPs, supervisor, subordinates, and customers all ranked this leadership task as very important, whereas peers ranked it as important. The leadership task of change was ranked as very important by peers and subordinates, whereas the NDPs, supervisor, and customers ranked it as important. All four rater groups ranked safety and organizational management for learning as important, whereas the NDPs ranked this task as very important. The lowest ranked leadership task was

diversity, indicated by the fact that the NDPs and all four rater groups ranked it as important.

The correlation between the importance rankings of the leadership tasks given by the NDPs' raters and their responses on the instrument about the NDPs' performance behaviors in those same tasks are given in descending order of importance as high importance or high performance: (a) instructional leadership, (b) communication and community relations, (c) planning and assessment, (d) professionalism, and (e) change. Importance was greater than or equal to 1 on a scale of 0 to 2, and performance was greater than or equal to 5 on a scale of 1 to 6. The two leadership tasks that ranked as low importance (i.e., less than 1 on a scale of 0 to 2) or high performance (i.e., greater than or equal to 5 on a scale of 1 to 6) were (a) safety and organizational management for learning and (b) diversity.

In analyzing the data, the one consistent leadership task that placed highest from both the NDPs' and their raters' responses on the instrument was professionalism. Otherwise, the average of the raters' responses to the 74 leadership behavior items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, grouped under the seven leadership tasks, differed from the NDPs' responses (see Table 2).

The NDPs rated themselves differently in each of the leadership tasks compared to how their supervisor, their subordinates, their peers, and their customers rated them. These results are important for spotting unseen strengths among the NDPs (i.e., areas in which they may have rated their performance significantly lower than others did). These results also showed blind spots, or those tasks in which the NDPs may have rated themselves significantly higher than others did. The results did not indicate a statistically significant variance (i.e., greater than 1 point on the scale) in the spread of scores in the

distribution; however, the findings did indicate some revealing information by studying how each of the four rater groups rated the NDPs.

Table 2

Average of Raters' Responses to Items About Their Principals Grouped by Leadership Task

Category	Average rank
Professionalism	5.54
Diversity	5.51
Planning and assessment	5.39
Safety and organizational management for learning	5.37
Communication and community relations	5.34
Instructional leadership	5.30
Change	5.30

The NDPs and their outside raters did not rank the seven leadership tasks as having the same level of importance. The one leadership task that the NDPs and all four rater groups agreed on and all ranked as critical was instructional leadership; however, their responses on the survey instrument indicated that instructional leadership was a weak area for the NDPs. Overall, the results from the survey instrument showed that the NDPs tended to rate themselves higher in the seven leadership tasks than their supervisors and their subordinates rated them, and the NDPs tended to rate themselves lower in the seven leadership tasks than did their peers and customers. Under the supervisor comparison, the NDPs rated themselves higher in five of the seven leadership

tasks than their supervisors rated them, with the biggest gap in the leadership task of professionalism. The two leadership tasks in which the ratings of the supervisors and the NDPs were similar involved diversity and safety and organizational management for learning.

Under the subordinates' comparison, the NDPs rated themselves higher in four of the seven leadership tasks than their subordinates did. Those four leadership tasks included change, instructional leadership, professionalism, and safety and organizational management for learning. The subordinates rated the NDPs higher than the NDPs did of themselves in the two areas of communication and community relations and diversity. The NDPs and their subordinates' ratings for planning and assessment were similar. Under the peers' comparison, peers rated the NDPs higher in all seven leadership tasks than the NDPs rated themselves, with the closest gap in ratings for professionalism. Under the customers' comparison, the customers also rated the NDPs higher in six of the leadership tasks than the NDPs rated themselves, with very similar ratings for professionalism.

Overall, the results from the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership showed that the NDPs tended to rate themselves higher in the seven leadership tasks than their supervisors and their subordinates rated them, and the NDPs tended to rate themselves lower in the seven leadership tasks than did their peers and customers. In addition to answering the 74 items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, all of the outside raters were invited to add written comments (see Appendix B) to the following three questions: What things done by the NDP should be continued? What could the NDP do to be more effective? What does the NDP do that should be stopped?

A qualitative analysis of the written comments provided by the raters indicated a

close relationship to the NDPs' strengths and needs that surfaced from the quantitative assessment survey. The positive written comments focused primarily on the NDPs' attributes of professionalism, not on instructional leadership or change. The written comments regarding what the NDP could do more effectively or should stop doing reflected the current overwhelming pressures, mandates, and stress being placed on principals in today's schools.

As to the first written prompt, much of the positive feedback regarding what the NDP does that should be continued centered on personal skill behaviors that could be grouped under the leadership task of professionalism. A few of the most common positive descriptors given by the NDPs' raters were as follows: (a) has positive attitude; (b) very professional and encourages professional growth in others; (c) gets along well with employees; (d) helps staff work as a team; (e) well respected; (f) sets a family-like, safe atmosphere at school; and (g) has good rapport with students, staff, and parents. Conspicuously missing from the written feedback about what the NDPs should continue doing were the leadership dimensions that could be grouped under the leadership tasks of instructional leadership and change.

The second prompt in the written comments focused on what the NDP could do to be more effective. A few of the raters' comments in this section included the following: (a) complete more employees' assessments, (b) enforce all rules regardless of how much work or effort it causes, (c) tackle issues before they become a distraction to the school culture, (d) needs more personal backbone and does not handle conflict well, (e) address and guide less effective teachers, and (f) hold teachers and staff more accountable.

In the third prompt in the written comments, the raters responded to the question of what the NDP does that should be stopped. Similar to the responses to the second

question, the responses to this question reflected how overwhelming the job of a principal has become. A few of the raters' comments to this question were as follows: (a) sweeps issues under the rug or avoids confrontation, (b) spread too thin with outside obligations, (c) does not deal with employee conflicts, (d) spends too much time in the office instead of in classrooms, (e) be more realistic about self-imposed expectations, and (f) stop letting the job consume you so you can put more balance into your life.

Research Question 3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership? These two national school leader standards responded to the current, challenging leadership role of the principal with recently revised standard frameworks.

