Inconvenient, but Essential: Impact and Influence of School–Community Involvement on Principals' Work and Workload

D. Cameron Hauseman, Katina Pollock, and Fei Wang

Abstract

The work of contemporary school principals is intensifying in terms of complexity and volume. Many factors moderate and drive such work intensification. More than ever before, school principals are expected to build relationships with organizations and agencies connected to the student and school community. Using findings generated from a large-scale survey of 1,400 Ontario principals, this paper reports on the influence of opportunities for school–community involvement on the work principals do on a daily basis and details how involvement in such activities influences and impacts their workloads. Survey findings indicate that principals are engaged in an average of 4.4 community involvement opportunities at the school level. Almost two-thirds of principals reported that school–community involvement increases their workload. Four ways in which work intensification influences principals' ventures in school–community involvement are also identified, including how school–community involvement leaves less time for direct instructional leadership practices.

Key Words: principals, principals' workload, instructional leadership, opportunities for school–community involvement, work intensification, Canada

Introduction

The work of contemporary school principals is intensifying in terms of its complexity and volume (Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015; Spillane, 2015).

Many factors moderate, influence, and drive such work intensification, with school–community involvement acting as an antecedent variable influencing both principals and their work. By no means is school–community involvement a new phenomenon (Auerbach, 2010, 2012; Best & Holmes, 2010; Hands, 2010; Koyama, 2011). However, now, more than ever before, principals are expected to build relationships with community organizations and agencies connected to the students and school.

Common examples of contemporary school–community relations include breakfast programs and afterschool programs (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). School–community involvement can take many forms, including initiatives conducted in concert with local colleges and universities, businesses, churches, and a variety of other entities (Best & Holmes, 2010; Hands, 2010, 2015; Koyama, 2011; Sanders, 2003).

Schools are being encouraged to engage in external relationships for many different reasons, including the generation of additional revenue from renting out building space after school hours, fostering connections to supplementary education services that the school cannot administer, and as a strategy to increase student learning and other positive school-based outcomes (Auerbach, 2010, 2012; Beabout, 2010; Clandfield, 2010; Hands, 2005, 2014; Koyama, 2011). There is a robust literature base supporting the notion that school–community involvement can be associated with positive student outcomes, such as increased student achievement in various subjects and decreased truancy (Durlak et al., 2010; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hands, 2014; Scott-Little et al., 2002; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Wright, John, Livingstone, Shepherd, & Duku, 2007). Hands (2010) notes that "school–community collaboration is one possible means for schools to garner financial and material resources, as well as social support and educational experiences to supplement students' in-school learning" (p. 70). Using findings generated from a large-scale survey of 1,400 principals funded by the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), we sought to answer the following research question: How do opportunities for school–community involvement influence principals' work?

School–Community Involvement

For the purposes of this article, school–community involvement relates to collaborative endeavors which are important for achieving strategic initiatives or outcomes (Gregoric & Owens, 2015). School–community involvement exists on a continuum, and opportunities can vary in intensity and duration ranging from one-off events to true partnerships and long-term relationships (Auerbach, 2012; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sanders, 2003, 2012; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

As school–community involvement can be viewed as a means for supporting student achievement and other positive outcomes, it can be considered one component of a principal's instructional leadership portfolio (Auerbach, 2010, 2012; Beabout, 2010; Best & Holmes, 2010; Gregoric & Owens, 2015; Hands, 2005, 2010, 2014; Koyama, 2011; Leithwood & Day, 2007; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Spillane, 2015; Stewart, 2006). However, opportunities for school–community involvement do not facilitate principals' direct involvement in curriculum and instruction in their daily work (Hands, 2005; Sanders, 2014). For many principals, engaging in school–community involvement requires participation in relationship development and maintenance tasks that can, at times, take them away from direct school functions (Hands, 2005; Sanders, 2003, 2014). For example, Hands (2005) states, "the principals take on the role of contact person or at least function in the capacity of decision-maker and gatekeeper for partnerships" (p. 79). Principals experience large and unrelenting workloads, and the time it takes to engage in new job demands such as building relationships and engaging outside groups can add to concerns about workload and work–life balance (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Sanders, 2003). This increasing workload can be problematic as the impact and sustainability of school–community involvement opportunities can be muted by inconsistent (or unwilling) principal leadership (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011; Gregoric & Owens, 2015; Sanders, 2012). Support from the principal can be a significant factor that contributes to effective school–community involvement, especially where student recruitment activities and program implementation are concerned (Epstein et al., 2011; Sanders, 2003, 2012, 2014). Further, principals occupy positions of influence in education systems, and the way in which they view school–community involvement can impact others in both their individual schools and in their district as a whole (Sanders, 2014).

The Ontario Ministry of Education provides schools and school districts with funding opportunities for developing school–community involvement (Hands, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012; People for Education, 2012). Provincial legislation also calls for parent councils at every school, and many school boards have created community engagement offices where tasks related to opportunities for school–community involvement are assigned to district staff or superintendents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, 2014; People for Education, 2012). However, in a recent survey, only 28% of Ontario secondary schools and 15% of elementary schools reported having a dedicated staff person, other than the principal or vice-principal, with responsibilities related to school–community involvement (People for Education, 2012). Further, in schools with designated staff responsible for involvement, only 29% of secondary schools and 18% of elementary schools reported allocating time

in the school schedule to develop and maintain school–community involvement (People for Education, 2012). The provincial Education Act that governs schooling also indicates that principals are responsible for everything that happens in their schools. Consequently, it is the principal who ultimately becomes responsible for school–community involvement opportunities operating within his or her school, regardless of all of the aforementioned supports that may be available (Ontario Education Act, Part 10, Section 265). Facilitating school–community involvement is a relatively new job demand for principals that, along with an increase in the complexity and volume of work-related tasks, contributes to work intensification.

