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The Decision to Pursue the Principalship: Perspectives of Certified Administrators in Upstate Central New York

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Abstract

This qualitative research study sought to uncover the attractants and deterrents of educational administrative positions in Upstate Central New York (CNY) public schools by exploring the perspectives of both practicing principals and those that are certified but not currently employed in an administrative position. The study posed three research questions. First, how do educators who are certified as administrators in Upstate Central New York describe experiences that have influenced them to pursue or not pursue the principalship? Second, what do certified administrators perceive as the attractants and deterrents to the principalship in Upstate Central New York and which of these are factors in their decision to apply for and accept principalships? Finally, how have the attractants and deterrents to the principalship changed in the recent years covered by this study? Participants in the study included certified educational administrators that are both practicing principals as well as those that have not yet assumed an administrative position. Purposeful and snowball sampling techniques were utilized to include participants from rural, urban, and suburban settings in CNY. Two separate cohorts, interviewed five years apart, provided insight into the changing landscape of the principalship. Findings addressing the research questions are based on five themes that emerged during the study: Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors. The longitudinal nature of this study revealed the emergence of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) requirements as a recent major factor impacting the decision of certified administrators to seek, accept, and remain in the principalship in New York State. The conclusions of this study have potential significance to assist decision makers of CNY public schools to better understand and attract high quality candidates from the available candidate pool. Recommendations and implications are enumerated and proposed for educational

constituent groups in New York State including Superintendents and Boards of Education, the New York State Education Department and State Government, Public and Private Universities with preparation programs in Educational Leadership, Professional Associations (SAANYS, NYSSBA, NYSCSS), and the Central New York School Study Council. School districts need to provide a rich professional fulfilling work environment to both attract and retain principals. As the principal is the key to promoting academic excellence, a supportive work environment that accentuates the attractants and minimizes the deterrents will facilitate the provision of a high quality, equitable education to all children throughout the diverse communities of CNY.

The Decision to Pursue the Principalship: Perspectives of Certified Administrators in Upstate

Central New York

by

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DISSERTATION

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Acknowledgments

This research study is dedicated to those who have served, are serving, or aspire to serve in the position of Principal in New York State. Your commitment to highly effective school leadership is essential to delivering a quality education to the children of New York.

Completion of this body of research would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my family, the Syracuse University School of Education faculty and administration, and my professional colleagues in Central New York and throughout the State of New York.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Problem

I have been a professional educator since 1979. During that time I have had the opportunity and distinct pleasure to serve the educational community as a teacher, an assistant superintendent, a director of pupil personnel services, an elementary school principal, and a director of curriculum and instruction. Throughout my career I have served in rural and suburban school districts. As an active member of professional organizations, I have had the opportunity to work both directly and indirectly with educators in urban and major metropolitan areas of New York State. Through these experiences, I have come to appreciate the diversity of the job requirements as well as the individuals who serve as school administrators, in particular in the office of the principal.

The literature reveals the perceived existence of a shortage of school principals as far back as 1988. I first became aware of the perceived shortage while actively engaged as a member of School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS). With this organization I have served as a member of the Government Relations Committee (GRC), the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee of the Board, and as President of the organization. The GRC meets quarterly each year with both the Commissioner of Education as well as key members of the New York Legislature and the office of the Governor. As the perceived shortage of administrators continues as a widespread topic of discussion within the educational community, SAANYS leads the initiative to discuss the issue of principal shortages with New York State. The organization argues aggressively that the shortage is a reality and not a perception. This discussion directly engages educational and legislative leaders to encourage the

enactment of policy and legislation to attract potential school leaders to the profession and retain current leaders in their positions.

In 2000, then New York State Commissioner of Education, Richard Mills, convened a Blue Ribbon Panel on School Leadership designed to make recommendations to enhance school leadership. This panel was composed of educators, state government officials, and members of the private sector including the business community. The Panel's recommendations called for addressing many of the challenges faced by principals that I will outline in the review of literature. Among the findings of this panel was a call for the improvement of working conditions for school leaders that would ultimately lead to more interest in the pursuit of school leadership positions by highly qualified candidates (NYSED, 2000).

In 2000, SAANYS engaged in a quantitative study of the principalship in New York entitled "Profiles of the Principalship." This was followed by a similar study in 2005, designed to provide longitudinal data. SAANYS has utilized both of these studies to support legislative initiatives to enhance benefits and working conditions for school administrators. The organization reports that periodic additional studies will follow to continue to provide longitudinal data on the subject.

While many legislators claim they recognize the existence of a shortage, little action on proposed bills has occurred due to the competing views of other special interest groups such as the New York State School Boards Association and taxpayer watchdog organizations. Further, when pressed in quarterly meetings with the GRC as to progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel for School Leadership (NYSED, 2000), the response of then Commissioner of Education Richard Mills, was that he no longer believed that a shortage of administrators existed. He claimed that the number of certificated administrators in the state

database outnumbered the vacancies that existed throughout the state. Since the departure of Commissioner Mills in 2009, Commissioners Steiner and King have shown little interest in engaging in substantive dialogue on this issue.

These two contradictory ideas being argued simultaneously are very interesting to me. On one hand, the shortage of administrators is being used by professional organizations to support their legislative initiatives, while on the other, the mere existence of a shortage is being refuted. It appears important to take note of the potential political agendas of various groups touting particular studies when assessing the importance of particular pieces of literature. One needs to look at the body or bodies of literature in their entirety while developing a perspective on its meaning. This perspective, I believe, can best be accomplished by gaining an understanding of the perspectives of certified administrators in the field.

As I began to review literature, I came across two major studies, one by Mitgang (2003) and one by Roza (2003) that indicated that there was indeed no shortage in numbers of principals but rather difficulty in recruiting principals to where the shortages exist. These studies are consistent with the position the Commissioner of Education had taken with the SAANYS GRC subsequent to the release of the Blue Ribbon Panel report (NYSED, 2000). Kolek (2002) further asserted that the shortage may be more related to certified applicants' lack of willingness to apply rather than that there are not enough certified applicants.

As I reviewed the literature further, I became increasingly curious about the factors that truly attract motivated educators to aspire to the principalship, what factors are roadblocks, and how these impediments can be overcome. This curiosity has led me to pursue this study. By seeking and fully understanding the perspectives of educators holding New York State

administrative certification, the state's educational community may find ways to attract and retain the numbers of high quality principals who are needed to lead effective schools.

Problem Statement

My background and experience as an educator of 33 years, combined with my review of the literature pertaining to the principalship, has yielded the following questions upon which I conducted my qualitative research study:

1. How do educators who are certified as administrators in Upstate Central New York describe experiences that have influenced them to pursue or not pursue the principalship?
2. What do certified administrators perceive as the attractants and deterrents to the principalship in Upstate Central New York and which of these are factors in their decision to apply for and accept principalships?
3. How have the attractants and deterrents to the principalship changed in the recent years covered by this study?

Understanding the perspectives of both certified administrators who have attained the principalship as well as those who have decided to not pursue the principalship may help us better understand the current state of the principalship. Further, it may assist the educational community in the development of strategies for ensuring the best, brightest, and most highly effective candidates are pursuing and attaining leadership positions in our schools.

To that end, this qualitative study utilized the perspectives of real life educators certified in New York as school administrators. It captured their perspective on their decisions to become or refrain from becoming educational leaders in New York. It is their perspectives and stories that lead this researcher to make recommendations to educational constituencies across New

York on how to enhance the recruitment and retention of high quality school principals and leaders.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

I initiated my literature review by looking at four general areas in which I was interested. These were principal preparation standards, current induction programs, challenges and working conditions, and issues surrounding supply and demand. This search yielded a base of literature that I chose to narrow in order to be manageable for a single study. Therefore, I will examine the three domains framed in studies on the principal shortage. They are as follows:

1. Research and related debate surrounding the shortage of principals.
2. Challenges faced by principals and realities of the position.
3. Proposed solutions to the shortage of quality candidates for positions.