In correlating the NDPs' dimensions of leadership as revealed in this study with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership, some important discrepancies were found. The highest strength area for NDPs that surfaced from this study was professionalism, and this leadership task is contained in the language of both the NAESP and ISLLC standards. An area of strength among the participants in this study was diversity, but it is not an area covered in either the NAESP or ISLLC standards. The three most common areas of need for the NDPs, indicated by this study, were safety and organizational management for learning, instructional leadership, and change.

There are references to principal leadership and managing and setting high standards for the organization in the two sets of national standards; however, given the results of this study, perhaps instructional leadership needs to be addressed by name and definition in the national standards and in the training of future principals. Instructional leadership is about transformation, and transformation is about change. The most

revealing omission from the NAESP and ISLLC standards, and perhaps the most critical leadership dimension to principal effectiveness, involves change. Change is not mentioned in the national standards, and change surfaced as an area of need for NDPs in this study.

In determining the extent to which the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlated with the ISLLC and NAESP standards, one could analyze the NDPs' 20 highest rated leadership behaviors and their 20 lowest rated leadership behaviors of the items assessed in the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership (see Appendices C and D). The results identified the specific behaviors that are recognized by the NDPs' raters as not only particular leadership strengths for the NDPs, but also those behaviors that may need further attention and development work. In analyzing the top 20 strength behavior ratings for the NDPs, according to the seven leadership tasks, the leadership task area of change did not make the list. Of note is the fact that change is also not mentioned in either the ISLLC or NAESP standards.

The highest strength area for NDPs that surfaced from this study was professionalism, which ranked among seven of the top 20 leadership behavior items from the survey instrument. This area described personal characteristics of the leader, such as high standards of behavior, clear ethics and values, and personal and professional growth, all of which are alluded to in both the NAESP and ISLLC standards.

The second area of strength among the participants in this study involved diversity. This behavior item ranked as five of the top 20 strength areas, but it is not an area covered in the NAESP or ISLLC standards. The ISLLC standards mention that the leader must be able to respond to diverse community interests and needs, which does not have the same connotation as the leadership behavior measured in this study. The items

from the survey instrument that ranked as strengths in diversity are as follows: (a) understands the value of working in a diversity-rich environment, (b) appreciates individual differences and diversity among others, (c) effectively works with people of diverse backgrounds, (d) encourages educational programs aimed at understanding diverse cultures and backgrounds, and (e) is able to capitalize on and learn from others' different talents. This study's data indicate that diversity is an important leadership task for the NDPs, but the importance of leaders understanding and working with diversity is not specifically addressed in either the NAESP or ISLLC standards.

Two important leadership task areas of need that surfaced for the NDPs in this study were instructional leadership and change, as indicated in Appendix D. Instructional leadership is not mentioned by name in either the NAESP or the ISLLC standards, and this leadership task surfaced as an area of need for NDPs in this study. Rather, the NAESP standards refer to leading schools, setting high expectations, demanding content and instruction that ensure student achievement, and creating a culture of continuous learning. The ISLLC standards contain the action words of facilitating, developing, articulating, and implementing a vision of learning, plus advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Inherent in the term, instructional leadership, but not mentioned in either set of national principal standards, is the element of transformation. The specific behaviors for instructional leadership, as measured by the survey instrument in this study and which should be a critical component of the ISLLC and NAESP standards, include the following items: (a) effectively determines the root cause of a problem, (b) does not attempt to solve problems without first analyzing the cause of the problem, (c) When

problems arise, immediately tackles and alerts others who would be impacted, (d) lets employees know how the tasks they are assigned fit into the bigger organizational picture, and (e) thinks about consequences of actions and how they affect overall facility strategies.

The leadership task of change was the third area of need for NDPs as evidenced from the survey instrument, and change is not mentioned in either the NAESP or the ISLLC standards. The specific behavior items relating to change from the survey instrument, which should be incorporated into the ISLLC and NAESP standards, are as follows: (a) explains how a change being introduced will affect the employees, the department, and the organization; (b) provides appropriate information regarding a change to aid staff in seeing the change as an improvement; (c) when introducing a change, solicits ideas from employees for implementing the change and enlists employee commitment and support for the change; (d) provides opportunities for discussion and clarification on changes; and (e) leads regular meetings with staff to communicate specifics regarding change.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This final chapter elaborates the results of the study relative to the three research questions. The findings are linked to relevant research, and implications of the findings are discussed. Conclusions regarding the findings are offered, along with limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

This study examined the leadership dimensions of a sample of NDP recipients as compared to the recent research findings about effective school principals in this era of increasing school reform and accountability. The sample of participants for this study volunteered from a population of NDPs who received their award in 2008, 2009, or 2010. This study was quantitative in design with an option for participants to include qualitative comments. Data were collected through the use of an online survey using the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership. This 360-degree survey instrument provided feedback from the NDP participants as well as from outside raters from each NDP's school and community. The selected research methodology was important to the study's results in that it impacted the data collected, the scope of inference, and the ability to draw defensible conclusions.

Summary of Findings

The following research questions were established to guide this applied dissertation:

1. How do NDPs rate their own leadership dimensions?
2. To what extent do the staff and stakeholders within the NDPs' school community identify the same or similar dimensions of leadership as the NDPs do of themselves?

3. To what extent do the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership?

Research Question 1. Even though the NDPs self-ranked instructional leadership as their most critical leadership task, in fact, professionalism surfaced as their highest leadership dimension based on their responses on the survey instrument. The fact that differences exist in this study between what NDPs believe is important for a principal to do on the job (e.g., rank ordering of the leadership tasks) and how they responded to the leadership behavior items on the survey instrument is a classic example of Argyris' and Schon's (1974) espoused theory versus theory in use. This study's findings revealed discrepancies between what principals say they should do as opposed to what they actually do.

In this researcher's experience, principals generally know, on an intellectual level, the importance of instructional leadership and change to the success of the organization given the pressures they face to reform schools and deliver high student achievement. However, the principals in this study did not exhibit these two leadership tasks as high as other leadership tasks, and they may underestimate the transformative aspect of instructional leadership that is necessary in these demanding times to lead change in their schools (Louis et al., 2010; Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011). The fact that professionalism rated the highest leadership dimension in this study, as indicated by the NDPs, is very relevant. This finding indicated that the personal leadership characteristics of high ethics, values, morals, trust, and even a sense of humor are not only important to principals, but these leadership dimensions are also achievable and evident as exemplified in the behavior of these NDPs.