The Nature of Work and Work Intensification

Also a contested term, "work," in this context, refers to all of the tasks and actions in which a principal engages that directly (and indirectly) influence the functioning and leadership of the school where she/he is employed (Applebaum, 1992; Fineman, 2003, 2012). Work takes place at or away from the school site and can occur at any time during the day (Applebaum, 1992; Fineman, 2012). Principals' work is also inherently influenced by policies, programs, and other initiatives intended to drive the work they do at the school site, such as the Ontario Leadership Framework (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013; Leithwood, 2012).

Work intensification is a recent phenomenon experienced by some contemporary principals (Pollock et al., 2015; Starr & White, 2008). Not only does work intensification involve an increase in the amount of work principals are expected to complete, but also an escalation in the complexity of work-related tasks and duties, all within condensed timelines (Allan, O'Donnell, & Peetz, 1999). Green (2004) defines work intensification as "an increase in the proportion of effective labour performed for each hour of work" (p. 709). Similarly, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA, 2012) describes work intensification as "an employment situation in which work has increased in volume and/or complexity, leaving workers constantly anxious and insecure" (p. 12). Fournier et al. (2011) mention that "the work intensification process is reflected in the increased workload borne by individual workers, where workload is seen as the result of a combination of job or occupational characteristics" (p. 3). Not only is work intensification stronger in public organizations (Green, 2004), but educators are also more likely to experience clashes between working time and social and emotional commitments outside of work (Yu, 2014). Work intensification in the K–12 education sector is comprised of a number of different components: (a) extending work hours; (b) speeding up the pace at which work must be performed; (c) the proliferation of information and communications

technology; (d) growing bureaucracy; (e) the increasing diversity of the student population and the complexity of contemporary student needs; and (f) the possibility that work intensification might lead to the work not being done at all to the detriment of the clientele being served (ATA, 2012; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015). Rationing effort, reprioritizing tasks, and/or simply not completing a job assignment are all associated with work intensification.

Contemporary conceptions of work intensification have been linked to consequences far more serious than rationed or missed work. For example, work intensification leads to negative consequences for employees "as measured by job satisfaction and by indices of affective well-being" (Green, 2004, p. 710) and is strongly related to psychosomatic complaints amongst the workforce (Franke, 2015). Work intensification—an expectation that workers can provide quality service and complete their work within tight timelines—can lead to role conflict, job stress, and often forces workers to choose between quality and productivity (Fournier et al., 2011). Burnout and work addiction are two psychological issues which can occur as a result of work intensification (Fournier et al., 2011). That said, there is evidence to suggest that different educators will respond to and experience work intensification in different ways, including developing innovative and proactive strategies for managing workload (Ballet & Keltchermans, 2009).

Email has been cited as a facilitator of much of the work intensification experienced by principals (Haughey, 2006; Pollock et al., 2015) because, "in addition to aiding the filling up of gaps during normal work time, information and communication technologies also raise the productivity potential of work done outside those hours" (Green, 2004, p. 716). Employees have little experience coping with work intensification as it has been characterized as a new job demand (Franke, 2015), potentially increasing negative and/or unintended consequences (ATA, 2012; Ballet & Keltchermans, 2009; Fournier et al., 2011; Franke, 2015; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015). For example, "multitasking is a widespread but ineffective mechanism for coping with work intensification" (ATA, 2012, p. 17). Furthermore, "work intensification and its consequences affect the internal and external resources available to workers and management for coping with work constraints" (Fournier et al., 2011, p. 4). The current study adds to this emergent theme in the literature by identifying factors that may contribute to principals' work intensification, in particular, how school–community connection intensifies principals' work.

Methods

A mixed methods research design consisting of two parts was utilized to gather data for this study (Creswell, 2005; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). The first

part of the research design consisted of focus groups to refine survey questions and to establish reliability and validity (McLeod, Meagher, Steinert, & Boudreau, 2000; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003), while part two was the online survey, which included both Likert-style and some open-ended questions. Discussion of the research methods used in this study begins with an account of the focus group session in which the online survey was pilot tested. The process used to develop and refine the online survey tool is then discussed in detail. Descriptions of the sampling procedures and the demographic characteristics of the sample follow. The methodology concludes with a short explanation of the steps undertaken to analyze the data.

Focus Groups

Three different focus group sessions containing eight principals each were conducted to inform the development of the online survey. Utilizing focus groups with the population under study is an effective strategy to assess the reliability and validity of surveys and survey questions (McLeod et al., 2000; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). OPC assisted in recruiting principals; focus group participants were current principals from three different school districts that responded to a call for participation. Participants in the focus groups included principals of both genders, as well as individuals with differing levels of experience in the role. Principals working in rural, suburban, and urban school settings were all represented. Each focus group lasted approximately two hours. During the first hour, principals were asked to complete a draft version of the online survey. In the second hour of the focus group, participants were asked to provide feedback on the content of the questions and the overall structure of the survey. The focus groups served as a quality assurance piece to increase the reliability and validity of the survey. Participating principals' insights and feedback helped to ensure that the survey questions were appropriate and that the survey itself was representative of the work they do on a daily basis.

Online Survey

The online survey was designed to best represent the broad range of tasks, responsibilities, behaviors, and practices expected of contemporary principals. The survey was revised a number of times to achieve this goal. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the factors that impact principals and their work, the survey development process began by reviewing the literature surrounding the topic, as well as recent changes in jurisdictional education policy. Further revisions were suggested by the funding agency and by a pilot group of six principals in a focus group setting prior to the three focus groups described above. The survey included a total of 60 questions, comprised of both Likert-

type questions and open-ended questions that allowed participants to expand on their responses. Questions were related to 12 different topics, including how principals spend their time, duties and responsibilities of contemporary principals, accountability and external influences, challenges and possibilities, well-being and job satisfaction, work and life balance, supports, how the Ontario Leadership Framework reflects their work, professional development, and school–community involvement. The survey also sought information concerning principals' personal demographic information as well as asking questions about their school(s) and the surrounding community. Two of the questions about school–community involvement that appeared are displayed in Figure 1.

