LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN K-12 ADMINISTRATORS

John Prestridge and Charminque Marcu

Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University

Abstract

Despite an increasingly diverse student population across the United States, the alarming decrease in minority K-12 school administrators (Taie et al., 2022) demands immediate attention. This qualitative study aims to understand the experiences of three different African American school administrators, extracting insights and implications that can be beneficial for school administrators. As we strive to nurture the leaders of tomorrow, our leadership representation must be diversified. Using a case study methodology, the authors employed the Principal Talent Management Framework (George W. Bush Institute, 2020) to examine three cases. Through interviews and transcription coding, the researcher identified themes and action steps that could be utilized to maintain a diverse pool of K12 administrators and reverse the trend of recruiting new administrators of diverse backgrounds into the field. The emerging themes from the study included lack of respect, balance, discrimination, hiring practices, experience, advocacy, calling, intentionality, and mentorship.

The benefits of public schools employing instructional leaders, including teachers and principals from diverse backgrounds, are well documented. Stevens and Motamedi (2019) write, "Research has shown that when a school prioritizes diversity and strives to create authentic cultural change, the quality of both teaching and learning improves, benefiting everyone" (para 3). The 2020 census showed the multi-racial growth in population in nearly every county within the United States (Chavez, N. 2011). Despite an increasingly diverse student body, representation of non-white instructional leaders is declining in the United States. According to a U.S. Department of Education report, 77 % of public K-12 school principals were white during the 2020/2021 school year, while only 10% were African American (Taie et al., 2022). To better understand how we can recruit and retain a diverse pool of instructional leaders, the researcher found it worthwhile to attempt to understand the experiences of existing instructional leaders who have chosen to remain in the profession despite the unique obstacles they had to overcome. This study will engage participants to understand the struggles and motivation of selected African American school administrators in Alabama who have earned their roles and maintained their positions. The hope is that by understanding their experiences, we can find ways to motivate other African American educators to pursue pathways to school administration, thereby creating a more diverse and promising future for our schools.

Theoretical Framework

Identifying one theoretical framework for this study proved challenging. While a body of research exists regarding the experiences of school administrators, identifying one that would fit the unique experiences of African American administrators was difficult. After reviewing multiple frameworks, the researcher settled on the Principal Talent Management framework as "the Framework is intended to support efforts to strengthen the policies and practices districts use in a holistic effort to attract, support, and retain the best principals…Each component is rooted in standards and measurable competencies and influenced by the principal's working environment" (George W. Bush Institute, 2020, p. 2-3). Components of the framework include pipeline development, recruitment and selection, professional learning, performance and evaluation, compensation and incentives, principal supervision, and working environment (George W. Bush Institute, 2020). Though this framework is not specific to any race, it was applied as a study designed to look through the lens of the participants. As each framework component was examined, we sought existing academic literature related to the study.

Literature Review

Recruitment and Selection

The Principal Talent Management Framework, a crucial tool for educational administrators, policymakers, and researchers, encompasses various aspects, with recruitment

and selection being the first. The significance of recruiting and retaining influential instructional leaders is well established. Districts that systematically anticipate and plan administrative vacancies can limit educational disruptions and learning loss due to gaps in qualified instructional leaders (George W. Bush Institute, 2020). It is additionally critical for schools in districts with diverse populations to be intentional and strategic in recruiting and selecting candidates. Relationships between student outcomes and achievement, disciplinary infractions, assignment to gifted and talented programs, and graduation rates can all be influenced by a teacher or a principal of the same race as the student (Redding, 2022). Data shows African American male students as having the most discipline referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and academic failures, and the problem is compounded by the fact that American male teachers of African American students are disproportionate (Vaughn, 2008). The researcher wanted to know how participating African American administrators had been recruited and retained in their school districts and what future strategies could be replicated in other districts.