Research Question 2. The average of the raters' responses to the 74 leadership

behavior items on the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership, grouped under the seven leadership tasks, differed from the NDPs' responses. Along with the NDPs, their raters also ranked instructional leadership as the most important leadership task. However, the one consistent leadership task that placed highest from both the NDPs and their raters' responses was professionalism.

An important finding from this study is that the NDPs rated themselves higher in the seven leadership tasks than their supervisors and their subordinates rated them, and the NDPs tended to rate themselves lower in the seven leadership tasks than did their peers and customers. Given that most principals are evaluated in their job performance by their supervisors, this gap in perception requires, in this researcher's opinion, a level of dialogue and feedback between principals and supervisors that may not presently exist. This researcher's personal experience is that central-level administrators or supervisors spend very little time in schools observing the principal's daily work. Too often, supervisors evaluate principals on the basis on high-stakes test scores and the volume of parent complaint calls to supervisors, superintendents, or school board members rather than on research-based leadership dimensions.

Derrington and Sanders (2011) established that a disconnection exists between principal leadership expectations and the actual practice of supervision and evaluation of principals. These authors recommended, given the increased principal responsibilities and rigorous standards that now exist, that a new principal evaluation be implemented. This new evaluation model would include (a) a supervisory relationship based on trust, (b) selection of research-based leadership standards, (c) collection of performance data, and (d) a rubric for judgments and decisions based on principal performance supported by the data. Babo and Ramaswami (2011) wrote that principal evaluation can be as varied from

district to district as the personalities of the principals and superintendents themselves. Too often, the influence of local politics or student performance on state mandated tests are the major determinants of a principal's effectiveness.

A qualitative analysis of the data from the written comments provided by the NDPs' raters indicated a close relationship to the NDPs' strengths and needs that surfaced from the quantitative assessment survey. Much of the raters' feedback regarding what the NDP does that should be continued centered on personal skill behaviors that could be grouped under the leadership task of professionalism. Missing from the written feedback about what the NDPs should continue doing were the leadership dimensions that could be grouped under the leadership tasks of instructional leadership and change. Valenti (2010) found that principals valued being a change agent, which was defined as "consciously challenging the status quo, being comfortable leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes, systematically considering new and better ways of doing things" (p. 137). However, similar to this study's findings, this leadership task of change did not surface as one of the top leadership behaviors in the Valenti study.

Research Question 3. In analyzing the extent to which the NDPs' dimensions of leadership correlate with the NAESP and ISLLC key areas of effective school leadership, one must consider the variations between the NAESP and the ISLLC standards. A leadership dimension area of strength for principals that surfaced in this study was diversity, but this leadership task was not mentioned in either the NAESP or ISLLC standards. A second area of strength from this study was professionalism, which was inherent in both sets of standards.

As indicated in this study, the three most common areas of need for the NDPs included safety and organizational management for learning, instructional leadership, and

change. The first leadership task is mentioned in both sets of standards; however, the latter two are not. Given the extreme need for school leaders in these demanding times for the leadership dimensions of instructional leadership and change, the fact that they are not included among the NAESP or ISLLC standards raises questions. As such, continued research is imperative concerning these standards and their relationship to the preparation, licensing, and potential evaluation of this nation's principals.

In summary, this study showed discrepancies among the NDPs' perceptions of their leadership dimensions and the raters' perceptions of their NDPs' leadership dimensions. The study also revealed misconceptions among the NDPs and their raters as to what they rated as the most critical principal leadership skills and what their actual responses on the survey instrument and the qualitative feedback indicated. In addition, this study revealed the NDPs' leadership strengths and needs and how those differed from the national principal standards as established by the NAESP and ISLLC national standards for school leaders.

Interpretation and Implications of Findings

In this era of accountability, the definition of success in schools may be too narrowly defined. Paredes-Scribner, Crow, Lopez, and Murtadha (2011) posited that test scores, grades, attendance rates, and other end marks of productivity have become substitutes for success and school achievement. Rather, success is both an objective and subjective measure, and it is important to clarify how educational leaders provide formal and informal direction to achieve success. Reitzug (2010) wrote, "Wrenching higher test scores from a group of students and teachers does not constitute educational leadership" (p. 319). Rather, Reitzug viewed following the dictates of bureaucrats and politicians as compliance, which falls far short of a compelling vision that is often defined as a key

characteristic of leadership. According to Reitzug, the competitiveness of an achievement-driven educational system may well be the cause of the modern era's adult desire for greed and profit at the expense of others. As such, the major priority for principals is a focus on the development of a compelling moral vision for the schools they lead.

Perhaps a more telling sign of principals' misconceptions about their own leadership is that this study revealed that principals rated themselves higher in the leadership tasks than did their subordinates. In this researcher's opinion, the principals' subordinates, consisting of teachers, support staff, secretaries, paraprofessionals, lunch staff, custodians, and bus drivers, are the people who are most directly impacted on a daily basis by the principal's leadership. The subordinates are positioned the best of all the other raters to view and assess their leader's performance. As with the supervisors, this researcher posits that principals would be well advised to solicit frequent and honest feedback and constructive criticism from their subordinates as a more thorough feedback loop about the leader's performance.

Equally curious information from this study is that principals rated themselves lower in the leadership tasks than did their peers and customers. Again, drawing on personal experience, the life of a principal, particularly an elementary principal, can be isolated in terms of association, mentoring, and networking with peers. Many principals have no assistant principal or any other administrative level personnel in their school. Consequently, their only interaction with persons with like positions and responsibilities may be at monthly leadership meetings. For this reason, the discrepancy in perceptions of leadership between the principals and their peers was not surprising.

In this researcher's opinion, the principals' customers (e.g., parents and

community members) tend to judge the principal's leadership abilities based on their own personal satisfaction with their students' education, school climate, and test scores.

Consequently, the fact that customers rated their principal's performance on the leadership tasks higher than the principals did of themselves was not surprising. In this researcher's experience, if customers were unhappy with their children's school and/or principal, they often transferred their children to another school. An important interpretation of this study's findings is that the NDPs had misconceptions not only about their own leadership dimensions, but also their raters had different perceptions about the NDPs' leadership than did the NDPs.