The claim that a shortage of principals exists has generated literature that both supports and disputes this phenomenon. I have reviewed pertinent literature on both sides of this debate. I have drawn on the literature that suggests means of addressing the perceived shortage; this literature points to the conditions of administrative work that purportedly influence recruitment and retention of principals. My initial literature review has been updated through 2015 to reflect recent research and articles pertinent to my study. An emerging theme in the recent literature review is the increased accountability associated with the principalship. The context in which accountability had previously been referenced was that of teacher and administrator accountability for building-wide test scores. Recently, with the initiation of the federal “Race to the Top” (USDOE, 2009) program, the scope of accountability has broadened. Teachers and administrators are being held accountable for the quality of the related instruction and individual student achievement. Administrators are increasingly held responsible for the performance of both teachers and students in their charge. This accountability comes with consequences beyond

those found with No Child Left Behind. These consequences potentially impact the very job security of the teachers and principals in our public schools.

Support for an Existing Shortage

The first body of literature supported the idea that a significant shortage of school administrators is impacting the educational community nationally as well as in New York State. This position appears to be highly touted by many, particularly those in the media and in organizations representing the interests of school administrators.

My search of the Syracuse University Library databases of ERIC, Dissertations, and Educational Abstracts yielded well over 1100 hits using the descriptors "administrator shortage" and "principal supply and demand." To narrow the search somewhat I added the descriptors "studies" and "empirical" to the search fields. Clearly much data have been generated on the topic both in the realm of studies and dissertations, as well as in other professional literature. As the literature is reviewed here, two clear patterns emerge. First are those articles and studies that serve to document the existence of the shortage. Many of those studies were completed in the 1990s.

As early as 1988, a survey conducted jointly by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP and NASSP) concluded "a case for concern" regarding the shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship. This case related to the responsibilities, stress, and time requirements failing to match the rewards (ERS, 1988 p. 25). A study by the Educational Research Service (ERS, 1998) confirmed the administrative shortage.

Also in a 1988, a study by Anderson (1988) indicated that during the next several years half of the principals in the United States would retire. He cited four reasons for the shortage.

These include insufficient attention to preparation, limited pool of capable applicants, non-specific vacancy announcements and selection criteria, and inadequate screening and selection techniques.

It is interesting that various news articles that I have encountered continue to claim that half the principals will retire within five years. These sources did not indicate whether or not these shortages have, historically, been the norm.

The New England School Development Council (1988) conducted a regional research study on shortages of administrators in New England. This early study on the issues surveyed school districts in New England and found 97% of respondents indicating some problem in filling superintendent and/or principal positions. The causative issues were reported to relate to fiscal issues, role expectations, and school board support received in the job. Anderson (1991) who found that the number of highly capable applicants may be dwindling confirmed this.

A study by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in 1998 found that a forty-two percent turnover during the previous ten years was likely to continue into the next decade (Doud and Keller, 1998). This shortage makes the retention of current principals critical.

Wendel (1999) conducted an extensive survey study of Nebraska administrators. It provided numbers to support that districts were experiencing difficulty attracting high quality candidates. It also sought to determine why administrators declined positions. Emerging from this survey research were issues of salary and family. Many potential candidates refused positions because they would not be able live outside the district and that there was no offer of employment for their spouse, making it economically unfeasible to move their family any distance. This issue was rarely identified in any of the other literature reviewed although it seems

quite logical. The issues of residency requirements and helping to secure spousal employment are issues that demand further study as they pertain to attracting qualified applicants to the principalship.

Fenwick and Pierce (2001a) acknowledged in an opinion article written for a professional publication for principals that they found no comprehensive study of the principal shortage as they reviewed the literature. They believed there is consensus in the educational community, however, that points to the perception of the principal as an overworked, underpaid bureaucrat entangled in a web of administrivia, unionized teachers, uninvolved parents and uninterested students. They asserted the top three responsibilities of principals include instruction, curriculum development, and student discipline and management. Fenwick and Pierce (2001b) strongly argued against going outside the realm of education to find principal candidates. These authors believed principals were more than individuals charged with keeping the buses running on time. They were, rather, charged with serving children by coaching and inspiring those who teach them. Fenwick and Pierce noted there was no reason to look beyond the classroom for candidates to fill principalships, as current classroom teachers were the potential candidates best suited for the job. The authors supported the use of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) to drive preparation and licensure programs. Further they argued that tapping already certified classroom teachers and seeking university partnerships in recruiting candidates would result in finding the necessary quality candidate to fill ever-increasing vacancies in the principalship. These standards have been recently updated and refined (CCSSO, 2008). The updated standards are more streamlined and to the point. They have been adopted by a majority of states, including New York, as the

foundation for principal preparation and evaluation pursuant to federal Race to the Top requirements (USDOE, 2009).

In an attempt to understand the lack of interest in the position of principal, McCreight (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of the research literature on the principal shortage. From this analysis emerged six main reasons for the lack of interest in the position of principal. They were

1. The principalship does not pay enough.
2. The job requires too much time.
3. Principals are held accountable for test scores that link the principal's job to student achievement.
4. The principal has little control over the hiring and firing process yet is accountable for teacher performance.
5. The position comes with accountability for solving social problems that are out of the control of the principal.
6. Principals, feeling alone and unappreciated, receive little or no support from the central office.

The International Center for Educational Statistics (2010) indicated that only 80 percent of principals remained in the same school each year. Six percent moved to a different school, and 12 to 15 percent of principals left the principalship altogether. As will be revealed in the literature, the longevity of the principal in the position enhances student learning.

Shortages are not limited to the United States. Mansell (1999) reported on shortages of headmasters in Great Britain. This study revealed that twenty-five percent of all headmaster posts that were vacant needed to be re-advertised during the 1998-1999 school year. Eighteen percent of the vacancies remained unfilled even after a second advertisement. This compiler

study warned that the situation could worsen for certain schools following the introduction of mandatory qualifications for principals or headmasters.

In further research in Great Britain, Fisher (1995) found that evidence is accumulating that more principals are quitting early and that their posts are more difficult to fill as fewer candidates choose to interview. The National Association of Headteachers reported that 80% of principals are opting for early retirement. The Teachers' Pensions Agency reported a three-fold increase in principals retiring early. The Local Government Management Board has further noted a decline in applications for principal positions.

Much of this literature supports the existence of a shortage of school principals. Later in the review, specific issues that appear in the literature that are purported to be causative of the shortage will be revealed. What is not articulated is whether or not these issues have always existed and are inherent in the job itself.

Stone-Johnson (2014) utilized generational theory to hypothesize the shortage of school principals. She asserts that there is a difference between generations as to why teachers, even when certified, choose not to pursue administration. She compared and contrasted Baby-Boomers and Generation X members who are now mid-career educators. According to Stone-Johnson, applicants themselves are changing. Baby-boomers value long hours and deference to authority whereas Generation X members favor balance, freedom, flexibility, and independence. Changing the role of the principal to accommodate the needs of a baby-boomer may not accommodate the needs of a Generation X member. The lack of attraction to the principalship, says Stone-Johnson, cannot be viewed in comparison to prior generations' attraction without acknowledging important differences in the way each group views work and career. She predicts that there will be a different set of attractants and deterrents for the next generation known as the

Millennials, once they become of age to consider the principalship. She summarized that “a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of job attraction must focus simultaneously on several shifting parts: changing job, changing applicant, and changing educational context.