Professional Learning

The Framework for Principal Talent Management delineates professional learning for principals into three phases: early career mentoring, ongoing coaching, and professional development (George W. Bush Institute, 2020). Mentoring, a critical aspect of instructional leadership at any point in the career, particularly early on, is often the exception rather than the norm for new instructional leaders (Wilkerson, 2019). He stated, "Providing the leadership of these schools with a clear vision and pathway to success, while removing barriers to their obtainment of this success and providing them with the requisite levels of support enabling them to achieve this success is a moral imperative" (Wilkerson, 2019, p. 5). While mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably, there exists a fine-grained difference between the two. Mentoring utilizes more of a questioning, self-discovery approach, while "coaches focus more on learning and perfecting specific skills" (Finkel, 2023, para 6). This ongoing coaching and mentorship should collaborate continuously throughout the professional development (Gersten et al., 2014)Gersten and colleagues explained that the most effective professional development required educators to attend an initial session and mini-workshops to reflect on and enhance their practices. This underlines the importance of continuous learning and professional development in education.

The Principal Talent Management Framework recommends that professional development activities be directly tied to performance and evaluation. Doing so allows principals to "engage in individualized growth plans that align to particular needs…The results of these evaluations inform continuous improvement processes" (George W. Bush Institute, 2020, p. 20). It is imperative to have a principal evaluation system that genuinely measures effectiveness. While there are certain situations where a school may be best served by removing a building principal, districts will be best served to have an evaluation system that measures the growth of the instructional leader. Principals typically need to be in place for four or more years at high-needs schools, and they are often not granted enough time due to pressure from supervisors to turn around schools quickly (Wilkinson, 2019).

An ideal scenario ties principal evaluation to compensation and incentives, viewed through professional growth and development. While most schools compensate their principals on a set salary scale based on education and years of experience, some systems are choosing an innovative approach to pay principals based on performance. "Pay for performance compensation systems seek to improve educator quality and attract the most effective teachers

and principals to high-needs schools…Evidence also emerges from existing district compensation and incentive initiatives that connect performance-based compensation to improved principal retention, principal practice, and student achievement" (George W. Bush Institute, 2020, p. 22). It is worth noting that utilization of performance-based incentives could create equity concerns. Districts in rural settings already must overcome geographic challenges with often smaller applicant pools, and creating competition with districts better equipped to meet the salary demands of incentive pay could prove quite problematic (Hansen, 2018). There is debate about whether financial incentives alone are enough to recruit and retain educators. "Unless teachers feel respected for their professional expertise through enabling agency, and school cultures and leadership are welcoming of diversity while providing opportunities for advancement, then teacher shortages will continue" (Blackmore et al., 2023, p. 18). How one quantifies respect could prove difficult as the definition may differ from person to person.

Research suggests that school improvement can be directly tied to focusing on personal growth and learning regarding evaluation (George W. Bush Institute, 2020). There is some debate, however, regarding the methods of principal supervision and how they are genuinely evaluated. While data analysis, specifically standardized test data, has been used to assess administrator effectiveness, most superintendents agree that a multi-faceted instrument should be utilized, and principals should be aware of the evaluation criteria (Chopin et al., 2011).

Working Environment

The final component of the Principal Talent Management Framework is the working environment. Work environment does not merely refer to physical school buildings or even the culture within the building. For this framework, the working environment "includes district policies and practices that give a principal the right support, balanced with the autonomy to make decisions" (George W. Bush Institute, 2020, p. 5). While granting such autonomy brings unique challenges, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. While superintendents may feel pressured to micromanage school principals, instructional leaders who are free to make decisions about their schools are often more content and likely to stay in their positions. "Principal autonomy may improve teaching quality at school, employee performance, and a more effective and efficient school administration" (Limon & Aydin, 2020, p. 479).

Problem Statement / Research Questions

Educators are fortunate that frameworks exist that tell us what makes successful school administrators. Educators also know the importance of humanization and diversity in students' ability to see themselves in the educators serving them. If educators understand what makes school administrators stay in the profession, why are we facing a crisis of a mass exit of minority administrators from our schools? Moreover, what can be done to reverse this trend? While multiple themes would emerge from this study that warrant further research, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What challenges do African American educators face as school administrators?
2. What were the barriers to becoming a K-12 administrator?
3. How did the opportunity to become school administrators come about for these participants?