A final important interpretation of the findings from this study is that the three leadership tasks of most need for the NDPs were safety and organizational management for learning, instructional leadership, and change. In this researcher's opinion, principals may be so overwhelmed with the demands of the job that they might be overlooking the three most important aspects of leadership. The results of this study indicated that principals might be exerting too much time and effort in daily leadership tasks that keep the school running and in promoting a positive climate for students and staff and parents (e.g., professionalism and diversity) but not enough time exhibiting instructional leadership and change, which can cause conflict among the followers. This researcher believes that leaders need to be aware that trying to move people in a new direction may result in conflict across racial, cultural, or socioeconomic lines. Leadership means refereeing and becoming comfortable with such conflicts (Heifetz et al., 2004). The reality is that change is essential for progress.

Korach (2011) wrote that school districts desire new leaders who will challenge the status quo. According to Korach, to alter the existing pattern of stagnant and declining

levels of student achievement, schools need leaders who are capable of enacting second-order change, in which the values of the system are challenged and changed. Leaders who promote second-order change will generate chaos, confusion, and conflict (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). To meet the needs of the 21st century, principals must manifest exemplary leadership in order to change the educational status quo to achieve high standards of learning for all students.

Unfortunately, Shoho and Barnett (2010) pointed to the lack of leadership-development opportunities for aspiring administrators and the fact that very little empirical evidence exists to show that university preparation programs make a significant impact on a principal's ability to lead today's schools. As this study indicated, relying on the ISLLC and NAESP national standards for principal training and evaluation may also not completely meet the needs of modern school leaders. Specific references to instructional leadership and dealing with change, two crucial components of principal leadership, are not mentioned in either set of standards.

Context of Findings

Multiple studies have found that school leaders tend to use a common set of practices to effect student learning, including setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the teaching and learning program (Day et al., 2009; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Waters et al., 2003). Paredes-Scribner et al. (2011) wrote that the specificity of the educational organization requires leadership activity that is unique from other organizations where leadership occurs. Leithwood and Riehl (2005) argued that successful school leadership is characterized by the following research-based evidence: (a) Leadership affects learning, second only to good curriculum and teaching; (b) there exist many sources of

leadership at a school; (c) leaders inspire, communicate, and model a vision, set direction, and develop people; (d) leaders respond to policy demands and promote processes and action in an accountability-driven environment; and (e) leaders respond to diversity challenges and foster strong communities.

According to Thoonen et al. (2011), transformational leadership practices seem to have an important role in fostering conditions for school improvement. Transformational leadership stimulates teachers' engagement in professional development as well as their motivation. However, vision building, a dimension of transformational school leadership, may have an adverse effect on teachers' professional learning if principals do not involve teachers in the process. Also, a second dimension of transformational school leadership (i.e., individualized consideration and support of teachers) may discourage teachers from engaging in experimenting and reflection activities. The research of Thoonen et al. reinforced this study's findings that principals must find ways to align their perceived leadership with the perceptions and expectations of all staff and stakeholders in the school community.

Thoonen et al. (2011) found that a third element of transformational school leadership, that of intellectual stimulation, can foster a climate of trust and encourage teachers to question and challenge the status quo. These results indicated that effective school principals need a combination of transformational and instructional leadership behaviors to effect change to improve teaching and learning within their schools. Temple University's Institute for Educational Leadership's Task Force on the Principalship declared that the top priority of the principalship must be leadership for learning and specified the following three key roles that the principals of the 21st century should provide: (a) instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning,

professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability; (b) community leadership manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school's role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners, and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources, and (c) visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit; conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as well as inspiring other with this vision both inside and outside the school (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2005).

The challenge to public education in America is to improve the quality of current school leadership and build sustainable leadership for the future. With increased governmental scrutiny and accountability over schools and student achievement, the job of the school principal has become untenable. Many principals are leaving the position and/or retiring in record numbers with few qualified candidates to take their place. Future studies about what leadership roles are most effective in improving student learning and how to ensure current and future school leaders develop the right skills for effective leadership are essential for principals to transform their schools and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century. This study contributed to the literature about school leadership and shed light on the dimensions of effective principals' leadership for learning.

Limitations

Part of the trustworthiness of the data that may have affected the validity of this study's outcome was to realize any limitations of this study (Glesne, 2006). The sample size for this study was small ($N = 8$), so one might legitimately question the effects of sample size on correspondence between factors obtained from analysis of sample data

and those present in the population from which the samples were drawn. MacCallum, Widaman, Preacher, and Hong (2001) found that the minimum level of N is dependent on particular aspects of design. The authors posited, “The level of communality has an especially strong interaction with N such that when communalities are high, good recovery of population factors can be achieved with relatively small samples” (p. 612). According to De Winter, Dodou, and Wieringa (2009) exploratory factor analysis is a widely used statistical method in research that goes beyond the individual items of tests and questionnaires to reveal the latent structure that lies underneath. The authors determined that, when factors are well defined or their number is limited, a small sample size exploratory factor analysis (e.g., well below 50) could yield reliable solutions.

To assist in the validity or trustworthiness of this research study, it was important to address potential researcher bias, a reflection of the researcher’s own subjectivity and how she will use and monitor it in her research (Glesne, 2006). Glesne (2006) stressed that validity is an issue that should be thought about during research design as well as in the midst of data collection. Because this writer shared the designation of NDP, she had to be acutely aware of, and constantly checking for, any personal bias about NDPs.

Creswell (2007) emphasized the importance in research studies of *epoche* or bracketing, in which researchers remove themselves as much as possible from their own shared experiences in order to maintain objectivity during data analysis. Considerable effort was made during this study to specifically report the data as the information was collected and to insure that the conclusions and recommendations were directly related to the objective results and subsequent analyses. There were validity and reliability limitations to this study due to the selection of a relatively new survey instrument, the Edge 360 for Educational Leadership.

This study was limited to NDPs from 2008, 2009, and 2010 with current e-mail addresses. This study was also limited and influenced by the fact that the sample contained seven females and one male participant, although this is somewhat reflective of the 2:1 ratio of female NDPs to male NDPs in the total population. The fact that 25 NDPs indicated that they would participate in this study, but only eight actually completed their survey and had a sufficient number of raters who also completed their surveys, speaks to difficulty of using a 360-degree assessment. Potential participants may have thought that the online assessment was complicated because, in addition to completing the survey themselves, they also had to list the names and addresses of a minimum of seven raters to include a supervisor, subordinates, peers, and customers.