Li (2012) found that increased accountability requirements promulgated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have impacted the mobility of principals. She asserts that the decreased mobility diminishes the quality of principals particularly for schools serving disadvantaged populations. Her study found that principals working in schools that were subject to NCLB sanctions were induced to move to schools less likely to face those sanctions. NCLB represented a significant and uncompensated risk for principals working in disadvantaged schools. Li advocates for increased compensation to incentivize high quality principals to consider taking positions in high needs districts. Her study indicates that salaries were found to not be adjusted for principals working in disadvantaged schools.

Contradiction of an Existing Shortage

Other literature argues that, despite the claims of shortage, a true shortage does not really exist. This second body of literature refutes the shortage indicating that there are plenty of certified administrators available compared to the number of vacancies. To understand this aspect of the argument, I explored several studies and professional journal articles that are seemingly contradictory to what I have previously described. These studies acknowledge that the problem being experienced is one of how to get the certified administrators to apply for administrative positions. The authors of these studies explore factors related to this phenomenon.

Next considered are research studies pertaining to the contradiction of a shortage. Pawlas (1989) predicted that while the supply of certified administrators was projected to decline, there

would be an adequate supply available. This seems to have been supported by the study findings of Roza in 2003.

Contradiction of the shortage is found empirically in the 2003 RAND study of school administrators and their careers. Gates, Ringle, Santibanez, Ross, and Chung (2003) authored this study of administrators' movement in and out of the profession. The study found that the number of administrators is stable though aging. Administrators are not being lured into other fields and are not avoiding high need buildings or school districts. Overall, individuals, according to the study, have incentives to move into and through the administrative career path. It recommended that school systems look for ways to respond to aging trends in the principalship, conduct further analysis of the careers of administrators locally, and examine the forms of entry into the school administration field.

Although some districts and areas have experienced difficulty finding good principals, there are far more candidates certified to be principals than there are vacancies to fill. This is the significant conclusion of an extensive quantitative study by Roza (2003). Roza attempted to quantify claims that there is an extensive shortage. The study was based on in-depth surveys and interviews with superintendents, human resource directors, district staffs, school organizations and state officials. It included ten regions across the country, surveying personnel in 83 districts thought to be struggling to fill vacancies. Despite widespread publicity about a universal shortage of principals, shortages were not the norm. It found, rather, that numbers of applicants have not significantly declined. Where there were reductions in the number of candidates for a position, several factors were present and attributed to the suppression of the applicant pool. These factors included schools with the most challenging working conditions, higher concentrations of poor and minority students, and lower salaries for principals. According to

Roza, presence of these factors affected the application of principals from district to district and also between schools within a district.

Perceptions of a shortage are driven by demands for a new and different kind of school principal. The perception of a shortage may be a matter of definition. While there are plenty of certified candidates there is a dearth of candidates with high-level administrative skills. Superintendents report that these skills are the ability to motivate staff and hold them accountable for results and the ability to execute a school improvement strategy. The findings in the Roza study suggest the need to get the incentives right to make non-attractive districts more attractive to applicants. Roza asserted that districts need to define quality as it pertains to principal candidates and articulate that definition between superintendents and human resource managers. This, according to Roza, included the serious consideration of non-traditional candidates with strong leadership skills. Further, the position of principal required redefinition when districts were unable to attract highly talented principals. School districts should consider alternative leadership arrangements by combining the leadership skills of one with the curriculum and instructional expertise of another. According to Roza, resource departments seem to be on the opposite wave length from superintendents. Human resource departments were concerned with more traditional measures of quality within the candidate pool such as length of teaching experience and traditional preparation. The study reported that human resource departments were very reluctant to consider non-traditional candidates and cited the traditional preparation of human resource managers as a factor in this decision.

Mitgang (2003) synthesized three studies to give some further perspective on the principal shortage. Mitgang first acknowledged that study after study and article after article had been published on the existence of a principal shortage. The Wallace Foundation commissioned

three independent studies. These included an analysis of the RAND Corporation study on the principalship, an analysis of the work of the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington, and a study by a research team at the University of Albany of the attributes and career paths of New York State principals. The University of Washington study included a survey of 83 school districts supplemented by Common Core data from the National Center on Education Statistics. Mitgang's research team sought to answer four research questions:

1. Is there, in fact, a nationwide shortage of candidates?
2. Are certain types of districts finding it more difficult than others to attract certified candidates?
3. What are the personal and professional characteristics and career paths of people entering the principalship?
4. How are state policies, local conditions, hiring practices and job incentives affecting the ability of districts to attract a broader and potentially more able pool of candidates for the principalship? How might those policies and practices be improved?

These research questions produced three major findings. They are as follows:

1. Finding one showed that there was no statistical evidence of a nationwide shortage of certified candidates for the principalship. There were actually many more people certified than there are openings for principals. This theme echoed across all three research studies synthesized.
2. Finding two indicated that districts and individual schools perceived as having the most challenging working conditions, large populations of impoverished or minority

students, lower per pupil expenditures, and lower salaries found it hardest to attract principal candidates.

3. Finding three showed hiring practices and common search criteria were compounding the problems of districts in attracting enough principal candidates capable of leading schools to meet heightened expectations for academic performance. Examples of these practices included the hiring of late career candidates whose longevity is limited. This was attributed to human resource departments interpreting the demand for improved quality as having more time or experience in education. The criteria were set up to exclude all but those with teaching experience. This excluded non-traditional aspirants. This concept mirrored the findings of Roza (2003) pertaining to the differences in interpretation of quality candidates between human resource managers and superintendents.

Using these findings, Mitgang identified and developed the related policy implications for education. First, strategies focused solely on adding more certified people to the pipeline, such as opening or expanding training programs or enhancing internal recruitment and mentoring programs wouldn't, in isolation, solve the school leadership challenge. Second, policies aimed at assuring adequate supplies of principal candidates should focus more on creating better conditions for leaders and providing the right incentives. If nothing else is clear, Mitgang asserted that the "shortage" is a problem of conditions. Finally, common district hiring practices and states' policies needed to be reviewed so that they were more flexible and more closely aligned with the increased expectations for school leadership. Times and expectations have changed for school leaders, and districts are searching for candidates with characteristics far beyond minimal certification requirements. Mitgang concluded that, taken together, the three

reports pointed to the need for superintendents and school boards to pay more attention to the hiring practices to ensure that they are in tune with the changing demands of school leadership. At the state level, licensure requirements and other policies that place unreasonable burdens on non-traditional candidates should be reviewed. He believed that it was time to move beyond the pipeline issues, away from policies solely aimed at increasing numbers of certified principals, and focus more attention and resources on reforming policies and practices to adjust incentives and working conditions in order to attract leadership candidates. Local recruitment and hiring practices should be brought in line with heightened expectations for the job. The job itself needed redefinition to allow principals to concentrate on student learning. Defining the shortage problem merely in terms of certified applicants was only part of the story. Clarifying what districts really wanted in school leadership applicants is the other part, according to Mitgang.

Kolek's (2002) dissertation found that much of the leadership crisis was not due to a shortage of qualified applicants for the principalship. Rather, it was due to candidates' lack of willingness to apply for the increasing number of vacancies. This qualitative study further found that primary deterrents keeping candidates from applying were related to job design and work context. Kolek focused on job design. Kolek found that among the deterrents to certified applicants applying for the principalship were quality of life issues, high community expectations, inadequate financial incentives, long working hours, and lack of support in the job. These issues have surfaced in other studies reviewed in the literature. Kolek's participants also reported the interview process as being discouraging and demeaning. Further, they reported that the logistics of preparation programs, including meeting the requirements as well as physically getting to the site of programs when they are offered, were significant deterrents. Solutions being considered by states, in this case, Connecticut, focus on increasing the availability of qualified

candidates. Few interventions are directed at the job as it is currently designed and practiced. The main recommendations of this study were three fold. They were that the following actions need to occur in education:

1. Redesign of the principalship by sharing responsibilities and the use of teacher leaders and interns to support the principal.
2. Improve the selection and interview process through streamlining, defining "quality" candidate upfront, and being respectful and responsive to candidates.
3. Training and certification programs needed to include on the job realities, an extended internship, and differentiated certification options.