4. What has kept these participants in their positions or advancing to other leadership positions?
5. How can we recruit more school administrators from diverse backgrounds?

Methods

This research endeavored to actively engage participants in exploring the challenges and driving forces experienced by specifically chosen African American educational administrators within Alabama who have successfully attained and sustained their positions. The overarching aim was to glean insights that inform strategies to inspire and encourage other African American educators to pursue trajectories leading to school administration roles and better understand systematic and individual barriers so they may be broken down.

Research Design

For this study, the researcher chose a case study methodology (Ebneyamini & Moghadamm, 2018). This method allowed the researcher to determine that the research questions examined in this study would best be answered through a case study method. Attempting to draw conclusions and implications from individual experiences can take time and effort. According to these researchers, it "involves careful and in-depth consideration of the nature of the case, historical background, physical setting, and other institutional and political contextual factors" (p. 2). Multiple coding techniques were utilized to help eliminate individual bias and assumptions from the design and execution of the study.

The methodology employed in this study was qualitative, as it was deemed most suitable to answer the research questions. The researcher engaged with well-established participants in their K-12 school district to better understand their career successes and failures. Central to the research was a commitment to allowing participants' narratives to unfold authentically, aiming to identify commonalities through their unique experiences. Interviews were structured to facilitate follow-up inquiries, fostering an environment where participants felt free to speak candidly, safeguarded by the promise of pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

The choice of a case study design was intentional and deemed ideal for addressing the research questions. Open-ended interview questions were favored for their capacity to elicit deeper insights, as opposed to the restrictive nature of survey instruments. The study's overarching aim was twofold: first, to understand the unique challenges overcome by the selected participants, and second, to learn lessons that can be applied to further the advancement of minority school administrators.

Sampling and Data Collection

Three African American administrators serving three different Alabama school systems were the participants. The school systems and participants were given pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities. Participants were enlisted via a phone call or email by the researcher. Interview sessions were scheduled to accommodate the availability and preferences of the participants. The study employed purposeful sampling to allow for diverse and unique perspectives. Interview protocols were strategically designed to foster an environment conducive to gathering unique narratives and perspectives pertinent to the participants. This allowed for a free-flowing conversation, enriching the answers and lessons learned from the interviews. Three African Americans who had served in various administrative positions were invited to

participate. Administrators refer to principals, assistant principals, or central office supervisors for this study. While it would be ideal to interview more participants, three were chosen to allow the researcher not to be constrained by time but rather conduct in-depth interviews and allow for emerging trends.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were duly informed of their right to opt-out at any stage. While interviews followed a semi-structured format, each session was guided by a predefined set of thematic categories derived from the conceptual framework discussed in the literature review. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and later coded. Member checks were conducted to assist with triangulation.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers serve as the primary tool for data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Though the interviews were rich in detail, the sample size was small. Thus, transcripts of interviews were hand-coded, and categories, data exemplars, and operational definitions were developed. Various thematic analysis techniques encompass repetitions, metaphors, analogies, transitions, comparisons of similarities and differences, language connectors, and theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The researcher identified approximately 70 codes after thoroughly analyzing the first reading of transcripts. Codes were categorized and consolidated into themes, and eventually, nine significant themes emerged for data reporting purposes that corresponded to the five research questions addressed. Member checks were conducted to assist with the triangulation of data.

Results

The results of this study can best be explained by further examining each research question and narrative examples from the participants. As codes emerged, they were categorized into individual answers to the research question. The researcher developed a codebook to include a list of codes, identification principles, operational definitions, and exemplars (See Table 1).

Table 1

Codebook

Category	Code	Operational Definition	Data Exemplar
Lack of respect	R	Accounts of disrespect by supervisors or stakeholders	"I felt disrespected throughout my career."
Balance	B	Accounts of Maintaining a work/life balance	"I sometimes neglected my kids for work."
Discrimination	D	Accounts of discrimination by supervisors or stakeholders	"I know I didn't get a position because I was Black."
Hiring Practices	HP	Accounts of hiring practices related to participants	"They already knew who they were going to hire."
Experience	E	Accounts of individual experiences	"I have filled a lot of roles."
Advocacy	A	Accounts of experience regarding others championing them	"A principal pushed me to apply."