Without a strong incentive to complete all aspects of a 360-degree assessment, such as being part of the principal's evaluation process, it will continue to be difficult for researchers to obtain a large sample using this type of assessment. Additionally, this study was limited by the outdated email addresses of the NDPs from the past three years. The current research indicates that school principals are leaving their positions in record numbers due to the increasing demands on the job (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011a). As such, the ability to locate a sample of experienced principals will become increasingly difficult for future research. Because this study contained a small sample of NDPs, the results cannot be generalized to all NDPs or to all elementary or middle school principals.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study revealed some implications for future research. The difficulty of obtaining research participants using a 360-degree instrument was evident from this study's small sample. However, this study showed the discrepancies in leadership perception between the principals and their raters. Without leverage such as

making the 360-degree assessment instrument part of the principal's annual evaluation, future quantitative or qualitative studies of school leaders might not obtain accurate findings from only the principals' perspectives. Future studies should investigate ways to encourage principals to participate in research using 360-degree assessments.

Future studies of principal leadership might want to collect two additional pieces of demographic information. It would have been informative to know in this study the high stakes testing information about the NDPs' schools. Even though Reitzug (2010) pointed out that a school's test scores are not the hallmark of effective educational leadership, a principal who is an instructional leader should be able to help transform the organization to achieve success over time; if not, the principal might be replaced by a leader who can improve student achievement.

Another facet about principals to consider knowing for future studies is their path to the principalship. It would have been informative to know if principals who moved into their leadership positions directly from the classroom were more or less successful than those who had obtained additional professional experience outside of education, such as in the military, business, or the nonprofit sector.

Future studies could be conducted comparing the leadership of NDPs with principals who have not received this award to determine the similarities and differences. This study examined only elementary and middle school NDPs, so future studies might investigate a comparable award of distinction for high school principals and conduct school leadership research with that population.

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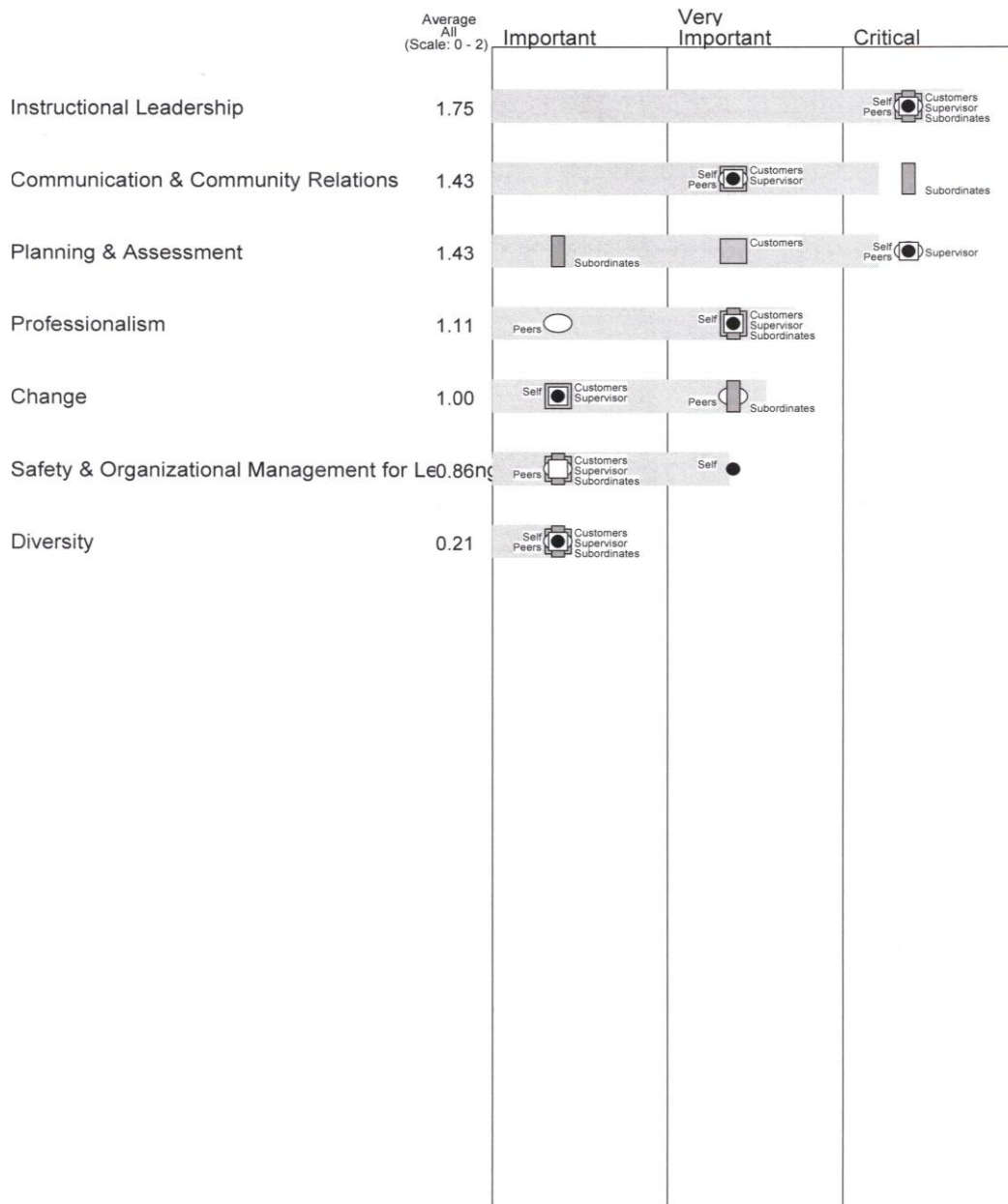
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Appendix A

Importance of Leadership Tasks Self-Ranked by NDPs and All Raters

Importance of Leadership Tasks Self-Ranked by NDPs and All Raters

Importance Rankings Report



Appendix B
Written Comments

Written Comments

Prompt #1: Things the person does that should be continued:

- Having a positive attitude, being open to diversity, understanding the financial/budgeting aspect.
- Works with all with positive professional attitude.
- Gets along well with employees; very flexible regarding employees that need time off; very professional
- Has a very positive attitude and professionalism.
- Very approachable for staff members, students, and parents. Helps the staff work as a team and makes changes with a very democratic approach. Encourages teachers to attend professional development and allows time for them to share new information with the staff. You rarely see a school event without this principal. Well respected in the school, county, and community.
- Does an excellent job as facilitator of our school and letting the staff have a say in the programs and activities at the school. Sets a comfortable family-like atmosphere at our school. Also has a very good rapport with the students, parents, and staff. Is fair in judgement (*sic*) and always listens to each side of the situation.
- Encouraging others to do their best and supporting efforts of faculty/staff. Leading by example in being dedicated to the success of our students.
- Just about everything the principal does. I knew this principal was good, but this survey brought to light how solid this person is across the board. The ability to handle sensitive situations with intellect & a calming presence is outstanding.
- Exceptional at human resources in that this principal has the capability to directly get a point across or send a message that may be difficult. However, this principal does this with a touch of humor and compassion that allows even our most difficult staff to receive it without negativity. Conveys a sincere and genuine attitude about the well being of our students and building as a whole. Great addition to our building!
- Asks for feedback, listens to it, and adjusts materials, procedures, policies, etc when appropriate. Understands family situations. This principal is human!
- Has a great communication skills. Constantly looking forward to how we can achieve (*sic*) new goals and improve on things we are presently doing.
- Looks at the overall big picture of our school and district goals. Implements best practice strategies to ensure our building reaches success. Gently moving the staff in a new and better direction.
- Hard working, ethical, and moral person. Believes in being a lifelong learner and is a good role model.
- Listens to all perspectives of an issue at hand; promotes the positive; anticipates when planning; and logistically approaches matters.
- One of this principal's greatest strengths is the ability to really listen to the person with whom he/she is speaking. I always feel "heard" when I need to talk with this principal about an idea or a concern. Works from a position of fairness in all situations. I believe this principal has a strong ethical code that drives his/her actions as a person and a professional.

Things the person does that should be continued: (cont'd)

- Supporting administrators in their work at each school. I always know this principal will listen and share insights on situations that effect (sic) our leadership. I feel his/her support in administration decisions - regardless of the outcome.
 - Is an instructional leader in the truest sense. Is well-versed in all of the latest trends, research, and strategies on effective instruction. Meets with teachers regularly to discuss instruction, and has embraced the new teacher evaluation system from the perspective of using it as a way to improve instruction.
 - Continue to show a strong belief in our students and their potential. Continue to model a sense of humor and 'positiveness' in the school environment. Continue supporting effective teacher strategies and the uniqueness of each teacher.
 - Continue to look honestly at the reality of the school. Pursue the data and make decisions that are based on student needs.
 - Continue being a great Instructional Leader
 - This person shields us from directives handed down from Central Office. This principal cushions the anxiety of the new teacher evaluation. Doesn't demand that we completely change our present lesson plan template, only enhance it. Tries to make us feel comfortable and positive about changes that occur.
 - Staying current on research
 - Creativity is one of your strengths. You see things others do not see. I believe the more you are able to engage multiple groups in visioning sessions, the greater the return on your talent. Keep involving others in meaningful conversations.
 - I put instructional leadership first. All decisions, including the master schedule, hiring teachers & support staff, managing student behavior, etc., are all done with the end result being a superior teaching/learning environment. Analyzing achievement data is critical in decisions, too. I am transparent and collaborative in decision making, and I maintain an open-door policy for those working in our building, as well as parents who need my input.
 - Is an excellent leader. Promotes professional learning, is always professional, and constantly communicates with all involved in our school to ensure success for students. Is a model example of what a leader should be. Truly cares about everyone on the staff and the students. Helps implement new programs and will do whatever it takes to ensure students' success at our school. This principal is outstanding!
 - I think this person does an awesome job at his/her job. Really and truly models what a principal should do. Is the same everyday and people know where they stand.
 - Has high expectations for teachers and staff. Wants what is best for the students and will settle for nothing less. Is an excellent communicator and relates well to parents. The school atmosphere feels safe and parents have great respect for him/her.
 - This principal's dedicaton (sic) to the whole picture is refreshing. She knows that our ultimate goal is our students and doing our best to educate and produce productive future adults.
- Gives both positive and negative assessments (sic) to individuals to help keep the quality outcome the best it can be for all involved. Is a true believer in the team effort and always lets everyone know their important place in this effort.
- Is very involved in all aspects of the school. Knows what is going on at all times. Puts the students needs FIRST but at the same time allows teachers to TEACH....does not

Things the person does that should be continued: (cont'd)

micromanage but steps in when he/she needs to. Finds ways to get the teachers and students the materials they need.

- Uses self-deprecating humor a lot. It allows other people that work for him/her a comfort level that is very unusual. It allows people to relax and not be afraid to bring up a question or a concern. Is not afraid to laugh at himself/herself. In my opinion, this is the happiest school because the staff is happy. We know how lucky we are to have this principal for our boss. I know teachers in other schools say they would come back if they could.
- Positive and optimistic (sic) outreach to the community. Encouraging professional growth and experimenting with new strategies. Cooperative learning opportunities between classes, grades and schools. Pushing back against too many demands for student assessment.
- Has an open door policy where faculty can feel comfortable popping in and chatting with him/her without having to set up a formal meeting. Keeps a great sense of humor and recognizes that families are important to the faculty and that those outside priorities affect our work. Maintains an active professional life and has an excellent relationship with the community-at-large.
- Continue to encourage and demand excellence from every single staff member in the school.
- trusting the teachers and professionals
- Has personable, comfortable, and professional relationships with staff.

Most staff feel they can go to this principal with any type of issue whether it be a complaint, a compliment, or a problem. Has an open-door policy and is always there for the staff, even if he/she doesn't have direct or immediate answers, this principal is there to listen and guide.