A population of participants who were certified, non-practicing administrators from Connecticut in 2002 informed the Kolek study. By not addressing differences between districts such variants in demographics or socio economics, the issues identified in this study were generalized equally statewide.

Many deterrents to the principalship were identified. Kolek asserted that further study is needed to identify what those who are currently serving in the principalship can describe as attractants to the job, as well as the attributes a school administrator needs to be successful. Kolek posed two pertinent questions in her recommendations for further study. They were

1. What characteristics, attributes, growth needs, and professional profile qualifications describe those currently in principalships who report that they are fulfilled and successful?
2. What experiences and conditions have most contributed to the confidence and competence of those who have successfully made the transition from classroom or department instructional leaders to principal?

I believe my study, in part, helps to inform the voids identified in Kolek's research.

Barksdale (2003), in a dissertation study, sought to identify factors that contribute to qualified candidates' decisions to apply for and to accept a position as principal. Perceptions of 116 qualified principal candidates were examined to determine the qualified candidates' perceived probability of seeking, being offered, and accepting a position as principal. Descriptive statistics and survey research methodology was utilized. The results indicated that job requirements and working conditions were the only variables that impacted job desirability. Barksdale determined that decisions made by qualified candidates were essential to solving the shortage of principal applicants. The perceptions of the role and responsibilities of the principalship were major determinants of job desirability. Barksdale suggested that further research be conducted to assist policy makers in making the job more attractive to candidates.

Several opinions in professional publications also support this position. Archer (2003) contradicts, in part, the notion of a principal shortage. He suggested that there was no national shortage of principals in the United States, but rather that the country was facing a challenge in getting the right leaders to the right schools. He identified that vacancies occur at schools serving the neediest populations. According to Archer, these schools attract fewer applications and report that applicants that do apply appear to be lacking in many key skills deemed critical by district leaders.

In an article analyzing the United States administrator shortage, Pounder (2003) raised the possibility that existence of the administrator shortage was widely accepted in spite of questionable evidence. Pounder believed the perceptions or misperceptions of a shortage may be politically motivated. According to Pounder, political forces may encourage or perpetuate beliefs

about the problem for administrators' own benefit such as higher salaries and benefits. Pounder offered no evidence to support this theory, which is contrary to a preponderance of the literature.

Baker (2004) summarized the current state of the principal shortage referencing major pertinent research. Studies in the late 1990s were abundant and documented that many principals were about to retire, and there would be no one available to fill the vacancies. This did not exactly occur, as there have been applicants for the positions. However, recently the focus has been the lack of high quality applicants. Baker cites the RAND (2003) study, referenced in this review, that acknowledged that there is no current crunch for principals but that barriers exist for qualified applicants. These barriers include certification and hiring practices, such as not giving due consideration to internal applicants, that affect teachers' willingness to become school administrators. He further referenced and promoted the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) standards and called for all principals to be evaluated on performance-based assessment.

The literature in this section argued that the shortage, in terms of numbers of applicants, does not exist. Rather the literature puts forth the argument that school leadership in today's environment demands a different type of candidate: a candidate who is highly skilled in motivating teachers and supporting meaningful reform that will increase student learning. It also indicated that incentives are needed to get this type of candidate to apply for positions in high need schools. It is critical that the story behind those who choose to be certified but not pursue the principalship is understood, to better create the conditions that will ultimately attract them to leadership positions in schools.

Challenges Faced by Principals

The literature spoke to the frequently referenced challenges facing school administrators. It is important to understand what is being reported to determine to what extent these issues will emerge as the professional lives of principals and potential principals unfold in my research.

In order to allow new and veteran principals to develop strategies to effectively and successfully confront these challenges, it is important to understand the nature, historical presence and metamorphosis, and current state of the principalship. To do this one must look to representative and reliable descriptions of the scope of the challenges described in the professional literature. Additionally, there are empirical and descriptive studies on the subject as well as a number of recent dissertations completed by doctoral students both in the United States and abroad.

Several key issues that have emerged in the literature as challenges to those serving in or aspiring to the principalship are examined in the following section.

Changing Roles.

Studies and professional literature regarding the changing role of principalships were located as early as 1955 (James, 1955) and continued into the 1970s with research conducted exploring principal perceptions (Satterfield, 1973). It can be argued that the role continues to change. Currently local, state, and national initiatives, regulations, and political conditions that are beyond the direct control of the principal are impacting the role.

In her dissertation that looked at the role of the principal in history, Noe (1998) traced the changing role of the principal back to 460 B.C. with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Change is not new. The role has been and continues to be in a constant state of evolution. Noe found that major external and internal influences, such as political, social, economic, technological, and

environmental, have affected the role. Noe discovered that effective principals were characteristically intelligent, energetic, stable, predictable, people-oriented, assertive, strong, forceful, and dynamic. She recommended that the present day principal must be prepared to handle the consistent and changing problems and issues confronted on a daily basis.

The history of changing role of the principal in the United States is told by Rousmaniere (2013). She categorized historical periods as follows: Before the 19th Century; 1890-1940; 1945-1980; and after 1980 for leaders in high stakes schools. These time periods in the history of the principalship are discussed as follows.

Prior to the 19th Century, schools were unregulated. Teachers were chosen for their moral character rather than their pedagogical skills. Private academies began to emerge in some communities. In these academies the leader's main purpose was to promote the academy in order to recruit tuition paying students and bring pride to the community which sponsored the academy. At the same time common schools began to emerge. There was an absence of an organizational system as schools were controlled by community members and teachers hired and fired at will based on their standing in the community. Graded schools took hold and were based on a specialization of labor factory model which drove the industrial revolution. In order to oversee the teachers at each grade level, head teachers and teaching principals became popular. While still responsible for teaching these leaders oversaw the grade level teachers. Many teachers were female as they were a cheap source of labor at the time. Communities tended to hire head teachers as they believed the female teachers in their charge would be more submissive and follow directions more readily from a male. During this time central administrative office control began. In order to professionalize the principal, a physical office was established in 1872 in Memphis. The principal became stabilizing for the school building and an administrative agent

to the central office. The role of the new professional principal at the time was to maintain discipline and oversee student registration. Conflict with the central office began to appear over issues of transfer and appointment of teachers, testing, and student promotion. There was no conception of the role as a community or intellectual leader.

During the period of 1890 to 1940 the principalship was strengthened. It was viewed as the key to educational reform because the principal was the agent that implemented central office policies. Educational reformers such as Ellwood P. Cubberley and Walter Hines Page advocated that the first step to reform the professionalization of the principalship was to physically separate the school leader into a separate administrative office. This became a central strategy for enhancing the role, according to Rousmaniere. It was during this period in history that supervisory leadership was initiated. The establishment of a clear supervisory line of authority over teachers began to hold those teachers accountable to new standards including punctuality and obedience. Principals began to rule with an iron fist with explicit authority over teachers. Debate whether supervision was for an evaluative process or a mechanism for instructional improvement ensued in the educational community. Much of the instructional supervision during this time period was conducted by supervisors from the central office. This was due to principals being overburdened with regular duties that prevented them from evaluating teachers regularly. Additionally, principals had little training in how to supervise instruction. These “outside” supervisors undermined the authority of the principal. The principal was not an inspiring observer but rather a rule bound distant bureaucrat. A further step toward professionalism of the principalship came with the initiation of credentialing. Principals became trained in accredited institutions and received state issued credentials. The credentialing of principals gave them academic standing as well as political legitimacy. Two philosophical schools of progressive

reform thought emerged. Administrative progressives such as Cubberley advocated fiscal economy and organizational accountability within schools. Reformers like John Dewey, a pedagogical progressive, promoted a child-centered, humanistic approach to education. Under Dewey's philosophy, principals were promoted as administrative statesman and not autocrats. They were expected to lead the community toward social transformation. It was principal that that expanded their own work outside the confines of the office thus actually challenging the bureaucracy that initially created the office of the principal. These principals developed democratic educational practices connecting with communities, leading political movements that strengthened and maintained links between teachers, principals, and communities.