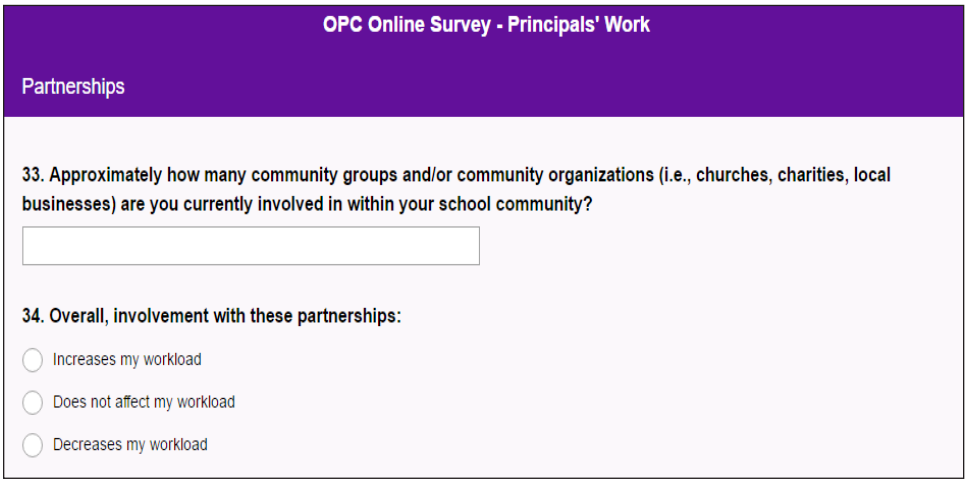

Figure 1. Survey questions regarding opportunities for school–community involvement.

This article focuses only on results gathered from the section of the online survey which dealt with school–community involvement, comprised of the two questions displayed in Figure 1. The survey offered principals the opportunity to qualify their responses by providing additional comments when answering certain questions or/and when they had completed the survey. The survey achieved a response rate of 52.68%. The response rate is based on 1,434 completed surveys available for analysis after accounting for missing data and eliminating ineligible respondents.

Description of the Sample

Access to participants was gained through the OPC. Survey invitations were sent to all public school principals who were members of the OPC at the time of data collection. A total of 62.8% of the principals who responded

to the online survey self-identified as female, while the remaining 36.2% of participants self-identified as male. Further, 77.3% of principals worked in elementary school contexts, while 16.4% were secondary principals, and 2.9% were principals of both elementary and secondary schools. The average number of years of experience as a principal for the total sample was 7.6 years. Respondents' average school size was 493 students, and school sizes ranged from 25 to approximately 2,200 students. Participating principals also reported a wide variance in their highest level of formal education; for example, 54.3% of respondents indicated they had obtained a Master's degree in addition to their undergraduate degrees. An additional 41.6% of the sample reported holding a bachelor's degree as the highest level of formal education they had completed. Only 2.4% of principals in this sample indicated that they have earned a professional degree, such as a law degree, while only 1.3% have completed a doctorate or another terminal degree.

Ontario principals who participated in the online survey worked in a variety of demographic contexts. For example, 35.6% of the sample indicated that they were employed at schools located in cities with between 100,000 to 1,000,000 people, while 17.9% of participating principals worked at schools located in areas with populations ranging from 15,000 to about 100,000 people. Schools in large, metropolitan cities with over 1,000,000 people were also represented in the sample, as 15.8% of respondents were employed in those settings. Principals working in schools located in small towns with between 3,000 to 15,000 people accounted for 13.2% of the sample, and 14.6% of respondents reported being employed in rural schools with fewer than 3,000 people in the surrounding communities. A further 1.3% of respondents indicated working in other types of population centers.

The vast majority of principals (91.4%) self-identified as heterosexual. A total of 3.4% of principals who responded to the online survey self-identified as gay or lesbian, with 2.7% selecting that they would prefer not to disclose this information. Smaller numbers of participants self-identified as bisexual and transgendered (each under 1% of the sample). Another area where the survey sample lacked diversity was in terms of ethnicity, as 92.5% of the entire sample self-identified as Caucasian. Only 1.6% of the sample self-identified as Black, and 1.3% self-identified as South Asian. While the survey respondents are representative of the Ontario principal population, these numbers are not representative of the general population where the study was conducted, as approximately 25% of Ontario's general population self-identifies as being non-Caucasian (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2013). Criteria to assess the representativeness of the sample are chosen based on prior knowledge of the target population (distribution of gender, school type, and school size), that is, the

principal membership of OPC. OPC President messages, e-newsletters, and emails were sent out to participants every week to solicit a better representation of principals based on the known criteria. Attributes such as gender, school type, and school size of respondents and nonrespondents were compared during data collection to ensure sample representativeness.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process for this study involved two phases. Phase one involved analyzing the questions surrounding community involvement using descriptive statistics (Pollock, 2015; Pollock et al., 2015; Springer, 2010). The descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to determine the central tendency of variables. SPSS 21 was the statistical analysis program utilized to analyze all quantitative data which arose from this study.