Calling	C	Accounts of calling or purpose	"If I don't do it, who else will?"
Intentionality	I	Accounts of purposeful action	"I am strategic and purposeful with everything I do."
Mentorship	M	Accounts of mentorship related to the participants	"A leader who became a friend believed in me and still challenges me today."

The first question examined challenges faced by African American administrators. Though the three participants served in three different districts, a couple of themes emerged that were common to all three.

Question 1: What challenges do you face as an African American K-12 Administrator?

The first of these themes to emerge was lack of respect. All three participants identified a need for more respect for the position as a challenge that they had to face as African American administrators. It is worth noting that descriptions of disrespect were not necessarily supervisor-related, as participants discussed offenses they had taken due to actions by co-workers, students, and parents. Mandy, a twenty-five-year veteran educator and current principal at a large, urban middle school, said, "Even though I have held numerous leadership positions, I have found it impossible to garner the respect of everyone in my building. Many of them misunderstand me and label me as mean and aggressive." Tim has been a principal for ten years and has over twenty years in education. He described the challenge of earning respect from the teachers in his building. He stated, "This job is all about managing people. It is a tremendous challenge to learn what resonates with so many different personalities, and not all these personalities will respond to you positively." Laura, a central office administrator who has quickly worked her way up the ranks as an instructional leader, cited disrespect as a significant hurdle preventing would-be leaders from entering the ranks. She stated, "Teachers who would be fabulous administrators are aware of the disrespect and criticism that comes with being a principal. Many want no part of it."

The second theme related to the first research question dealt with finding balance. All three participants discussed finding a balance between their personal and professional lives, which was challenging. Laura described how she struggled significantly in her first assistant principal job. She stated, "I did not want to ask anyone for help. I neglected my family to stay late and try to get everything done. It was not fair to them or me. I have learned to ask for help but still struggle with it." Mandy stated that balance is something she continues to struggle with. She reported, "I do not maintain a good work-life balance. I need to do a better job taking care of myself." Tim also cited difficulties finding balance and partly attributed it to a massive workload. He stated, "I come from a secondary background. Now I am at an intermediate school. To learn all there is to know how to operate this school effectively takes so much time. It is a burden I love, but it is a burden." As educators grapple with a professional and personal balance, it becomes increasingly evident that fostering a culture of understanding and support is essential for individual and organizational success.

Question 2: What were the barriers to becoming a K-12 Administrator?

The second research question asked participants to speak about the barriers they had to overcome to become K12 administrators. Though the three participants had unique paths to their current roles, two major themes emerged as they related to the barriers they had to overcome.

The first theme to emerge was discrimination. Mandy was the bluntest regarding her experiences:

I have been passed over because of my skin color. I know this to be true for a fact. Even before I was able to secure an instructional leadership position, I was discriminated against by my peers. I remember we were working prom, and four were African American. We were tasked with working the coat check-in, and that is all we could do. Laura shared similar experiences regarding being passed over for positions. She stated, "I saw several candidates hired for positions for which I was more qualified. Part of it is because I was not from here, and they were, but it was not right." Tim, while not citing discriminatory practices directly, spoke on how, though his supervisor saw his potential, he was encouraged to apply out of the system because he was unlikely to be promoted where he was.

A second theme that could be tied to discrimination emerged: hiring practices. All three candidates spoke about what they saw as unfair employment procedures. In describing her disadvantage of not being from the community where she worked, Laura stated: "I was qualified, but I was not from here. The principal always knew whom they wanted to promote. And I get it; I would want someone I trusted, but it did not work to my advantage." Mandy and Tim shared similar experiences, explaining that hires were often politically driven and usually were not in the decision-maker's plans. Tim stated, "My principal saw my potential and knew I had a lot to offer, but I was not given a chance in my district to prove myself." Mandy shared that some schools she worked at had one African American administrator on staff and that if that position were to open, she knew she would have an opportunity. "Otherwise, I was not going to be considered for the position because I did not look like the type of person they wanted representing the school," she said.