After World War II the principalship reverted to a more autocratic model. Rousmaniere characterizes the period between 1945 and 1980 as that when baby boomers led to an explosion in school enrollments. With the launch of Sputnik and later the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, federal intervention into education increased exponentially. Teachers unions demanded an ever increasing role in policy development. With the growth of suburbs, parents demanded involvement in the functions of the school. This included the formation of budgets, racial integration of schools, curriculum development, and social programming. The cold war competition between the United States and the USSR had the public questioning the competency of schools and complaining about administrative dysfunction. Principals became almost entirely oriented toward understanding and applying new federal guidelines pertaining to improving math and science as well as implementing civil rights legislation.

After 1980 came the release of the report, *A Nation at Risk*. The nation was concerned with the "rising tide of mediocrity". A series of educational reforms ensued. Tests drove the curriculum which emphasized reading and math and downplayed science and social studies.

Effective schools researched in the 1970's was put into practice in the 1980's. The idea, first put forth by Ralph Tyler in 1953, that effective schools are led by principals who were effective in leading instruction began to take hold. Accountability translated into a link between expenditures and student performance. There was an increased accessibility of student test scores by the public which increased pressure on school leaders. The enactment of No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001 promoted shared decision-making in schools which negatively impacted the authority of the principal. Scrutiny of principal preparation programs, accused of being too theoretical or too technical also developed. In response, some districts attempted to control the quality of principals by developing their own grow your own programs. This era of rapid reform saw an exodus of experienced principals.

The context of the history of the changing role of the principal, as outlined by Rousmaniere, is the key to understanding the continued metamorphosis of the principalship uncovered by this study.

Many school effectiveness studies in recent years continued to affirm the role of principal leadership in school success (Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Lipham, 1981; Sergiovanni, 1995; and Taylor & Valentine, 1985). Principals remain key instructional leaders and innovators of change (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). However, their ability to act in this capacity in the current educational environment may be compromised by many external factors.

The importance of the role of the principal is embedded into statute, code, and policy. Traditional expectations and descriptions of the job appear in state regulations and Board of Education policies. For a new role to meet with success, significant modifications in policy and code must be instituted (Portin & Shen, 1998). The current role is fraught with constant

interruptions, lack of planning time, fragmentation of activities, and compliance with numerous rules and regulations. The role is changing as more is expected of principals (Richardson, Shod, Prickett & Flannigan, 1999).

Five evolutionary stages of the principalship included one teacher (one room school), head teacher, teaching principal, school principal, and supervising principal (Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand & Usdan, 1990). Malone and Caddell (2000) suggested that the principalship has now entered a sixth stage, that of principal as an agent of change. They asserted that effective school leadership by the principal as change agent is incorporated in the six standards formulated by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

Richardson (1991) synthesized the research on the changing roles of the principals. He cited the historical conflict between the instructional leadership and administrative roles of the principal. He indicated the literature supported the idea that educational reforms that have met with success in enabling schools to restructure have ultimately had an impact on the role of the principal. Principals are seen as now having to act as facilitators for shared governance, participant empowerment, and school-based decision making and expanded student potential. Principals must now fully understand and be prepared to address interrelationships in school operation in order to be successful. This is a tall task for new administrators.

Williams and Portin (1997) conducted a study regarding role change, specific to Washington State. A large survey sample was analyzed quantitatively. Data indicated that principals believed their responsibilities have changed during the last five years. Decentralization of decision making to local school sites was occurring, and many were experiencing the need to utilize site-based councils. Many school districts reported the existence

of school business partnerships. These participatory management changes were in addition to responsibilities that were state imposed, regarding educational reform, truancy reporting, and special education. Principals reported working at sites with increased student diversity, increased frequency of interactions with parents, and the pressure to consider “client satisfaction” when making decisions. These changes resulted in the documentation of several trends:

1. Additional responsibilities did not always come with the corresponding authority.
2. A shift from leadership to management due to the trend toward more shared decision-making.
3. Ambiguous and complex new responsibilities.
4. A decline in morale and enthusiasm.

The researchers also found an assumption by the public that principals would be able to absorb additional duties thrust upon them by reformers and would do so in an increasingly complex environment.

Wanzare and DaCosta (2001) attempted to define and summarize the challenges to the principals’ leadership role that currently existed. They reviewed various items in the literature and concluded that there were definite challenges to the principal’s role as educational leader. The major problems cited were the nature of the work and conflicting demands on the principal’s time, lack of adequate incentives to the role of instructional leader, personal factors, and confusion in defining the role of instructional leader. The authors believed that successful instructional leadership would see principals not engaging in turf battles over leadership with teachers, working with teachers, students, and parents to improve instructional quality, creating a strong culture that enabled collaboration, sharing of responsibility, and the constantly redefining the role of instructional leader. The principal must be knowledgeable about teaching, be

successful in working with and through people, committed to academic goals, and have a strong sense of vision.

Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003) conducted another extensive research study on the changing role of the principalship and suggested that the principal shortage was an unintended consequence of the role change. This study did a very complete job outlining and validating the issues facing the principal. In their review of the literature, the authors cited anecdotal and empirical evidence, which indicated that, although there were adequate numbers of persons qualified for the principalship, there was a shortage of applicants for vacant posts (Educational Research Service, 1998; Hough, 2000; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2001; and the U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Their study of the principalship was conducted in two stages. First, they utilized a Delphi technique of identifying a panel of experts who have knowledge, expertise, and skill in the area of study. The researchers utilized principals chosen as high school principals of the year in the 2000-2001 MetLife-NASSP Principal of the year recognition program. The participants took part in a series of electronic conversations over a three-month period, the result of which was the identification of forty-five descriptors for the changing role of the principal. The second stage of the study saw the researchers administer an instrument called the Principal's Role Questionnaire (PRQ) to a sample of 375 principals randomly selected from NASSP members who were principals of secondary schools.

The analysis of this data resulted in the identification of four major themes that reinforced the conclusion of other studies that there was substantial conflict in the principals' perceptions of the requirements for their positions. The following four areas will be explored in more depth:

1. **Role Conflict** – defined as conflict between the roles of strategic leader, instructional leader, organizational leader, and political or community leader. The authors indicated that since the 1980s instructional leadership has been asserted as the primary responsibility of the principal and that this is confirmed by this study. The participants identified the importance of establishing high standards and involving others in their development and implementation. The study findings contrasted to a NASSP study in 2001 regarding the importance of regular professional development opportunities for principals to stay current with regulations and learning strategies. The participants in this study saw instructional leadership as a key role component of the principalship. While principals also recognized the expectation that they look outward to the community, they were highly suspicious of mandates that required them to do so. The study results reinforced the conclusions of the Public Agenda Report (2001) that bureaucracy and politics have become substantial barriers to the work of the school. Principals also reported the need to find time to meet with state politicians and with local law enforcement agencies. Despite the suspicion of the litigious political climate, principals understood the pressing need to be active in the community and political arena as advocates for education.
2. **Accountability Conflict** – Principals in this study reported the stress on both principals and faculty as a result of striving to meet higher standards and more stringent measures of accountability in contrast with the responsibility of meeting growing academic, social, emotional, physical, and moral needs of children. Increased special education regulations and the related compliance issues were stated

- as a major challenge along with the time requirements, legal issues, and paperwork involved.
3. **Autonomy Conflict** – Participants in the study identified conflict between being responsive to mandates and being autonomous, and concluded that the principal’s autonomy should be commensurate with the responsibility levied on the position. The loss of autonomy brought about by legislative mandates conflicted with a sense of responsibility to build the relationships that generate student growth and development. The authors recommended that autonomy be increased and saw the need for principals to be more cooperative and collaborative in working with the school community. The essence of this is that the principal spends a great deal of time ensuring that mandates are met which leaves little time for the extensive community building activities necessary to create an educational environment supportive of cutting edge teaching and learning.
 4. **Responsibility Conflict** – A nearly universal concern that emerged from the study was the increased need for professional and clerical assistance. Legislative mandates, funding issues, and equity concerns have had an immense impact on schools. Increased help is needed to deal with the burgeoning amounts of paperwork associated with the principalship. The study found the need to rely more on administrative teams with support specialists to handle items that impede educational leadership.