Phase two of the data analysis process involved analyzing the qualitative data gathered as part of the online survey. A total of 1,241 unique qualitative responses related to school–community involvement were derived from the survey questions. The constant comparative method was utilized to analyze the qualitative data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). This means that the responses were initially read in an effort to identify any recurrent themes. Each of these themes was assigned a code named after the theme. The qualitative responses were then read again in an effort to develop categories and subcategories, which involved grouping together and breaking apart codes developed in the first stage of the constant comparative analysis process (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). Throughout the survey, these recurrent themes identified in the responses focused on the emotional aspects of the position, as well as elements of work intensification faced by contemporary principals, including community relations, email, and accountability. The key recurrent theme in the qualitative data directly related to school–community relations included an expansion of principals' workload. Other themes included principals indicating that school–community involvement is simply an element of their daily work and the perceived positive impact that school–community involvement has on students and the school as a whole.

Findings

The descriptive statistics related to how school–community involvement influences principals' work are discussed first. Then the findings from the 1,241 unique qualitative responses derived from the survey questions related to school–community involvement are described in detail. It is important to mention that we only compare principals based on school type (elementary,

secondary) throughout the findings because this variable is associated with differences in the number of opportunities for school–community involvement principals engage in as part of their daily work. We did not find any statistically significant differences in either the nature of or the number of opportunities for school–community involvement based on other variables (e.g., urban vs. rural, school size, student composition, etc.).

Table 1. Average Number and Range of School–Community Involvement Opportunities

	Entire Sample	Elementary Principals	Secondary Principals
Average # of school–community involvement opportunities in which principals are engaged	4.4	3.9	6.9
Range of school–community involvement opportunities in which principals are engaged	0 to 33	0 to 25	0 to 33

Table 1 outlines the number of opportunities for school–community involvement participating principals engage in at their school(s). Analysis of the quantitative data indicates that principals who responded to the survey are involved in an average of 4.4 school–community initiatives. However, as mentioned above, the number of opportunities for school–community involvement principals engage in varies by the type of school in which they are employed. For example, elementary school principals reported that they are involved in an average of 3.9 opportunities for school–community involvement. With an average of 6.9, principals of secondary schools appear to be involved in substantially more school–community involvement opportunities than elementary school principals. There are also great variations in the range of opportunities for school–community involvement principals and schools engage in. For example, the number of school–community involvement opportunities elementary school principals engaged in ranged from 0 to 25. The number of opportunities for school–community involvement secondary school principals engaged in ranged from a low of 0 to a high of 33.

As displayed in Table 2, 57.4% of secondary school principals indicated that they are involved in less than five opportunities for school–community involvement, while this was the case for 80.3% of elementary school principals who responded to the survey. Overall, 75.8% of the sample reported involvement in less than five opportunities at the school level. A total of 15.3% of elementary principals and 20.4% of secondary principals indicated that their schools were involved in six to ten opportunities for school–community involvement. Only 4.8% of the entire sample of principals that participated in the survey work in

schools where between 10 and 20 opportunities were reported. Smaller numbers of elementary and secondary school principals were involved in more than 20 opportunities at the school level. On average, secondary school principals reported participation in more school-level involvement opportunities than their colleagues working in elementary schools.

Table 2. Average Number and Range of Opportunities for School–Community Involvement

# of School–Community Involvement Opportunities	Entire Sample	Elementary	Secondary
less than 5	75.8%	80.3%	57.4%
6 to 10	16.4%	15.3%	20.4%
10 to 20	4.8%	3.0%	13.2%
20 to 30	0.9%	0.4%	3.4%
more than 30	0.1%	None	0.4%

Table 3. Impact of School–Community Involvement Opportunities on Principals' Workload

	Overall	Elementary	Secondary
Increases my workload	64.6%	63.7%	70.6%
Does not affect my work load	31.2%	31.2%	26.8%
Decreases my workload	1.0%	1.1%	0.4%

When asked about how these school–community involvement opportunities influence their workload, 64.6% of the sample indicated that their workload was increased by participation in such initiatives. These findings are reflected in Table 3. Just under one-third of the principals who participated in the online survey (31.2%) reported that school–community involvement does not affect their workload. Only 1% of the survey respondents indicated that school–community involvement decreases their workload.

A total of 1,241 of the 1,423 principals who completed the online survey provided additional comments when responding to questions on the topic of school-level involvement. Examining these comments, 89.28% of principals (1,108 of 1,241) claimed that opportunities for school–community involvement and programming derived from these activities expanded their workload. For example, one principal stated that work related to such involvement "makes my briefcase heavier each night." Another principal expressed the inconvenient but essential nature of opportunities for school–community involvement and the programs they provide schools by stating that, "while these programs are

very important to the well-being and learning of all students, they certainly take time. There is never enough time to do everything well. Something is always being left out, rescheduled, or minimally completed." The qualitative data also provided further confirmation that involvement in these opportunities is beneficial to the workload of only a small number of principals. Only 3.79% of the principals who responded to the online survey indicated that opportunities for school–community involvement are a part of their daily work and do not add to their workload. When discussing how participating in opportunities for school–community involvement influences their work, many of these principals simply said, "they are a part of my job." A further 20 responses, or 1.6% of the sample, mentioned that programs which result from opportunities for school–community involvement are positive, but failed to elaborate on how these opportunities influence their work or workload. Of the unique qualitative responses, 66 focused on other problems which compounds principals' workload, but did not mention anything directly related to opportunities for school–community involvement.

Despite the impact on their workloads, principals seem to recognize that these programs can have a positive impact on students. For example, one respondent referred to opportunities for school–community involvement and the programming they bring to the school as:

> critical investments in students and families that have ripples of dividends in [the] future. It is the passion that we have as school leaders to invest in that which has long-term positive impacts for our students, families, and school teams.

Another principal mentioned, "Managing the connection with outside agencies and building community connections is slow, arduous work. It is also very important work. Our students benefit from all these efforts, and it is very hard to say no to any of them." Some principals felt that the beneficial nature of opportunities for school–community involvement neutralizes any negative effects they may place on their workload. One principal expressed this sentiment eloquently:

> typically, these programs have huge impact for students—particularly student leaders. Therefore, the impact is an increased workload, but it becomes negligible as I take comfort that the effort I expend goes towards the right group of students.

