

Promising Practices: Building the Next Generation of School Leaders

Jennifer Edic Bryant

Monrovia Unified School District, California

Karen Escalante

California State University, San Marcos

Ashley Selva

California State University, Los Angeles

ABSTRACT: This study applies transformational leadership theory practices to examine the purposeful ways in which principals work to build the next generation of teacher leaders in response to the shortage of K-12 principals. Given the impact principals have on student development and the shortage of those applying for the principalship, the purpose of this cross-case analysis was to discover how principals build leadership capacity at their respective school sites and groom individuals for leadership roles. Further, this study explored teacher perceptions of the practices in addition to factors that facilitated or inhibited the implementation of the principals' practices. Three school principals served as the primary participants for this research, and data were gleaned from interviews, observations, and artifacts. Findings indicated that the principals fostered leadership capacity by providing authentic administrative opportunities for teachers pursuing the administration credential. Additionally, the principals' methods for building leadership capacity were positively perceived by the identified teacher leaders. Factors that facilitated leadership capacity development include school and district systems and structures, while factors that inhibited teachers' development include psychological concerns. This study illuminates the need for principals to build leadership capacity at their school sites in order to purposefully prepare teacher leaders for principal succession.

Keywords: Education, school leadership, succession planning, transformational leadership, principals

Leadership is known to impact all types of groups and organizations, as studies from a variety of industries indicate that leadership is a significant factor in an organization's success (Bass, 2008; Collins, 2001;

Northouse, 2013; O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz, & Self, 2010). Given that the very nature of education is to develop human beings, the impact that leadership has on student achievement and development is a critical factor that cannot be ignored (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Seashore Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Wahlstrom, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). As the predominant school leader, principals play a critical role in the success of schools (Marzano, Water, & McNulty, 2005). However, recruitment and development of leaders to fill site administrative positions has become a national and global problem (Brooking, Collins, Court, & O'Neill, 2003; Fink & Brayman, 2006). As a result, schools and districts increasingly seek ways to find high-quality principal candidates who can fill vacancies and move schools toward greater success. Unfortunately, the problem is not simply a shortage of people with administrative credentials. Given that many teachers obtain administrative credentials, potential school leaders exist within the teaching ranks (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012). However, teachers frequently choose not to pursue an administrative path due in part to a lack of recruitment and development of latent teacher leadership potential (Fink, 2011; Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011; Peters, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that 13,000 principal positions will need to be filled nationally between 2012 and 2022, while state projections such as those in California estimate the need for 5,000 school administrators between 2008 and 2018 (White, Fong, & Makkonen, 2010). Current data attribute the problem of filling leadership positions to several factors, including candidates who lack the necessary skill sets, vacancies created by retirements, general attrition, and teachers lacking motiva-

tion to move into school administration (Kearney, 2010).

Kearney (2010) found that in California there are sufficient administrative credential holders to fill the state's vacancies, but these teachers are not moving into administrative positions. For example, in the 2011-2012 academic year, 1,535 California educators became eligible for administrative positions, but only 332 of them were working in such positions the following year (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2014). DeAngelis and O'Connor (2012) found similar results in Illinois, where 60% of administrative certificate holders were not serving in administrative positions even six years following initial credential attainment. While teachers are obtaining minimum requirements necessary for administrative licensure, only a small proportion of them are seeking employment in an administrative capacity. In addition, human resource personnel are often finding administrator candidates ill-prepared to take on the challenges of school administration (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Fink, 2011). The shortage of qualified principal candidates who desire to become school administrators can be attributed in part to a lack of leadership capacity cultivation of potential administrators (Fink, 2011)

Upon close examination of the school leadership pipeline, a major problem emerges on how to best identify, recruit, and train educators who will develop into strong principals capable of positively impacting student learning and achievement. In seeking to solve this problem, an initial course of action is to investigate the promising practices principals use to build leadership capacity in teachers who will become future school administrators.

Review of Literature

Cultivating teacher leadership is a multi-level undertaking involving the state, district, and school (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011). Human capital management practices are enacted at the district and school level; therefore, this study will begin by examining principal leadership succession practices with a wide lens by initially exploring district level practices from a systems perspective before delving into a narrower focus on school level succession planning practices.