Question 3: How did the opportunity to become K-12 administrators come about for participants?

The researcher embarked on this study due to concern about the decreasing number of African American K-12 administrators in the United States. Though it is impossible to answer in this study with such a small sample size, it is worth considering if limited opportunities for advancement can be attributed to decreasing numbers. Selecting candidates for advancement after they decide to apply is just one piece of the puzzle. The researcher set out to determine how opportunities for advancement came about in the first place. The participants spoke about this issue more than any other. After several rounds of coding, two themes emerged that helped to paint a holistic picture regarding opportunities for advancement, experience, and advocacy.

The first theme that emerged was experience. All three participants had unique backgrounds and experiences that they believed helped shape them and helped create opportunities for advancement. Mandy described her life experiences as key to preparing her for the role of a K-12 administrator. She stated, "Growing up with nine siblings, I always had to be a leader. We did not have much, but education was so important. The values I learned as a child, I carried with me into adulthood and the profession." While Mandy emphasized her upbringing, Laura spoke about her work experiences as a critical factor in gaining opportunities for advancement. She said, "I was selective in the positions I took early on. I did not apply for every job that came open. After teaching for several years, I was allowed to serve as a reading coach, which opened many doors for me. I developed a skill set other applicants did not have." Tim also partly attributed his opportunities to his work experiences. However, he focused on work

outside of education. He reported, "I have a business background. Bringing what I learned in the business world into education and offering a fresh perspective helps set me apart from other candidates." Tim did not solely attribute opportunities to his work experiences. He also credits his childhood upbringing with helping to create opportunities for him. He stated. "I had a love of teaching and learning instilled in me by my parents without even realizing it. My parents were always there for me, and I later realized education would be a career path that would always allow me to be there for my kids."

The second theme to emerge regarding how opportunities for these participants came about is advocacy. Their stories underscore the power of advocacy in fostering career advancement. They illuminate the profound impact of mentors who recognize and nurture potential, paving the way for individuals to realize their aspirations. All three participants spoke passionately about their opportunities partly because somebody challenged them, believed in them, and advocated for them. Mandy described a setback she had in her professional journey. She described a time in her career when she was at her lowest point professionally, and she stated: "A former classmate had an opening, and he recruited me to come to be his assistant principal. It was refreshing being pursued and wanted, and it helped get me back to where I am now." Tim also cited a colleague who helped open doors for him. He stated, "I was reluctant to change, as I had grown comfortable in my district, but I was not growing. A former colleague had moved to another city and called me about an opportunity. I was reluctant to go, but I am so glad I did. I am so grateful for that colleague and would not be here without him." It is exciting and discouraging that although Tim was so well thought of in his district, he had to leave to pursue advancement, which is not lost on him. Laura also credits an advocate for encouraging her to pursue higher career paths. "I had a young principal. He saw potential in me. He challenged me to go back to school beyond the master's level, and I am still going in part to him. I graduated and earned my current position, partly because someone saw something in me and encouraged me."

Question 4: What has kept participants in their positions or advancing to other leadership positions?

Suppose we are to reverse the trend of the number of minority K-12 administrators in leadership positions. In that case, we must focus on recruiting new educators for these positions and strive to keep quality administrators serving our schools. During the interviews, participants spoke about factors that have kept them in their current positions or advanced them to higher-level administrator positions in K-12 schools. Though many themes initially emerged related to these factors, they could all be consolidated under the theme of calling. For this study, calling refers to a sense of chosen purpose that the participants were meant to fulfill.