The principals in this study validated the importance of their role as strategic educational leaders, change agents, and visionaries. They also provided evidence that the principalship had increased in complexity and that the disconnection between the expectations of instructional leadership,

strategic leadership, organizational leadership, and community and political leadership had increased. The role was perceived as complex and under stress from factors that were, many times, out of the control of the principal. Throughout the study, the principals professed strongly that the principal remains the key to school success. The authors believed the study has application for local boards, state legislatures, professional organizations, and administrators who are attempting to recruit new talent into the principalship.

Woodruff (2004) conducted a dissertation study in the Nashville, Tennessee schools to gather the perceptions of elementary principals regarding their changing roles. This was done with a 42-item survey that was analyzed using quantitative methodology. The literature review of the study indicated a change in the role of principals with additional responsibilities and that this change impacted their ability to do the job effectively. The study results bore this out. Woodruff found that principals reported meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population, marketing and public relations, increased interactions with parents, and program needs of special education students as major role changes. Also of interest was the finding of differences in the responses of male and female principals regarding the positive impact of decentralized decision-making. A majority of females indicated that decentralization had been positive but required them to reprioritize their time and that they had garnered support from teaching staff. Male principals, for the most part, indicated that the emphasis on standardized testing took a disproportionate amount of time. All agreed that the amount of time spent on special education was disproportionate to other job responsibilities impacting the total school community.

The literature portrayed a changing principalship, one that must accommodate the demands of today's society including the politics of special interests while providing strong, skillful leadership for our schools.

Winter and Morgenthal (2001) asserted that No Child Left Behind mandates increased accountability at all levels. As a result, school systems were requiring more of principals and assessing academic growth at the school level. According to Hess and Petrelli (2004), successful administrators establish accountability systems, build a culture of excellence, deal firmly with unproductive personnel, manage information, improve business practices, recruit good supporting personnel, cultivate a strong leadership team, and negotiate political and parental pressures. The demands and expectations placed on administrators by internal and external sources have a direct impact on school administration as a profession. The demands and expectations placed on administrators, accelerated by accountability mandates, have contributed to a global shortage of school leaders (Olsen, 2008). Hunt (2008) concurred, indicating that accountability mandates under NCLB have increased the pressure on school administrators to perform and deliver positive indicators of school improvement.

Working Conditions and Political Climate.

The working conditions encountered by principals are frequently cited in the literature as negative factors of the job and deterrents to the application of potential, qualified candidates. There is growing evidence that an emerging challenge to schools and school systems is that many in the logical aspirant pool are indicating a reluctance to seek promotion to the principalship (Cranston, 2005). This phenomenon is described as principal disengagement (Gron & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2003).

Winter and Morgenthal (2002) found that candidates, qualified to assume a principalship, even with an average of 8.9 years' experience, were not likely to pursue a principal position in low-achieving schools. According to the researchers, at a time when there is a shortage of applicants for principal vacancies in general, it would appear to be a problem that districts'

internal pool of qualified personnel, such as highly experienced assistant principals, are not attracted to jobs at the schools that may need new leadership the most. In this study, location of the school was a less significant factor than school performance in the candidates' reluctance to apply for principal positions.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) described a study of school principals in which they were asked to indicate whether the expectations at their jobs had increased or decreased. Across all reported dimensions of their work, 90 percent reported an increase in expectations. Time demands were reported to have increased in the area of community relations, requests by trustees, administrative activities, staff and student involvement, and social services. In reflecting on these demands, Fullan and Hargreaves cited Evans (1996), finding that the explosion of demands decreased school leaders sense of efficiency and heightened their feelings of isolation, insecurity, and inadequacy.

Hallinger and Hausman (1992) conducted a four-year case study involving school restructuring. They focused on a school that was implementing a theme of school community partnerships. The school also incorporated parental choice by allowing input into the decision of what school their children would attend. This qualitative study relied on document analysis and interviews with various constituency groups including the principal, superintendent, central office administrators, the school's theme coordinator, and the chair of the shared decision making council. The study found observable impact on the role expectation of the principal. The researchers indicated that school principals must develop their public relations and collaborative skills to be successful in carrying out their new environmental and instructional roles.

Murphy (1992) indicated that immense new social and economic challenges have been added to the leadership agenda. Murphy stated: "The fabric of American society is being

rewoven in some places and unraveling in others, resulting in changes that promise to have a significant impact on schooling." (p. 122). Murphy concluded that differential policy intervention might be needed in order to enable school principals to meet the needs of school communities. By this he means modifying policy that keeps principals locked into their traditional roles with traditional job requirements. Eliminating the mandated management tasks would allow for more time devoted to instructional leadership.

Joseph Murphy, at Vanderbilt University, was frequently quoted in the literature. In a visioning article, Murphy (1998) talked about the principals of tomorrow. He saw the principal as organizational architect, social architect, educator, and moral agent. In essence, Murphy believed tomorrow's principals will both shape the organization and overhaul the system to meet the demands of a new social structure. Murphy articulated the concept of moral leadership. He asserted that knowledge of instruction and curriculum would be key leadership skills. Knowing that there are moral leaders would drive the need to voice shared values and help define purpose within their schools. Principals must see, according to Murphy, that education is one component of a solution to many non-school problems facing children.

The changing work environment, together with the increased demands promulgated through either regulation or public perception seems to have increased the stress and anxiety of many serving in the principalship. Yerkes and Guaglianone (1998) cited several factors creating high stress in the principalship:

- Long hours (60-80 hour work week).
- Workload and complexity of the job.
- Supervision of evening activities "unending".
- Minimal pay differential between teachers and administrators.

- Feeling overwhelmed with very high expectations.
- State and district mandates that require “mountains” of paperwork.
- Increasingly complex societal and social problems.

The increasing demands of the position can cause principals to feel that the stress is not worth it.

McAdams (1998) noted the impact of democratic governance and enhanced power of students, teachers, and parents had steadily diminished the principal’s authority despite the fact that the principal is increasingly held accountable for student performance. This “middle management bind” led many principals to increased frustration, increased stress, and diminished job satisfaction.

Studies such as Portin and Shen (1998) pointed to the tendency of managerial responsibilities to supplant the leadership of the principal. This, with the proliferation of expectations, has been seen as a significant factor in the gap between theory and practice (McEwan, 1998).