In spite of their acknowledged potential to contribute to positive outcomes for students, the impact of school–community involvement on principal workload was a persistent issue that was voiced by survey respondents. Through their qualitative survey responses, three particular themes emerged related to

how opportunities for school–community involvement acts as an additional factor that expands principal workload, including:

- Limiting time available for instructional leadership;
- Time needed to build relationships extends the workday; and
- Lack of staff willing to lead school–community involvement efforts.

Each of these three themes is described throughout the following sections.

Limits Time Available for Instructional Leadership

Principals indicated that their roles in school–community involvement opportunities give them less time to be instructional leaders in their school. When speaking about opportunities for school–community involvement, one principal voiced the opinion that "they are all intended to be beneficial, and mostly they are—except that they detract from my ability to work on real instructional leadership and be in classrooms more, talking to teachers and students about their work." This sentiment was repeated over and over by the principals who participated in this study. For example, another principal mentioned that opportunities for school–community involvement, "are critical and important but take away from my time as an instructional leader in classrooms," and, "all programs create less time to spend in the classroom and supporting the School Improvement Plan and instructional leadership for staff and the VPs." In many ways, when it comes to their role in school–community involvement opportunities, it seems that principals are being asked to choose between providing staff and students with the engaging and innovative programming offered by community agencies or being visible instructional leaders in their schools. Some principals indicated that they think the programs—specifically those supporting student mental health—are necessary before instructional leadership efforts can be effective. As one respondent said:

> These programs decrease the amount of time I am able to spend interacting with staff and students as an instructional leader, but in my school environment, and most of these days, the social/emotional and mental health needs must come first.

While acknowledging the negative impact that opportunities for school–community involvement and the ensuing programming have on workload, other principals said that they do not mind working longer hours if their efforts directly support students and their well-being. For example, this principal states that opportunities for school–community involvement:

> …moves me away from instructional leadership. I strongly believe that the child's (and community's) educational experience extends beyond

> academics and into equity, inclusion, engagement, social justice, benevolence, and environmental responsibility. I'm saying that instructional leadership and the well-being of the whole child are imperatives which increase workload for the right reasons. System-level micromanagement and compliance focus increase workload for the wrong reasons.

Though principals seem to recognize the benefits associated with programming derived from involvement with community groups/agencies, there is some uncertainty as to whether these activities are more beneficial than and should take precedent over instructional leadership responsibilities.

Time Needed to Build Relationships Extends the Workday

Principals also mentioned that participation in school–community involvement opportunities increases their workload as it takes time to build relationships and a sense of trust amongst all stakeholders. One principal expressed this notion, "[school–community involvement] takes a lot of my time, but I deem it an important part of relationship building and supporting the school's climate for learning and working." Additional time is needed to communicate with stakeholders and engage students, teachers, parents, staff, and the rest of the school community in the various programs occurring at the school level. To that point, another principal pointed out that tasks and activities related to opportunities for school–community involvement have:

> an impact on my workload by making it difficult to focus on specific staff development initiatives during the day. Attendance at various meetings requires my participation/input, however, it lends itself to building trust and rapport amongst colleagues. In addition, being a part of these decisions ensures my knowledge and understanding of what is occurring in my school.

Opportunities for school–community involvement impact principals' work through the additional time and effort required to build effective working relationships with all stakeholders, both inside and outside of the school. Due to their extensive list of competing priorities, principals must make up for the time spent building relationships with community partners by completing other work into the evening or at their home office. For example, many principals indicated that the supervision required of many programs derived from school–community involvement extends their workday and increases workload. For example, one principal said that "the need to supervise often happens from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at night in a secondary school, as well as many Saturdays...five hours working on Sunday to prepare for the week is routine," while another mentioned that, "work I might get done during the day gets moved

to after school and weekends, such as emailing, budgets, newsletters, memos, etc." This sentiment is perhaps best expressed by the principal who stated:

> Involvement in such programs enhances the work, but increases workload. Some elements, especially supervision and attendance at meetings, must be done during the school day, which means many of the others have to occur outside the school day, including evenings and weekends.

It takes time for principals and schools to build relationships and get involved in community groups and agencies. Because principals' work is comprised of a number of competing priorities, principals often have to move work into the evening or complete tasks on the weekend to facilitate their participation in opportunities for school–community involvement.

Developing opportunities for school–community involvement also extends the workday for principals by resulting in an increase in the amount of administrative tasks, such as paperwork and email, on a daily basis. Participating principals indicated spending an average of 11 hours on email each week. With 83.7% of the sample wanting to spend less time on email, many principals are reluctant to increase an already heavy administrative burden, potentially limiting opportunities for school–community involvement. For example, one principal stated opportunities for school–community involvement "take time to oversee and supervise if you want them to run smoothly. Often the associated paperwork is the most challenging part to complete." Another principal echoed these sentiments, stating that school–community involvement "requires meeting time and documentation. Email, letter writing also are typically done outside of the regular day." In addition to spending time building relationships, another factor related to developing opportunities for school–community involvement that influences contemporary principals' work is a lack of staff involvement in such efforts.

Lack of Staff Willing to Lead School–Community Involvement Efforts

Principals also indicated that staff are often reluctant to take on responsibilities, either due to a lack of capacity or interest, so it is the principals themselves who are often left to implement, monitor, and coordinate school–community involvement opportunities and/or external programming. One principal spoke to this difficulty of finding program staff:

> As principal, you do as much as you can to distribute leadership opportunities to reduce the workload. However, there are only so many teachers who are willing to volunteer to take on the many demands to run and operate various social programs needed within a school, and then unfortunately it falls upon the principal. There are parents interested in

volunteering but not many staff, including administration, free to supervise them to ensure they are not by themselves with children.