Laura spoke of her position, referring to it as a calling and acknowledging her belief that she serves a greater purpose. She stated, "I am a natural leader and always have been. Even as a beginning classroom teacher, I sought out leadership roles. As I gained more leadership positions, I saw my capacity to affect change on a greater level. I must stay. I see leaders leaving their schools, which is very concerning to me." Tim also used the phrase "calling" to speak to his position. He stated, "I am here for a reason, to serve the students. I see them improving, and that drives me. They need me. I know they need me, and I have been put here to serve them." Mandy explained her passion for serving teachers and students. "I am needed more than ever to create an environment where my teachers can teach, and my students can learn. If I were not here for them, who would be? That keeps me going." The participants shared a common belief that

they had a calling highlighting their dedication to serving a greater purpose beyond themselves, whether through leadership or student and teacher support. Their commitment reflects a passionate belief in the impact they can have and the responsibility they feel toward their roles.

Question 5: How can we recruit more leaders from diverse backgrounds?

Each participant spoke about their unique experiences, how they found themselves, and why they stayed in their positions. There are lessons to be learned from all these experiences. Still, the most important takeaway is how we can recruit other educators with diverse backgrounds and experiences for the betterment of our students. While many of the themes addressed could fit into the puzzle of answering this question, two last themes emerged that best help address this issue. They are the themes of intentionality and mentorship.

For this study, intentionality refers to actions with purpose. All three candidates spoke about how existing instructional leaders strategically sought them out. One interview question explicitly asked was how to recruit more leaders from diverse backgrounds. Mandy responded, "It will not happen naturally. It will take leaders who care and want to see it happen." Laura echoed these sentiments and mentioned, "It will take school administrators who are mindful of diversity and understand the importance of it to seek out educators of color for this position." Tim repeated his story of how someone saw something in him and knew it was important for students to have someone they could relate to teaching and leading them. All three participants indicated that the trend would reverse only with the intentional efforts of existing school administrators.

The final theme to emerge from this study was mentorship. All three participants spoke about having someone who invested in them and helped them grow professionally. Laura explained, "I have a friend who helps me see things differently when things get murky. She helps keep me grounded." Mandy described her mentor as "someone I can go to for advice and help me realize if I am overreacting or should be paying more attention to a situation. He helped me push myself beyond my boundaries and saw something I did not see in myself." Tim discussed how his mentor has changed throughout his professional journey, but there is one who has been a constant source of trust for him. It is worth noting that I followed up a question on recruitment, asking if they had a mentor who the same person was. All three participants distinguished between recruiters and mentors. In fact, for two of the three participants, their mentor was not a supervisor or someone in their district but rather trusted, more experienced colleagues with whom they had outside informal mentor/mentee relationships.

Discussion, Limitation, and Researcher's Positionality

This qualitative study gave the researcher a glimpse of the unique experiences of African American school administrators. The emerging codes and the theoretical framework overlapped considerably. The framework's components include pipeline development, recruitment and selection, professional learning, performance and evaluation, compensation and incentives, principal supervision, and working environment (George W. Bush Institute, 2020). While this framework cites essential factors that lead to school administrator success, the researchers would expand these measures to include mentorship and wellness.

As with any research study, some limitations must be addressed. The small sample size involved very detailed interviews with only three participants. The assumption that we can

conclude with a small sample is optimistic, so it is recommended that this study be replicated with a more significant number of participants. These accounts underscore the need for greater transparency, accountability, and diversity in hiring practices within educational institutions. Addressing these challenges requires zero tolerance for biases, fostering inclusive environments, and prioritizing meritocracy to ensure all individuals have an equal chance to contribute and thrive in educational leadership positions.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand and learn from the experiences of African American school administrators with action steps that could be recommended to reverse the trend of decreasing representations within these groups. The study's outcomes present some findings that could be applied to recruiting and retaining school administrators from diverse backgrounds. The research shows that purposeful individual recruitment by respected educational leaders can lead to the desired recruitment outcome. School administrators who can influence hiring decisions should seek out experienced candidates from diverse backgrounds who can demonstrate an understanding of purpose or calling. Mentorship, respect, and workplaces conducive to maintaining a work-life balance can keep administrators in the field.