District Level Practices

Research supports the idea that intentional succession planning is important for lasting organizational success (Collins, 2001). Studies show that effective succession planning by school districts must link aspects of identification, induction, forecasting, and on-

going administrator learning (Fink, 2010, 2011; Fink & Brayman, 2006; Peters, 2011). Fink and Brayman (2006) and Fink (2011) examined succession practices by districts in three regions of three different countries, finding that intentional planning for principal succession that involved developing leadership capacity within a district leads to positive outcomes for schools and students. Similarly, Peters' (2011) case study analysis of principal succession in one urban district further supported the idea that schools and students benefit when succession is planned and supports are provided for schools and administrators who experience leadership transitions. However, intentional succession planning is not a common practice in most school districts (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006), and plans that exist are often widely varied with differing levels of success.

In response to the research findings, Fink (2010, 2011) challenged education systems to strategically address principal succession and create a reservoir of leadership talent that could fill administrative vacancies from within an organization. Fink (2011) described the most common strategy to principal succession as a "hire and hope" approach. Relying upon this approach also requires depending on the unknowns of principal candidate school leadership preparation. Fink (2010) chronicled the trajectory many districts take in dealing with principal succession. He found that school districts are initially uninvolved in the beginning stages as teachers self-select to attend an administrative credentialing program. These programs are often sponsored either by universities or other educational organizations and vary widely in the quality of the training they provide to candidates. School districts then post openings for school principals and subsequently wait to see who applies from this group, hoping to get a qualified candidate. In contrast to these practices, Fink (2010) recommends the creation of a pipeline for leadership succession that extends from a leadership reservoir and takes on a "grow your own approach" to filling vacancies (p. 681).

In another study, Zepeda, Bengtson, and Parylo (2011) conducted a cross-case analysis of school districts in the United States that claimed to be using succession planning. They found that larger, urban districts tend to have more formalized plans for filling administrative positions, whereas smaller districts have less formalized succession plans. The researchers also uncovered four emergent themes. The first represented a sense of urgency especially existent in larger districts that were prone to require filling vacancies more frequently. A second theme drew atten-

tion to the various ways districts provided for the development of leaders, including some that used standards to drive learning and assess leadership qualities, such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and those of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). A third theme, mentoring, was a core component of succession planning in all districts. Mentoring as an element of leadership capacity building is found prominently across many studies examining administration succession planning, professional growth, and credentialing programs (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004; Russell & Sabina, 2014; Zepeda et al., 2011). A final theme identified in the study was the building of collaborative relationships with organizations outside of the districts, such as universities who participated in administrator preparation (Zepeda et al., 2011).

In summary, research on district-level succession planning has illustrated the importance of filling vacancies and maintaining school growth in a strategic manner. In doing so, districts can fill vacancies with effective principals and increase the chances that school improvements will be sustained through the leadership change.

School Level Practices

Along with district level practices, research has also explored principal practices employed at the school level to identify and recruit successors. For instance, Myung et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative study of teachers, assistant principals, and principals in the Miami-Dade school district following the 2007-2008 academic year. Participants were surveyed on whether they had been *tapped* for the principal role, or informally recruited and deliberately developed in their leadership capacity by an administrator. Results showed that 72% of principals and 52% of assistant principals were tapped by a principal prior to entering school administration. Results also indicated that gender and race are significant predictors of being tapped. Within schools, male teachers were twice as likely to be tapped as their female counterparts, and Black and Hispanic teachers were more likely to be tapped than their White colleagues. These findings were discovered after controlling for teacher leadership capabilities, suggesting current principals tap and promote teachers that resemble them in appearance and background.