- Should continue working for parity between the two Montessori schools. I appreciate how this principal thinks of both programs with an eye-on success. An example is when hiring teachers, wanting to make sure both schools were getting good candidates and not wanting to "out-hire". Should continue addressing each staff member directly and verbally appreciating their contributions to the school (janitors, parents, teachers).
- Future oriented, accepts change, planner, gives appreciation
- Should continue: to use and encourage the power of teams to set and accomplish goals; see the vision for our school and lay it out so everyone else gets to see it; to have staff that can help with details and ideas in order to reach goals or expectations; working to make sure all staff feel a part of decisions, trainings, and support.
- Continue to lead by example and stay true to convictions and values. Sustain the passion for what you believe is good for the students who are under your care.
- Should continue to be the side by side learner with the classroom teachers. Participation in Montessori conferences and willingness to continue to learn more about Montessori instruction is the strength of his/her leadership.
- Continue to include faculty members and parents in significant decision making processes. Continue to communicate clearly about the purpose of things that occur. Continue to build systems to support effectiveness of all stakeholders.
- Is an intuitive educator. Has almost a sixth sense of knowing what is the right thing to do. Is willing to try new initiatives (sic) if it means that students will be successful. Is also not afraid to admit when something is not working, too. Is a global thinker and is always

seeking new knowledge to push the organization to the next level.

- Uphold the standards of the district, promote safety, and learning for all.
- Encourages professional growth of all, and models this expectation (sic) with her continuous professional growth.

Prompt #2: What could this person do to be more effective?

- Complete more assessments of employees, hold all employees to the same standards, enforce all rules regardless of how much work or effort it may cause.
- Tackle issues before they become pervasive and a distraction to the school culture.
- needs more personal backbone; doesn't deal with conflict well; when issues arise amongst employees, needs to be firm and discipline if needed
- Sometimes we have teachers that might not be using a very effective method for teaching or communicating with staff and students. I would like to know that this principal has a plan of action to address and guide some of these less effective teachers.
- Could communicate with the staff more effectively, concisely, and on a timely manner. Could utilize the staff and resources more effectively in order to get more done. I would love to see this principal in the classrooms more and help a couple of teachers to improve their teaching practices. Needs to hold staff more accountable in order for us to show student achievement.
- Be more willing to confront issues without worrying about negative interactions that could arise from giving constructive criticism. I'm often 'too nice' when people need to change some of their behaviors to be more effective in their jobs.
- This principal has been given a building that has underwent (sic) a huge amount of change and transition. I think the challenge will be to look at our current schedule and curriculum offerings and redistribute staff and/or elective rotations that will best benefit our student body. This principal isn't ineffective in this area it is something he/she has inherited from our transitioning of students as we went from an 8-9 building to a 7-8 middle school, big shift...
- This principal's explanations/rationale could be more detailed. Sometimes the quick "snapshot" of the big picture just isn't enough.
- NA
- Make sure the entire staff has clear and specific guidelines on any new agenda.
- Accept certain limitations of the organization, but don't let them deter you.
- Encourage others to share perspectives and set up an environment for sharing perspectives. Modeling might be more effective here. Gather all information possible when making a decision or a judgment and review in the context given. Separate the person and the position and timing from issues when applicable.
- I think this principal is highly effective!
- Not sure. Until central office figures out a way to work together, I think this principal's effect is limited. The dysfunction among the leaders of the district greatly effects (sic) the feelings of trust with school administration. It is hard to know who you can trust- but this principal is a person I am comfortable being honest with. What this person should do to be more effective - take a time off school to revitalize himself/herself. This principal is getting beat up by life and his/her job.
- This principal thinks that one of the assistant principals is doing a great job—when in fact he is not. Nobody on the staff feels comfortable telling this principal what the

assistant really does and how he really conducts himself because all we ever hear is how great and wonderful he is. I think this principal needs to be developing him into a better leader instead of "protecting" him the way he/she does all the time.

- I can't really say anything about being 'more effective' as this principal is a very effective administrator and instructional leader.
 - Continue to seek out the opportunity to work with the community to strengthen the connection and increase ownership in the school.
 - Hold all teachers accountable
 - Can't think of anything.
 - Being a quick study carries the trait of being impatient with others when they do not see what you see. Practice slowing down as you try (sic) to share perspectives that are different or new. Pacing is important as you try to build a critical mass to move an agenda.
 - Not sure. There is literally no time left in my working day to make major changes.
- Improving community involvement is a need for our school. Also, honoring the diversity of our student body could be an emphasis leading to improved student achievement. We must reduce the achievement gap that exists between many of our sub groups.
- I truly do not think there is anything more this principal could be doing. Maybe if there were more hours in the day; he/she is working hard every minute of each school day as an effective principal.
 - Maybe delegate more. Sometimes I believe this principal takes on too much. He/she is such a perfectionist that he/she will do it before someone else can help.
 - In all my years of being under a supervisor (over 20 years), this is the most dedicated, detail-oriented and productive person I have worked with. This principal's love of the job shows in his/her dealings with students, parents and staff members.
 - Nothing....This principal is very effective.
 - This principal admits that he/she procrastinates. This person claims that he/she takes piles of work home and brings the piles back without touching them. I believe that if there was something (sic) really pressing he/she would get to it. This principal has trouble getting to the evaluations.
 - Organize resources and prioritize (sic) initiatives. Begin to limit the number of organizations, meetings and out of school responsibilities that I participate in. Spend more time informally visiting classrooms.
 - I think this principal could give specific feedback to teachers a bit more. Overall the general feeling at the school is that we ALL do a great job, and he/she does say so frequently. I appreciate that very much, but would also like to hear specific feedback about things to work on or a job well done.
 - Does well communicating business one-on-one. Many of his/her communications would be more effective if these one-on-ones were combined into group updates. This ensures all appropriate people are updated fully and in a timely manner. This principal could provide more help along the way, especially when a task is given to a staff-member that is a stretch for their individual skills. Some people have been in need of help but didn't know how to ask
 - trust others, expand partnerships internally, expand/extend sense of inviting others into vision, let optimistic side have free reign

What could this person do to be more effective? (cont'd)

- visiting classrooms often with a specific item to look for and then sharing with the staff what was seen; seeing his/her role in working with students on behavior plans by being a part of the planning and making sure his/her piece is written in; supporting teachers with difficult students as a challenge that needs looking at and solved, instead of simply how the teacher is reacting with that student
- One can never communicate enough.
- I think this principal needs to balance the conversation around the impact of a Montessori education in comparison to the traditional model. By using data, from other measures than state tests, to show the growth and development to the community and her peers.
- I need to continue to work on time management, adhering to a schedule that allows me to put first things first... without working 80 hour work weeks if possible!
- This principal has so many great attributes that it is difficult to think of any areas where he/she may have deficiencies. Is really the type of leader that I feel all would like to be or would like to have. Is passionate about education and making all children receive a first class education!
- Keep improving in all areas; continue professional growth; be more pro-active in the community and professional organizations.
- Realize that not everyone is as passionate, committed, or interested in the research or even best practices. Effectively using communication to get those who are less enthusiastic on board with the initiative or best practice that is being advocated.