Oberman (1999) referred to massive waves of school reform legislation since 1985 that have brought about major transformations in the roles and responsibilities of principals in the Chicago Public Schools. She looked at high levels of principal turnover that have had an impact on the ability of schools to initiate and sustain restructuring efforts. The Oberman study sought to explore the changes in the organizational framework including the changing role of the principal and their willingness to remain in these positions and how principals responded to these imposed role changes. The study utilized demographic interview and survey data collected over a ten-year period that paralleled major school reform events. Oberman found that the transformation of role affected the decision of school leaders to stay in their leadership roles or not. This decision-

making included the early retirement of administrators as well as the return to the classroom or a move to the private sector.

Adams (1999) further echoed this idea. He indicated that the erosion of authority to effect change, escalating expectations of accountability, lack of support, and a stressful political environment for school leaders are all factors that cause principals either to consider leaving the field entirely or to request classroom teaching assignments. This spoke to not only the difficulties being experienced in the recruitment of quality principals but also to the difficulty school districts have in retaining principals in their positions.

Portin (2000) discussed challenges unique to the urban principalship in a review of two studies, one on the Washington State principalship and another on national study of principals' perceptions. Portin indicated that his review of the studies and literature revealed four broad themes addressing challenges among urban principals. These themes included the coordination of non-instructional needs, increased job pressures, mediation of hopelessness, and management of resources. Portin believed the urban principalship may be more challenging in the areas of management of social complexity, entrepreneurial requirements, and political skills. While Portin cited the urban principalship as somewhat unique, the literature and studies bear out that many of the challenges are quite common to principalship no matter what the location.

High levels of employee turnover were found to be both the cause and effect of problematic conditions and low performance in organizations (Ingersoll, 1999).

Good leadership may, despite all other attractants and deterrents, be most important in retaining teachers in disadvantaged schools (Ladd, 2009). She also found that the effectiveness of principals depended on their level of experience. Skills found to be related to effectiveness were less likely to work in high-poverty, low-achieving schools. The key predictor of principal

effectiveness was years of experience. Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) specifically found that the most important predictor of principal effectiveness was a principal's years of experience. Further their analysis showed that among new principals, experience as an assistant principal in the existing school positively impacted student test scores and suspension rates. The years of experience also positively impacted school performance measures, in particular, math achievement and student absences. This impact by effective principals on math performance was confirmed by Branch, Hanucheck, and Rivkin (2009). However, the study also indicated that high quality principals tend to stay in their schools. From a policy perspective if low-performing schools can recruit a high quality principal, it is more likely to retain the principal. That same study found low performing schools more likely to have a first year principal and least likely to have a principal with six or more years' experience. In several states, the average tenure rate for a new principal was 4.5 years (Fuller & Young, 2009). Both NCLB in 2001 and Race to the Top in 2009 identified school leaders as one of the major catalysts to improving academic achievement.

The accountability triggers in these legislated initiatives call for the replacement of the principal when adequate gains in student achievement are not met, yet research indicates it takes at least 5 years to affect change (Fullan, 2001). This finding begs the question, should low performing schools be subjected to the legislated removal of a principal due to their low performance? Further, why would any principal remain in an appointment as principal in a chronically low-performing school? (Sorapura, 2012) This may tend to ensure that such schools never get a principal with experience.

The practice of removing principals from a school every time test scores decrease or do not increase sufficiently increases the likelihood that the principals will leave the profession (Fuller & Young, 2009; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Principal turnover is higher in schools that have performed poorly on accountability measures (Fuller & Young, 2009). Numerous studies of principal attrition share one common finding, the fact that low-performing schools, high poverty schools, and schools with large numbers of minority students, experience the highest turnover of principals compared to other schools with different demographics (Battle, 2010; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2009; Cullen & Mazzeo, 2008; Gates et al., 2005; Papa, 2007; Weinstein, et al., 2009). In fact, 20 percent of principals leave these schools in the first year (Hornig, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2010). Of those principals who leave a school, 90 percent leave the principalship altogether (Fuller & Young, 2009). This highlights the problem as not one of simply principals moving from one school to another, but rather massive number and percentage of principals leaving the profession, many never to return. This, according to Fuller and Young, suggests there is a revolving door of new principals who have not had the opportunity to hone their skills and become experts at school leadership.

The literature indicated that the length of principal tenure is highly correlated to levels of student achievement, teacher retention, school climate, and school culture (Fullan, 2001; Vanderhaar et al, 2006; Weinstein et al., 2009). The lack of stability could only reinforce low school performance scores (Plecki et al., 2005; Weinstein et al., 2009).

Teacher recruitment is also impacted by principal quality (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009). These researchers found that effective principals were better able to recruit effective teachers. They also found evidence that teachers who work in schools with more effective

principals improved more rapidly than their counterparts who worked in schools with less effective principals. Taking this all to the next level, a question that seems not addressed in the literature is whether or not an effective superintendent is an attractant for quality principals.

Donaldson (2001) asserted that hostile conditions exist for leadership at the school level. These conditions include high stakes testing, legislative calls for accountability, outcomes based promotion, and the call for schools to be run like a business. Donaldson believed that if policy makers wanted to attract our best teachers into school leadership, this view of schools does not support effective teaching or provide rewards for school leaders. This is referred to as a lose-lose leadership proposition and is related to the current shortage of leaders aspiring to the principalship.

Thompson et al. (2003) suggested that part of the principal crisis in the United States was due to the media imagery of principals. The negative media picture of the principalship is likely to exacerbate what is perceived to be a difficult situation by further deterring aspiring principals. According to Bloom (2004) principalships have lost appeal for many potential administrators due to the lack of support from supervisors and government entities. Sorapura (2012) saw the state reporting of test scores, which are often negative, as an unavoidable reality of education reform. She recommended that districts be prepared to counteract negative publicity with positive highlights of other school characteristics that could enhance the public's perception of the school. Negative public perception is a very heavy weight on the principal, who may have only been there for one year, potentially igniting early departures of principals.

Attempts to multitask and perform at optimal levels often contribute to administrative work load, stress and burnout for administrators during the new age of accountability (Okah, 2007). Principals found they must develop various interpersonal skills to address demands from

students, faculty, parents, government officials, and state/federal mandates in order to be successful in a reform environment (Rooney, 2008). Differences in leadership styles had a significant impact on how teachers experience high stakes accountability pressures (Berry, 2003).

Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001) echoed many others in their discussion of the principal shortage. In considering the issue of what was holding back potentially promising candidates from the principalship, the authors concluded that too little pay, costly and irrelevant requirements, too many pressures, too many hats to wear, finding time to be an instructional leader, and too little authority were significant factors. As a solution, they recommended better pay, more relevant training and professional development, better recruitment, and one big hat free of managerial duties. They argued that these positive reforms were critical to principals' surviving and prospering.

Carole Kennedy, principal in residence at the United States Department of Education is quoted as saying:

It used to be that you could get by being a good manager. Now principals must do everything from ensuring that immigrant students learn English to bringing all kids up to high standards and so much more. (Ashford, 2000, p.3).

Urban principals in Indiana were studied by Hintz (2002) to determine the reasons for their diminishing supply. The findings of this quantitative dissertation study, similar to others, indicated that numbers of hours worked and always being on call were leading factors in the diminishing pool of aspirants. Compensation was also a major factor. The author suggested further study on the nature of the urban principal job focusing on transforming the position could provide useful insight on stemming the tide of anticipated shortages.

Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone (2003) echoed others in identifying too few rewards, low pay, job stress and long hours as causative factors in the shortage of principals. They wrote based on an Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) committee's research on the administrator shortage and ways districts can better support administrators. The authors attempted to offer solutions focusing on a variety of proposed actions that could be undertaken by educational systems. They suggested assignment of some duties to teachers on released time, co-principalships, and job restructuring. The suggestions from these authors were unsubstantiated by any empirical data. In an earlier article by Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone (2001), similar deterrent issues were identified. They joined many others in calling for a revamping of the role and responsibilities of the principalship coupled with increased pay and support, including mentoring in the first few years of employment.