The challenges in developing teacher leadership vary, but an ever-present hurdle stems from the notion that teachers are part of an egalitarian culture (Donaldson et al., 2008). Teachers veering toward leadership roles are often unaware of the unwritten

rules of education. Traditionally, teachers are autonomous professionals and those in position of seniority are often unappreciative of newcomers' leadership authority (Donaldson et al., 2008). Under an egalitarian reign, all teachers are equal and are expected to put up a united front. Those willing to take risks by seeking or being appointed to leadership roles place themselves in direct conflict with their teacher peers (Donaldson et al., 2008; Fairman & MacKenzie, 2014; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Embedded within the teacher socialization process is the notion that teachers are followers and should remain focused on their classroom duties (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Moreover, in this era of multiple school reforms and heightened accountability, principals are tasked with many responsibilities, and one area of particular struggle is investing in school culture and climate. Research posits that positive school climate fosters leadership development (Drago-Severson, 2012), but with little time available to devote to school culture and climate, teacher leadership will not develop. To that end, teachers successfully mentored by the principal are often accused by their peers of being the "principal's pet" (Donaldson et al., 2008). To avoid this title and association, teachers in leadership roles frequently refrain from celebrating leadership successes or acknowledgements (Fairman & MacKenzie, 2014).

Overall, research on how principals identify teachers for leadership positions is scant and predominantly depicts informal methods. The research also reflects identification and recruitment practices that follow traditional methods of self-selection for licensure, with little innovation devoted to recruiting the younger generation of teachers to pursue administration (Fink, 2010). Further, scholarship is limited in that it predominately dwells on district failures in principal succession management planning rather than illuminating promising practices to recruit leaders. The present study attempted to bridge the gap in literature and give insight into practices used to cultivate the next generation of principal leaders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the promising practices that principals engage in to create a reservoir of quality leaders to fill school principal positions. To gain insight into the experiences of principals' leadership succession practices, the research team collaboratively posed three research questions:

- In what ways do principals work to build the next generation of leaders?

- What are the perceptions of teachers regarding the influence of those practices?
- What are the factors that both facilitate and inhibit the development and implementation of strategies designed to build leadership capacity?

Methods

A qualitative case study design was used to produce a rich description and acquire a thorough understanding of the participants' thoughts about leadership succession management practices (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The cross-case analysis in this study provided for enhanced external validity of the findings (Merriam, 2009). To triangulate the findings, this study accessed data through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Document analysis entailed evaluating job descriptions, résumés, school policies, the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), and leadership meeting minutes. Furthermore, to garner a deeper understanding of the phenomenon related to building leadership capacity (Maxwell, 2013) and explore the relationship between leaders and followers, this research study was grounded in a transformational leadership theory. At the core of this framework were three of the five exemplary leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner (2008). These practices, which can be applied to principal leadership succession management, are *enable others to act*, *inspire a shared vision*, and *model the way*.

Participants

This study's primary participants were school principals who used promising practices to build leadership capacity in teachers they determined as having potential to move into school administration. Purposive sampling was used to select the principals fulfilling three specific criteria: (a) he or she served in the role for more than three to five years; (b) he or she reported to purposefully build leadership capacity in teachers with the intent of encouraging them to move into school administration; and (c) one or more of his or her tapped teachers was pursuing or was already in a school administration position. The principals and sites were selected through multiple means including email recruitment through a superintendent as well as recruitment at a state school administrators' association conference. Selection resulted in three principals: Ms. Garcia, a K-8 elementary school principal; Mr. Roth, a high school principal; and Mrs. Devon, a K-5 elementary school principal. Each principal served in this administrative role for 10 or more years, and all principals were serving in ethnically diverse schools in Southern California. Two principals led elementary

schools with a range of 600 to 724 students while another was responsible for leading a high school of 2,376 students.

Along with principals, snowball sampling was used to identify 20 additional participants to inform the study. The participants included superintendents, teacher leaders identified as being tapped for leadership capacity development, and assistant principals who were mentored into their role. Although the small participant sample size impeded generalization, it allowed for rich participant perspectives of their experiences during the leadership succession management process (Gall et al., 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Data Collection and Analysis

All participants in this study were provided with an introductory letter informing them of the purpose of the study and the role they would play in providing data for the research. Participants were also assured that their anonymity would be maintained through the use of pseudonyms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals, current teachers, and former teachers who were tapped by the principal and subsequently moved into school administration. These interviews, coupled with observations and document analysis, served to provide data for the study. Questions in the interview protocols addressed the study's three research questions and were developed in collaboration with the research team. In advance of the interviews, all protocols were piloted to ensure that questions were clear and that responses addressed the research questions. Data from each source were compiled and analyzed using Creswell's (2014) model for qualitative data analysis with the theoretical lens of three of Kouzes and Posner's (2008) transformational practices: *inspiring a shared vision*, *enabling others to act*, and *modeling the way*. In alignment with the model, data were analyzed for emergent themes and then clustered into salient and recurring themes that addressed the research questions.