Principals who are the only building administrator and work at schools with smaller staff complements seem to feel the work intensification impacts of opportunities for school–community involvement more intensely than their peers in other schools. One principal simply wrote that single administrators are "involved in ALL aspects of programs listed above." Another principal echoed this sentiment by stating that "since we are a small staff, we have limited numbers of staff available to take on 'extras.'" Teachers at these schools may also be experiencing work intensification and are unavailable (or unable) to assist principals in taking ownership of opportunities for school–community involvement and other necessary and important tasks.

Discussion

While opportunities for school–community involvement can be beneficial for students' academic and social/emotional outcomes, they are a form of work intensification further complicating principals' work (Durlak et al., 2010; Hands, 2014; Scott-Little et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2007). Furthermore, principals seem to view their role in opportunities for school–community involvement as an extra task or a new job demand which intensifies their work and expands their workload, rather than as part of their work in developing relationships with the community or creating a positive school climate (ATA, 2012; Fournier et al., 2011; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015). Involvement in school–community initiatives limits the amount of time principals have available to be directly involved in instructional leadership activities at their school(s). With the benefits of instructional leadership being well-known (Leithwood & Day, 2007; Leithwood et al., 1999; Pollock et al., 2015; Spillane, 2015; Stewart, 2006), it is worth considering whether this cost outweighs the benefits that opportunities for school–community involvement bring to students. Would principals be better off focusing their efforts on instructional leadership and buffering themselves, as well as their staff and students, from these kinds of distractions? The answer to that question may depend on the nature, duration, and intensity of the school–community involvement and whether it is suited to the needs of the school, as principals need to be strategic about which opportunities for school–community involvement they engage in (Hands, 2005, 2010, 2015; Beabout, 2010; Gregoric & Owens, 2015; Sanders, 2003, 2014).

Perhaps principals' involvement with school–community initiatives does not have to be a zero sum game where beneficial programming is thrown to the

wayside due to the effects of work intensification. Even though efforts are in place to assist Ontario principals with community engagement opportunities, findings from this study suggest that principals still lack support in operating and monitoring programming resulting from school–community involvement. Furthermore, similar to findings reported by Hands (2010), who found that principals did not set aside time to conduct activities related to school–community involvement, principals who participated in this research did not view school–community involvement as a core element or expectation of their work (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Sanders, 2003, 2014). In isolation, the work required to support and sustain an individual partnership may not be very taxing. We do not know enough about the specific school–community initiatives that principals who participated in the survey are engaged in at their schools. However, when schools are involved in an average of 4.4 school–community opportunities, work intensification for principals is the result of a cumulative effect (ATA, 2012; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015).

Implications for Policy and Practice

In terms of implications for practice, the findings also lend further evidence and support to the notions that principals are experiencing work intensification and that different people will experience work intensification in different ways—even if they are employed in the same position/profession and come to the employment with similar demographic characteristics (ATA, 2012; Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015). Some principals indicated that they feel little work intensification because of their undertakings in opportunities for school–community involvement, and a smaller group of participants indicated that it makes their jobs easier. However, most principals indicated feeling a significant and intensified impact on their workload due to, in part, their involvement in new job demands, including involvement in school–community opportunities (ATA, 2012; Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Green, 2004). Few Ontario schools and school boards have dedicated staff responsible for developing and maintaining opportunities for community involvement, and when they do, these individuals rarely have the time or resources necessary to focus fully on the responsibilities stemming from school–community involvement (People for Education, 2012). As such, principals' workloads are intensified by the larger volume of tasks for which they are responsible (ATA, 2012; Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009; Green, 2004; People for Education, 2012). In order to combat these concerns, the principals' role in developing opportunities for school–community involvement could be shared between a number of stakeholders, including parent councils, vice principals, department heads, supervisory officers, and other district staff.

Elementary and secondary school principals reported experiencing work intensification associated with their roles in school–community involvement in different ways. Elementary principals indicated that, on average, they are involved in fewer opportunities for school–community involvement than their peers employed in secondary schools. On the surface, it may appear that secondary principals are feeling disproportionate effects of work intensification due to their work with opportunities for school–community involvement. While they may be dealing with more opportunities for such involvement on the whole, secondary school principals often have vice principals to whom they can potentially delegate these tasks and responsibilities. Typically, elementary schools are also much smaller than secondary schools in Ontario, meaning that on a per-student basis, elementary principals may actually be doing more work on school–community involvement opportunities. Because of the way schooling in Ontario is organized, elementary and secondary school principals are managing the impact of work intensification in different ways, though both groups did indicate that school–community involvement increases their respective workloads.

Over the past two decades, instructional leadership (Leithwood & Day, 2007; Leithwood et al., 1999; Pollock & Hauseman, 2015; Spillane, 2015; Stewart, 2006) has been hailed as an important aspect of principals' work in raising student achievement outcomes in schools. It is clear that participation in school–community involvement opportunities may influence principals' decisions to forgo direct (and possibly indirect) instructional leadership tasks and activities. Rather than conducting walkthroughs, meeting with teachers, or visiting classrooms, principals indicated that they are busy building relationships with stakeholders and are burdened by administrative tasks related to school–community involvement. Most programs and activities which result from school–community involvement are well-intended and have the potential to reconnect students to the school and increase student achievement. However, when evaluating whether a potential opportunity for school–community involvement is right for their school, principals should consider (or reconsider) that relationship building and administrative tasks related to such partnerships intensify principals' workloads and leave less time for instructional leadership tasks and responsibilities (ATA, 2012; Ballet & Keltchermans, 2009; Fournier et al., 2011; Green, 2004; Willis et al., 2015; Yu, 2014).