Prompt #3: What does this person do that should be stopped?

- Sweeping issues under the rug, avoiding confrontation, spreading himself/herself too thin with outside obligations.
 - doesn't deal with employee conflicts amongst each other; letting issues go too long before dealing with them
 - Last minute notices are very discouraging and should be kept to a minimum.
 - Spending too much time in the office instead of out in the building observing what is going on in the classrooms.
 - I have only worked alongside this principal for four months and I can honestly say I haven't witnessed anything that he/she needs to discontinue.
 - This principal's building includes a staff that is "mixed"--meaning: coming from different districts/buildings. While most of the staff have been either at School A or School B, this doesn't help all staff. Many times, the staff hears explanations of..."It's the same as last year" or "it's what School B did last year." Basically that helps most people, but it always needs explained to the staff that comes from elsewhere. It's an unwelcoming vibe.
 - NA
 - I think this principal is doing a GREAT job!
 - Be more realistic on the expectations that he/she places on himself/herself.
 - Should avoid listening to negative comments as though they are fact until he/she researches the information and takes into account the messenger. This "situation" can at times derail his/her good intentions and his/her attitude about a given situation or person.
- What does this person do that should be stopped? (cont'd)

- Stop taking responsibility for decisions that are out of his/her control. I am worried this principal will burn out from all of the tension in central office.
- Tends to "nit pick" teachers and staff over small things like wearing jeans to school. Needs to realize that he/she has a very hard working, very talented staff that is going to work hard for the kids no matter what they are wearing. The way he/she has addressed staff dress code concerns has been demoralizing.
- Stop working so hard! but then Marshall wouldn't be a very effective or happy place!
- Can't think of anything.
- Learning to find ways to vent that do not do harm. When you allow the negatives, often things out of your control, to be the focus you lose your influence with others who need the creative things you have to say. Work on balance and release so that you are heard more effectively.
- Again, I'm not sure... Perhaps I allow too many interruptions in my anticipated day? It's quite different this year with so many more teacher observations required. I would like to stop being at school 12 hours every day and one weekend day.
- Not one thing.
- Nothing.
- I honestly cannot think of a thing. When this person first became principal 8 years ago, he/she would have the tendency (sic) to react to a situation before thinking it completely through. But his/her growth as a supervisor and all of its challenging situations has helped him/her learn patience in dealing with the many problems sent his/her way.
- I cannot think of anything
- Responds to emails from other administrators sometimes in a snarky tone. I can't blame him/her because they send it in that tone to him/her and it infuriates him/her, and everyone else. To facilitate communication between offices it might be worth it to not respond that way. This principal is working on it and trying really hard to respond in a more effective way.
- Making more commitments to associations that then require attendance at events.
Procrastinating.
- Sometimes allows very vocal or "pushy" members of the faculty determine how things should be done.
- Spreads himself/herself very thin sometimes. Has many groups and organizations that he/she works with outside of school. Not that I wish him/her to stop work with outside organizations, I just worry that he/she has too many plates to juggle.
- check sense of cynicism or suspicion - can be too "wary"
- sometimes not allowing staff enough processing time and then time to implement (should still have timelines, just more time);
- Stop letting the job consume your life, put more balance into your life.
- This principal has a passion about his/her work in education. Needs to continue to balance his/her life, taking time for himself/herself and his/her own self care.
- Never be neagative! (sic)
- Assuming that all are as passionate as he/she is.

Appendix C

Top 20 NDP Leadership Strengths

Top 20 NDP Leadership Strengths

#1 – Diversity – Item 22	5.83
#2 – Professionalism – Item 19	5.75
#3 – Professionalism – Item 9	5.74
#4 – Diversity – Item 21	5.73
#5 – Professionalism – Item 10	5.69
#6 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning – Item 69	5.68
#7 – Professionalism – Item 18	5.66
#8 – Communication & Community Relations – Item 38	5.64
#9 – Instructional Leadership – Item 44	5.64
#10 – Professionalism – Item 17	5.63
#11 – Diversity – Item 24	5.61
#12 – Professionalism – Item 13	5.60
#13 – Diversity – Item 26	5.59
#14 – Instructional Leadership – Item 47	5.56
#15 – Planning & Assessment – Item 58	5.55
#16 – Planning & Assessment – Item 62	5.55
#17 – Planning & Assessment – Item 54	5.53
#18 – Professionalism – Item 11	5.49
#19 – Diversity – Item 23	5.49
#20 – Communication & Community Relations – Item 31	5.48

Note. Average = 1-6 point scale.

Appendix D

Top 20 NDP Leadership Needs

Top 20 NDP Leadership Needs

#1 – Instructional Leadership – Item 49	4.85
#2 – Instructional Leadership – Item 50	4.96
#3 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning – Item 66	4.98
#4 – Instructional Leadership – Item 48	5.00
#5 – Change – Item 4	5.06
#6 – Communication & Community Relations – Item 35	5.06
#7 – Instructional Leadership – Item 42	5.07
#8 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning – Item 73	5.08
#9 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning – Item 74	5.14
#10 – Planning & Assessment – Item 53	5.19
#11 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning – Item 72	5.20
#12 – Instructional Leadership – Item 43	5.21
#13 – Change – Item 8	5.21
#14 – Change – Item 3	5.21
#15 – Change – Item 6	5.22
#16 – Diversity – Item 27	5.23
#17 – Change – Item 5	5.25
#18 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning	5.25
#19 – Safety & Organizational Management for Learning	5.25
#20 – Communication & Community Relations	5.27

Note. Average = 1-6 point scale.