Findings

This cross-case analysis sought to illuminate and differentiate the promising practices that some school principals use to build leadership capacity in teachers who have been tapped to move into school administration and fill the reservoir of high-quality principal candidates. The findings of this study aimed to provide insight for school principals who wish to build capacity in teachers who will become the next generation of principals.

Strategies in Building Leadership Capacity

Three emergent themes were derived from research

question one and shed light on the practices that school principals use to build leadership capacity in tapped teachers. It was found that the culture that principals created inspired a shared vision and enabled others to act. Additionally, the opportunities of tapped teachers for authentic practice in administrative duties aligned to the practice of enabling others to act. Lastly, the principals' leadership ideologies drew them to mentor the tapped teachers, modeling the way for these teachers to build a career in a leadership role.

Culture

Creating a culture that is structured around positive relationships, accessibility, clear values, and vision provided a base from which the three principals worked to build leadership capacity in teachers. All three principals built positive relationships with tapped teachers, whereby teachers felt cared about and invested in both professionally and personally. Mr. Roth remarked that building positive relationships with his tapped teachers was the most powerful tool he had in developing them as future administrators. He shared, "I believe in relationships. People realize I do care about them and I hope that we can build good relationships so that I can then invest in them." A second principal, Ms. Garcia, developed her nurturing, relational approach after experiencing an unsupportive relationship with a former school administrator. She believed this inhibited her leadership capacity growth and conscientiously decided to tap teachers differently. Ms. Garcia explained, "We are very different [describing her previous administrator]; I lead more through nurturing, modeling, and encouragement." Despite differing pathways, all three principals shared a common belief in building a culture where positive relationships offer support and encouragement to those teachers who would go on to be the next generation of principals.

In addition to a culture that included valuing positive relationships, the principals developed school cultures that inspired a shared vision and enabled others to act—two of the three transformational leadership practices that framed this study. All principals provided a strong vision for their schools, particularly for those teachers with whom they were building leadership capacity. This vision centered on individuals striving for personal and professional growth and success. Tapped teachers commented on their principals' vision for improvement and growth: "He was very consistent about sharing with me the fact that I had the capacity to do what I wanted to do as a leader—that I could be an effective school administrator." Another tapped teacher observed, "[My principal] is

always looking for ways for us to grow and to be better individually and as a school." The collaborative efforts of moving teachers into the principal pipeline stemmed from principals' positive relationships and clear values and vision around self-improvement.

Opportunities for Authentic Practice

A second theme was that all three principals provided tapped teachers with opportunities for authentic administrative practice. The principals allowed teachers to develop their administrative skills and knowledge by delegating to them some administrative duties at their respective sites. For example, Mrs. Devon frequently started by giving tapped teachers experiences in managing students by saying, "Okay, you are in charge of discipline while I'm gone." She subsequently walked them through the challenges that emerged and provided support as they managed the difficult discipline situations. One tapped teacher explained the opportunities to do administrative work under his principal: "You get to *be* [emphasis added] an administrator; you may not have the title or pay, but you are doing the *real* [emphasis added] work that school principals and assistant principals do." Providing opportunities for authentic practice is a critical strategy in building leadership capacity in teachers who have been tapped for the principalship.

Personal Ideology

Along with opportunities for authentic practice, the findings also revealed that the principals' personal ideologies contributed to the growth and development of future school administrators. All principals examined believed that their role was to build capacity in others, particularly those teachers who would go on to become school administrators. By enacting this ideology, the principals inspired a shared vision for tapped teachers, moving them toward reaching the goal of becoming effective school administrators (Northouse, 2013).

While all three principals examined shared a personal mission to assist others in becoming effective school principals, the source of this ideology differed between them. For instance, Ms. Garcia held strong beliefs about helping those who face larger obstacles to success. She characterized her ideology as an "immigrant mentality." Her family's experiences as Cuban immigrants coming to the United States drove her to push toward something better, and she desired to inspire this sentiment in those she taps. In particular, she felt strongly about empowering women to succeed in school administration, and she referenced a quote she has hanging in her office that summarized her beliefs: "A great woman doesn't know she's great.