Implications for Leadership Theory and Research

Many current leadership frameworks assume that they are accurate reflections of the work principals do or the work principals should do on a daily basis. The Ontario Leadership Framework, for example, aims to be prescriptive

and drive the daily work principals do (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013; Leithwood, 2012). These frameworks suggest that principals engage in particular types of activities and that principals do not (or should not) be involved in tasks outside of those formally defined in the framework. In so doing, these frameworks ignore how new job demands, such as work involving opportunities for school–community involvement and resulting email, influence principals' work (Koyama, 2011). Due to a lack of support from school staff, principals pursuing opportunities for school–community involvement are forced to both extend the workday by working longer hours and to take time away from other tasks to build relationships with potential partners. In failing to acknowledge this additional work and these new job tasks, the Ontario Leadership Framework and similar guides to effective principal leadership do not accurately portray what principals' actually do (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013; Leithwood, 2012). New models of leadership need to be developed which capture new job demands that have led to work intensification, including time spent reading and responding to email and work conducted as part of engaging in opportunities for school–community involvement (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013; Leithwood, 2012; Pollock et al., 2015). By ignoring the influence of work intensification on school principals, the Ontario Leadership Framework seems to be reflective of a "best case scenario" in which principals have enough time and energy to complete all of the evidence-based best practices associated with their role, rather than illuminating the realities of the job.

Principals indicated that they engage in school–community involvement opportunities because of their potential to facilitate positive academic and nonacademic outcomes for students (Durlak et al., 2010; Scott-Little et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2007). Findings from this study suggest that engaging in opportunities for school–community involvement is a new job demand that contributes to the work intensification experienced by contemporary principals in Ontario. However, further research is needed to develop a better understanding of the conditions that facilitate principals' work intensification and how engaging in school–community involvement contributes to or could potentially assist in alleviating this phenomenon. For example, the present survey findings failed to find any differences in how school–community involvement influences principals' work beyond school type (i.e., elementary vs. secondary). Additional research could aim at determining if (and how) other contextual factors—such as school size, the characteristics of the community surrounding the school, and years of experience in the principalship—influence principals' engagment in opportunities for school–community involvement and how that relates to work intensification. Furthermore, additional research regarding this

topic would be useful in determining who could effectively take over the principals' role in developing opportunities for school–community involvement.

Conclusion

Opportunities for school–community involvement are an additional activity for which principals are responsible and one of the factors contributing to work intensification felt by contemporary principals. Engaging in opportunities for school–community involvement hinders principals' work by limiting time available for instructional leadership, extending the workday, and presenting issues related to a lack of staff willing to initiate school–community involvement. Even if school or district staff ease this burden by seeking out and identifying potentially beneficial opportunities for school–community involvement, once these opportunities are operationalized in the school, they become another competing priority that principals must manage on a regular basis. However, some principals indicated that effective and evidence-based community involvement opportunities can have positive impacts on student achievement and the school climate. Some schools simply need these programs in order for students to be successful. As the effects of work intensification make the principals' role increasingly complex, principals need school-level support facilitating opportunities for school–community involvement. Otherwise, opportunities for school–community involvement will remain an inconvenient, yet essential part of principals' work.

References

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). (2012). *The new work of teaching: A case study of the worklife of Calgary public teachers*. Retrieved from http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research/pd-86-23%20New%20Work%20of%20Teaching%20-%20Calgary.pdf

Allan, C., O'Donnell, M., & Peetz, D. (1999). More tasks, less secure, working harder: Three dimensions of labour utilisation. *Journal of Industrial Relations, 41*(4), 519–535.

Applebaum, H. A. (1992). *The concept of work: Ancient, medieval, and modern*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Auerbach, S. (2010). Beyond coffee with the principal: Toward leadership for authentic school–family partnerships. *Journal of School Leadership*, *20*(6), 728–757.

Auerbach, S. (2012). Conceptualizing leadership for authentic partnerships: A continuum to inspire practice. In S. Auerbach (Ed.), *School leadership for authentic family and community partnerships: Research perspectives for transforming practice* (pp. 29–51). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ballet, K., & Kelchtermans, G. (2009). Struggling with workload: Primary teachers' experience of intensification. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(8), 1150–1157.

Beabout, B. R. (2010). Urban school reform and the strange attractor of low-risk relationships. *School Community Journal, 20*(1), 9–30. Retrieved from http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Best, A., & Holmes, B. (2010). Systems thinking, knowledge, and action: Towards better models and methods. *Evidence & Policy*, *6*(2), 145–159.

Clandfield, D. (2010). The school as a community hub: A public alternative to the neoliberal threat to Ontario schools. *Our Schools/Our Selves*, *19*(4), 5–74.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., & Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 45*, 294–309.

Epstein, J., Galindo, C., & Sheldon, S. (2011). Levels of leadership: Effects of district and school leaders on the quality of school programs of family and community involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(3), 462–495.

Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. L. (2004). Partnering with families and communities. *Educational Leadership, 61*(8), 12–18.

Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2006). Prospects for change: Preparing educators for school, family, and community partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education, 81*(2), 81–120.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 95*(5), 308–318.

Fineman, S. (2003). *Understanding emotion at work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fineman, S. (2012). *Work: A short introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fournier, P.-S., Montreuil, S., Brun, J.-P., Biolodeau, C., & Villa, J. (2011). *Exploratory study to identify workload factors that have an impact on health and safety: A case study in the service sector*. Retrieved from http://www.irsst.qc.ca/media/documents/PubIRSST/R-701.pdf

Franke, F. (2015). Is work intensification extra stress? *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 14*(1), 17–27.

Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2005). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Green, F. (2004). Work intensification, discretion, and the decline in well-being at work. *Eastern Economic Journal, 30*(4), 615–625.

Gregoric, C., & Owens, L. (2015). The impact of school–community involvement on students, teachers, and the community. In H. Askell-Williams (Ed.), *Transforming the future of learning with educational research* (pp. 221–239). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Hands, C. (2005). It's who you know and what you know: The process of creating partnerships between schools and communities. *School Community Journal, 15*(2), 63–84. Retrieved from http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Hands, C. (2010). Why collaborate? The differing reasons for secondary school educators' establishment of opportunities for school–community involvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21*(2), 189–207.

Hands, C. (2014). Youth perspectives on community collaboration in education: Innovative developers, active participants, or collaborative activities? *School Community Journal, 24*(1), 69–98. Retrieved from http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Hands, C. (2015). Creating links between the school and the community beyond its walls: What teachers and principals do to develop and lead school–community partnerships. *Teaching and Learning, 9*(1), 1–15.

Haughey, M. (2006). The impact of computers on the work of the principal: Changing discourses on talk, leadership, and professionalism. *School Leadership & Management, 26*(1), 23–36.

Institute for Educational Leadership. (2013). *Ontario leadership framework 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/ec/services/hrss/LeadershipDevelopment/Documents/OLF2013.pdf

Koyama, J. (2011). Principals, power, and policy: Enacting "supplemental educational services." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *42*(1), 20–36.

Leithwood, K. (2012). *The OLF 2012: A discussion of research foundations*. Retrieved from http://iel.immix.ca/storage/6/1360068388/Final_Research_Report_-_EN_REV_Feb_4_2013.pdf

Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (2007). Starting with what we know. In K. Leithwood, C. Day, & S. Jacobson (Eds.), *Successful principal leadership in times of change: An international perspective* (pp. 1–16). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

McLeod, P. J., Meagher, T. W., Steinert, Y., & Boudreau, D. (2000). Using focus groups to design a valid questionnaire. *Academic Medicine, 75*(6), 671.

Ontario Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *Parents in partnership: A parent engagement strategy for Ontario schools*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE_Policy2010.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2012). *Safe schools: Urban and priority high schools*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/urbanPriority.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *Achieving excellence: A renewed vision for education in Ontario*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/renewedVision.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2013, July 23). *2011 national household survey highlights: Fact sheet 2*. Retrieved from http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/nhshi11-2.html

People for Education. (2012). *Making connections beyond school walls: People for Education annual report on Ontario's publicly funded schools 2012*. Retrieved from http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Annual-Report-2012-web.pdf

Pollock, K. (with Hauseman, C.). (2015). *Principals work in contemporary times*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.uwo.ca/faculty-profiles/docs/other/pollock/OME-Report-Principals-Work-Contemporary-Times.pdf

Pollock, K., & Hauseman, D. C. (2015). Principal leadership in Canada. In H. Arlestig, C. Day, & O. Johansson (Eds.), *A decade of research on school principals: Cases from 24 countries* (pp. 202–232). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Pollock, K., Wang, F., & Hauseman, D. C. (2015). Complexity and volume: An inquiry into factors that drive principals' work. *Societies*, *5*(2), 537–565.

Sanders, M. (2003). Community involvement in schools: From concept to practice. *Education and Urban Society, 35*(2), 161–181.

Sanders, M. (2012). Community–school partnerships. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of diversity in education* (pp. 428–431). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sanders, M. (2014). Principal leadership for school, family, and community partnerships: The role of a systems approach to reform implementation. *American Journal of Education, 120*(2), 233–255.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2012). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. London, UK: Routledge.

Scott-Little, C., Hamann, M. S., & Jurs, S. G. (2002). Evaluations of after-school programs: A meta-evaluation of methodologies and narrative synthesis of findings. *American Journal of Evaluation, 23*(4), 387–419.

Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. (2005). Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and mathematics achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research, 98*(4), 196–206.

Spillane, J. (2015). Leadership and learning: Conceptualizing relations between school administrative practice and instructional practice. *Societies, 5*(2), 277–294.

Springer, K. (2010). *Educational research: A contextual approach*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Starr, K., & White, S. (2008). The small rural school principalship: Key challenges and cross-school responses. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 23*(5), 1–12.

Stewart, J. (2006). Transformational leadership: An evolving concept examined through the works of Burns, Bass, Avolio, and Leithwood. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 54*, 1–24.

Wilkinson, D., & Birmingham, P. (2003). *Using research instruments: A guide for researchers*. London, UK: Routledge.

Willis, E., Henderson, J., Hamilton, P., Toffoli, L., Blackman, I., Couzner, L., & Verrall, C. (2015). Work intensification as missed care. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work, 25*(2), 118–133.

Wright, R., John, L., Livingstone, A., Shepherd, N., & Duku, E. (2007). Effects of school-based interventions on secondary school students with high and low risks for antisocial behaviour. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 22*(1), 32–49.

Yu, S. (2014). Work–life balance: Work intensification and job insecurity as job stressors. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work, 24*(3), 203–216.

D. Cameron Hauseman is a Ph.D. candidate in the Leadership, Higher and Adult Education Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto (OISE/UT). His research interests are situated in K–12 educational leadership and program evaluation. Correspondence concerning this article may be addressed to D. Cameron Hauseman, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1V6, Canada, or email cameron.hauseman@mail.utoronto.ca

Katina Pollock is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University, Ontario, Canada. She is also codirector of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER-RECRAE). Her research explores work, leadership, and learning.

Fei Wang is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. His research interests focus on educational leadership and administration, social justice and diversity, social justice leadership, subversive leadership, leadership in cross-cultural and international settings, the implication of *The Art of War* in educational leadership, the role of school principals, and educational policy studies.