With over 17 years of experience in various administrative roles within K-12 schools, I understand the challenges associated with these positions. My professional background has afforded me firsthand insight into the critical role of representation within educational environments, emphasizing students' need to see themselves reflected in the adults around them. As the primary researcher, I am acutely aware that my questions, interpretations, mental models, and preconceived notions can influence the research outcomes. Although I am deeply committed to promoting equity and the advancement of all educators, I am equally dedicated to ensuring the integrity of this study by rigorously mitigating my biases and preconceptions.

References

Bernard, H.R., & Ryan, G.W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches.* Sage.

Blackmore, J., Hobbs, L., & Rowlands, J. (2023). Aspiring teachers, financial incentives, and principals' recruitment practices in hard-to-staff schools. *Journal of Education Policy, pp.,* 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2023.2193170

Chavez, N. (2021). The multiracial population grew in almost every county in the US. It doesn't mean racism is over. *CNN News*. https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/15/us/census-2020-multiracial-nation/index.html

Chopin, S., & Wiggall, Richard. (2011). "Evaluation of School Principals: Arizona Superintendents' Perspective." *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal*. https://doi.org/10.58809/ZQRS4988.

Ebneyamini, S., & Moghadam, M. (2018). Toward Developing a Framework for Conducting Case Study Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918817954

Ellis, A., Grillo, L., Jenkins, D., Gipson, C., & Burt, J. (2019). Expressing Care Through the Lens of Black Male School Administrators. *American Educational Research Association. https://doi.org/10.3102/1443995*

Finkel, E. (2023). Where coaching and mentoring meet. NAESP.org. Retrieved October 2, 2023, from https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022112

George W. Bush Institute. (2020). *A framework for principal talent management*. George W. Bush Presidential Center. Retrieved from https://www.bushcenter.org/school-leadership/resources/principal-talent-management.html

Gersten, R., Taylor, M. J., Keys, T. D., Rolfhus, E., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Summary of research on the effectiveness of math professional development approaches* (p. 17).

Hansen, C. (2018). Why rural principals leave. *The Rural Educator, 39*(1). https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v39i1.214

Jang, S., & Alexander, N. (2022). Black women principals in American secondary schools: Quantitative evidence of the link between their leadership and student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 58*(3), 450–486. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X211068415

Limon, I., & Aydin, B. (2020). School principals' opinions on autonomy in school administration. *Sakarya University Journal of Education, 10*(3), 459–484. https://doi.org/10.19126/suje.648585

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative Research A Guide to Design and Implementation (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA Jossey Bass.

Redding, C. (2022). Is teacher–student and student–principal racial/ethnic matching related to elementary school grade retention? *AERA Open, 8*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211067534

Ross, G. (2023). The African American male student and problems with suspensions and expulsions within public schools. *Open Access Library Journal, 10*(9751). https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1109751

Stevens, D., & Motamedi, J. (2019, February). Increasing diversity in the teacher workforce: The importance and potential impact of authentic change | REL Northwest. Retrieved May 3, 2023, from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/blog/increasing-diversity.asp

Taie, S., & Lewis, L. (2022). Characteristics of 2020–21 public and private K–12 school principals in the United States: Results from the National Teacher and Principal Survey First Look (NCES 2022-112). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC. Retrieved September 1, 2023, from https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022112

Vaughn, V. (2008). A struggle to bridge the gap: Promoting African American males in teacher education. *University of Texas at Tyler: School Leadership Review, 3*(3), Article 7. https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol3/iss3/7/?utm_source=scholarworks.sfasu.edu%2Fslr%2Fvol3%2Fiss3%2F7&ut

Weiner, J., Garrett, W., Strickland, T., & Burton, L. (2022). Reifying discrimination on the path to school leadership: Black female principals' experiences of district hiring/promotion practices. *Frontiers in Education*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2022.837219/full

Wilkerson, R. (2019). Lifting while we climb: Improving support mechanisms for African American principals in high priority schools. *American Educational Research Association - School Turnaround, School Transformation, and Models in School Reform: The Overload*. https://doi.org/10.3102/1444929