A great woman creates other great women.”

In contrast, Mrs. Devon felt her professional success was contingent upon building leadership capacity in others. Her ideology centered on the mutual benefits of tapping teachers for school administration, which allowed her to derive satisfaction from others who attributed their success to her leadership. Mrs. Devon’s source of motivation for capacity building in others stemmed from a desire for professional satisfaction and upward mobility. She prided herself on the number of teacher leaders she had hired, stating she looks for individuals with a “natural sense of perseverance, and strength, and undying desire to move forward.”

Unlike Mrs. Devon, Mr. Roth’s ideology emanated from a core belief that his life’s purpose was to build capacity in others. He explained, “I personally want to be better tomorrow than I am today. I want to be sure everyone on this campus is the same way.” He added, “Leadership never stops; I ask, ‘How can I build up new leaders?’ Building the capacity to help others lead is paramount in my duties. Leadership is a journey that I embrace and, when looking at people, one I can give back to.” Despite differing sources of the ideology that motivated these principals to build leadership capacity in teachers, all three worked to ensure their teachers were given multiple opportunities to become successful school administrators.

Perceptions of Practices

The second research question explored the perceptions that tapped teachers construct around the principals’ efforts to build leadership capacity. Exploring the perceptions of these teachers contributes to a greater understanding of the promising practices that principals use to build capacity in teachers who will potentially move into school administration. The findings revealed that the teachers valued the relationships with their principals and perceived these relationships as conduits for leadership development. The positive relationships were seen as a foundation for effective mentoring and coaching in school administration. Furthermore, it was through the practice in authentic administrative settings that teachers felt they were being prepared to be effective principals.

Valuing Relationships and Mentoring

Tapped teachers perceived that positive relationships that included encouragement were instrumental to their growth as future principals. One teacher described how his principal helped him to learn from failure in a safe and supportive environment. The teacher shared, “He’s like, ‘This can’t happen again,’

and then went on to say ‘pick yourself up and brush yourself off, let’s go.’ I felt like it was safe to fail, that he doesn’t judge, he models improvement and he’s trying to push people to be better.” Another teacher spoke of the relational support and subsequent learning that took place with her principal: “She encouraged me to go for admin . . . She kept telling me, ‘Go. Move. You need to go for it. You’re ready. You can do it.’ Slowly, she started giving me leadership roles at the school and let me do it my way. Eventually I became the administrative designee. Then, I was feeling like I wanted to do something bigger.” Similarly, another teacher commented on an opportunity to work alongside Mrs. Devon in a summer school setting and on administrative credential coursework. The teacher described, “I was there with her and able to walk around; the exposure was just awesome. She’s giving us opportunities to succeed without doing the job for us.” Tapped teachers viewed these mentoring opportunities as significant factors contributing to their leadership capacity development.

Valuing Authentic Practice

In addition to valuing positive relationships, teachers viewed the opportunities to complete authentic administrative tasks as critical to their development as school administrators. All three principals provided substantial opportunities for tapped teachers to work in an administrative capacity. Through their principal feedback, teachers regarded the authentic experiences as beneficial to their growth as future principals. One teacher described his view of the opportunities provided by his principal: “As one [tapped for the principalship], you’re really going to learn the job. Whether it be spending days in the office, or substituting when an administrator is out for meetings or having the opportunity to take care of a project.” Another tapped teacher shared that because she was entrusted to run a workshop, she felt encouraged to continue to pursue other leadership tasks. She stated, “So the principal asked me to give a training . . . She supported me in doing it how I wanted, and I ended up creating a full day of professional development for two schools in our district.” Teachers tapped for school administration also valued the strategies that principals used to build leadership capacity in them. In particular, the positive relationships with their principals coupled with opportunities to perform authentic administrative work were critical to their development as the next generation of school principals.

Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors

The third research question sought to delineate the factors that both facilitate and inhibit the leadership

capacity building of teachers who will become school administrators. With increased demands placed upon current principals and limited number of candidates prepared to take over the principal position (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Fink, 2011), it is crucial to identify successful methods of preparing and securing future principals in addition to identifying impeding factors that can be minimized.

Facilitating Factors

Facilitating factors that supported the leadership development of teachers included school structures that allowed for tapped teachers to take on additional leadership roles. The three principals in this study provided commitments of time and finances to support teachers' work in administrative roles. The principals set aside site funds to pay for substitutes to occasionally release their teachers from the classroom to allow them to work on administrative tasks. Mr. Roth commented on this commitment by sharing, "I am probably spending more money that way than any other principal in our district. I think it's important though." Other structures included principals creating schedules that allowed tapped teachers to lead teacher teams and promote collaboration at their respective school sites. For example, Ms. Garcia noted, "We do a lot of collaboration and I have the teachers teach each other . . . it's a pain for our office manager, but it's super important that the teachers get their time together."

While two of the principals relied heavily on their own school sites to facilitate the building of leadership capacity in tapped teachers, one had more significant involvement in leadership development from the district office level. In Mrs. Devon's school, in addition to site commitments of time and financial resources, the small size of the district allowed for district administrators to also be involved in the support and development of tapped teachers. One teacher shared, "The superintendent told me, 'I'm up late, if you have any questions give me a call.' I don't think you would hear that in a larger district." This superintendent expressed the involvement in leadership succession planning at the district level: "I'm always looking for leaders for the next level. I'm always strategic. I know right now who I think can be promoted." This promote-from-within mindset facilitated the leadership capacity building in tapped teachers, as they were confident that they might be able to secure an administrative position in their current district.

Unlike his counterparts, Mr. Roth's tapping of teachers was systematic and formalized at his school site. Tapped teachers were called interns and fre-

quently served in this capacity for multiple years, gaining extensive experience and development in school leadership. Interns were identified formally and their annual administrative roles were delineated in the site's organizational chart. Mr. Roth realized that his method was unconventional. He explained, "This chart shows the areas of responsibility for each of us, including my interns. I would venture to say that most other schools don't do something like that." Flexibility in how the principals organized their school site structure and commitment to both time and finances all served to facilitate leadership capacity building among tapped teachers.

Inhibiting Factors

Two themes emerged that suggested some factors also inhibit the implementation of strategies to build leadership capacity in tapped teachers: additional stress and colleague resistance. First, teachers who have been tapped for leadership development felt added stress caused by the additional work they assume while playing an administrative role. One teacher commented, "It was like I had both jobs putting pressure on me, that was hard." Another teacher corroborated this additional pressure: "My [administrative] project is pretty intense and very important to the school, but my students are important to me, too; it's difficult to manage the two things competing for my attention." Serving dual roles as a teacher and aspiring administrator contributed to additional stress.

Second, strategies to build leadership were often impeded by the negative perceptions of some teacher colleagues who felt tapped teachers challenged the established norms and roles of teachers and administrators. Several tapped teachers interviewed suggested that negative attitudes, comments, and resistance from colleagues were a part of their experiences. Donaldson et al. (2008) discovered that designating formal leadership roles deviated from the egalitarian cultural norm of the teaching profession and provoked conflict among teachers. Comments from teachers tapped by the principal participants in this study substantiate Donaldson et al.'s (2008) findings and highlight the barrier caused by the norms. One teacher reflected, "I was no longer one of them, a teacher. I was now viewed as a district person." Although lighthearted about it, another teacher noted that she received comments such as, "Oh, you're going over to the dark side." For some tapped teachers, colleagues would find passive ways to resist their leadership. When asking for information from teaching colleagues for a report he was preparing, one teacher noted, "Without saying no, they say no to my requests for further in-

formation. They say they don't have time, but realistically, they just don't want to do it, and they don't."

Discussion

This cross-case analysis explored the transformational leadership practices exhibited by three principals to build leadership capacity within their teacher leaders. Results suggested they did so by creating a culture based upon positive relationships, providing opportunities for authentic administrative work, and drawing on a personal ideology that motivates them to develop the next generation of principals. Furthermore, teachers found value in these relationships and perceived authentic administrative work opportunities as contributing to their leadership development. Lastly, several factors emerged as facilitating strategies used by principals to build capacity in tapped teachers, including commitments of time and site financial resources to provide leadership succession planning. In contrast, factors that inhibited leadership capacity building were psychological challenges such as additional stress and colleague resistance. In the section below, these findings are discussed in relation to their alignment to the study's theoretical framework, which consisted of three of Kouzes and Posner's (2008) exemplary practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and enabling others to act.

Each of the principals modeled the way for tapped teachers by demonstrating the transformational leadership practices required to effectively lead a school. In addition, they developed positive, supportive relationships with the tapped teachers that allowed for powerful mentoring opportunities to arise as teachers worked on administrative duties. These mentoring relationships were the conduit through which teachers received feedback on their administrative practices. These findings are consistent with the recent literature on the benefits of mentoring (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Principal tapping of teachers for school administration provided teachers with mentoring opportunities to develop into effective school administrators.

A second transformational practice, inspiring a shared vision, was demonstrated as principals built leadership capacity in tapped teachers. They encouraged the teachers in their quest for the principalship and worked alongside them, making it clear that they valued personal and professional growth and achievement. Despite differing motivational sources for this growth ideology, all three principals were successful in creating a vision for tapped teachers that inspired them to improve as educators. The ongoing opportunities for authentic practice in administration helped

tapped teachers develop a positive view of school administration and their own potential value as principals. Finally, principals' shared vision was further embraced as they enabled others to act by engaging the tapped teachers in collaborative, authentic administrative tasks. The three principals worked to build a culture and climate that supported tapped teachers in growing their skills, knowledge, and efficacy in school administration. The learning opportunities built upon teachers' strengths and provided occasion for detailed feedback and improvement in a range of duties that administrators undertake. Through the use of transformational leadership, this study was able to delineate the promising practices employed by the principal participants to foster and develop leadership capacity amongst their teachers.

Implications

Given the impact principals have on a school's success (Marzano et al., 2005), the findings from this study have implications for improving the educational field. The road to developing a reservoir of principal leaders who can increase academic achievement and empower teacher leadership can begin with this study to determine promising practices. As such, the findings have implications for several audiences including teachers, principals, and districts.

Transformational principal leaders can play a pivotal role in promoting teacher leadership. Principals can use these research-based practices to manage leadership complexities and foster growth among teachers. In turn, teachers can benefit from the principal employing practices such as developing a vision based on a personal purpose and creating a culture based on positive relationships. These practices may be implemented by creating a district-wide principal leadership academy. The leadership academy should be a collaborative effort focused on helping principals develop promising practices. During the academy, principals should examine their current practices, redesign their leadership strategies, and meet with principal mentors who have a history of success with leadership succession management plans.

Along with the development of a leadership academy, the findings also imply the need to help teachers overcome the stress of fulfilling a new role. This too may be addressed at the same academy. It would benefit teachers to have an empathetic principal leader who is aware of teachers' perceptions and the influence of their leadership practices. At the leadership academy, principals should learn how to develop teachers' competence and informally mentor teachers to help them persist through perceived leadership

challenges. Workshops should also focus on providing principals with ways to deliver constructive feedback that can help funnel teachers into administrative roles.

Future Research

This cross-case analysis illustrated how three principals worked to build leadership capacity within their tagged teachers to prepare them for the principalship. While thorough examination was conducted in this analysis, further questions beyond the scope of this study's research questions emerged. One recommendation for further research includes examining the obstacles female principals experience and how they overcome the proverbial glass ceiling. As Northouse (2013) noted, there are meaningful differences between women and men's leadership paths. Additionally, because the principals in this cross-case analysis were employed at suburban schools, a final recommendation for future studies includes a comparison of urban, rural, and suburban principals who tap teachers for school administration. This would serve to improve understanding of common and divergent succession planning practices across school settings.

Conclusion

This study's findings suggest that despite the evolution of the principal's role into a position with increasingly complex job responsibilities, principals can disrupt the traditional egalitarian school culture and empower teacher leadership. As such, the pursuit of effective principal succession management practices is achievable and can help ensure all schools have effective principals who can improve academic achievement and empower teachers' growth into leadership roles.

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