Expectations and responsibilities continue to increase for principals yet support and incentives are typically not present. The lack of support is a major contributor that causes many educators to be reluctant to embark on an administrative career (Olson, 2008).

Accountability and Reforms.

Commencing with the release of the report, *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983), continuing with the enactment and implementation of NCLB (USDOE, 2001), and the current reforms initiated in *Race to the Top* (USDOE, 2009), accountability is impacting the role and scope of the principalship both in New York and across the nation.

Increased accountability, a by-product of educational reform initiatives, seems to be a double-edged sword. There is some evidence that test-based accountability systems may result in higher student achievement, and states are strengthening these provisions legislatively (Jacob, 2005; Carnoy & Loeb, 2002; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005). Loeb and Strunk (2005) noted that

principals indicate having more control over their schools the stronger the accountability system. Principals report facing both possible dismissal for underperformance and recognition for success as a by-product of increased accountability demands added Loeb and Cunha (2007). Principals may not be happy with increased pressures or responsibilities but research findings suggested that many principals desire recognition of their work and control over the resources necessary to do their jobs (Oberman, 1996). Reform strategies during the current age of accountability have increased the complexity and the demanding nature of principal positions throughout the nation (Marks & Nance, 2007; Webb, 2005; Hess, 2004). As control increased from outside accountability mandates, principal autonomy and influence on school improvement initiatives decreased (Marks & Nance, 2007).

Fink and Brayman (2006) speculated that having been stripped of their autonomy by the implementation of additional accountability measures, principals were frustrated, which has produced an increasingly rapid turnover of school leaders and an insufficient pool of capable, qualified, and prepared replacements.

Fuller and Young (2009) found that the accountability pressures placed on school principals to quickly and dramatically raise student achievement had a profound effect on the stress being felt by principals. Principals often felt like they were asked to do the impossible without the tools and time necessary to do the job well. Other factors found to negatively exacerbate principal retention were the complexity of the job, lack of central office support, and inadequate compensation.

In a comparative study of accountability systems in six states, Berry (2003) found both teachers and administrators baffled by results. No teacher or administrator reported that the accountability system was easy to understand or straightforward in its measurements of one

school system against another. None of these educators offered to explain how the state was deciding how many schools would or should be low-performing or how a school could be sure to attain an excellent or high-performing rating. This finding held regardless of the complexity of the state system for calculating and reporting scores.

As for the characteristics of age, race, and gender, Fuller and Young (2009) found that they have little impact on retention rates of principals. The demands of the principalship and increasing workloads pose dilemmas and reveal unattractiveness to all administrators regardless of gender. (Louder, 2005; Kochan, Spencer, & Matthews, 1999).

A study on the profile of the principalship (SAANYS, 2005) highlighted challenges facing principals. The study cited involvement, responsibility, authority, and accountability as major focus issues. The principals surveyed in this study indicated a sharp increase from the prior study (SAANYS, 2001) in the amount of interaction needed with shared decision-making constituencies. Also principals indicated that their interface with student achievement data used to drive decision-making had significantly increased. Several other surprising factors emerged from this study related to the current challenges of the principalship. Only 60% of principals surveyed reported they had meaningful administrative support. Further respondents spoke out on the importance of tenure and that 40% of current principals would not even consider the position if tenure protections were removed. The authors of the study found that given the challenges some districts face trying to attract high quality building leaders, the elimination of tenure may only exacerbate an already difficult situation.

Principal evaluation was a significant component of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) requirement of New York's reform and accountability initiative beginning in 2012 (NYSED, 2013). This process grew out of requirements contained in the federal Race to

the Top initiative (USDOE, 2009) in which New York is a participant. Teachers and principals received a score based on a combination of student achievement results as well as other professional components, which included direct observation by a supervisor. Race to the Top encourages these scores to be used to make decisions about the quality and ultimately the compensation of teachers and administrators. Harris and Sass (2009) found that principal's subjective evaluations of teacher performance were better indicators of a teacher's value added effectiveness than traditional approaches that focus on experience and formal education.

Gao (2012) found that accountability pressures resulted in the targeting of precious school resources to tested grades. This pulled support away from grades and subject areas not currently tested for accountability purposes. Gao also found fewer staffing changes in tested grades.

Principals are hiring, developing, and removing teachers in an effort to increase school overall performance, paying particular attention to student test scores when making staffing decisions (Cohen-Vogel, 2011). With the impact of high stakes testing, the desire to attain a principalship is losing ground (Friedman, Friedman, and Markow, 2008). Adamowski and Petrilli (2007) found the demand for continued growth and accountability are stressful factors that can deter highly qualified school leaders. They stated that public school principals are frustrated by bureaucracy that holds them accountable but prevents them from making major decisions.

A study prepared by Education Analytics for the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents (2014) indicated that the APPR system in New York State has been inadequately and unequally implemented. Implementation has been inconsistent. While it found that the New York State Education department has made improvements in the system since its

initial implementation, further adjustments need to be incorporated. Until this system is refined, results should not be made public.

Inadequate Preparation.

Concerns regarding the preparation of educational leaders are well documented in the literature. A study by Heller, Conway, and Jacobsen (1988) indicated that while graduate training was rigorous it was not necessarily valuable or aligned with the real world. Usdan, McCloud, and Podmosko (2000) stated that the demands of the principalship had changed, but the profession had not changed to meet those demands. Farkas, Johnson, and Duffet (2003) reported that all but four percent of practicing principals stated that on-the job experiences or guidance from colleagues had been more helpful in preparing them for their current position than their preparation program.

A study by Levine (2005) concluded that the majority of educational administration and educational leadership programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the leading universities in the country.

Hess and Petrelli (2004) indicated that principals lacked adequate preparation to handle accountability demands. Increased certification requirements have also limited the pool of applicants for vacant administrative positions. According to Hess and Kelly (2007), the current system of preparing school leaders may leave aspiring principals prepared for the traditional world of educational leadership but not for the challenges they will face in the 21st century.

Murphy and Orr (2009) stated that there was a need for programs to address changing expectations for principal leadership, particularly to foster school improvement and meet accountability expectations.

A study of Massachusetts principals conducted by Militello, Gagda, and Bowers (2009) indicated that there is a perceived difference in the nature and quality of the preparedness of principals for the position. This has to do with both when (pre NCLB or post NCLB) and where (public, private, or alternative programs) they were prepared. The researchers suggested that accountability measures may have led to changes in the content and structure of principal preparation programs over time. Accountability is having an impact on preparation programs. These researchers found that alternative certification programs seemed to be cost effective, provide greater accessibility, contain clear objectives, provide meaningful internships, are staffed with high quality faculty, and employ a cohort model. There was also significant a difference in courses among the various types of preparation programs (public, private, and alternative). In the past six years they found preparation courses have included an increased emphasis on accountability in concert with current reform initiatives. The development of courses in the area of utilization of student assessment data also were noted. The researchers called for state standards that influence the development, delivery, and evaluation of all programs to reflect the requisite skills principals needed and wanted in the 21st century. This revision of standards has included the development and then revision of the ISSLC standards (Murphy, 2003; Militello, et al., 2009) as well as the revisioning of the NCATE accreditation process to reflect the need to prepare leaders for 21st century challenges (NCATE, 2008).

A significant body of literature documented the ever-evolving role of the principal. This role change, coupled with an increasing intensity of difficult working conditions, including increased high stakes accountability measures along with inadequate preparation for the job, appears to be a major deterrent to high quality candidates applying for positions.

Potential Solutions

Various strategies for dealing with shortages of principals have emerged in the literature. Several types of proposed solutions have been documented.

Succession Planning/ “Grow Your Own”.

One potential strategy to address shortages that is contained in the literature is the concept of succession planning. This entails the continuous planning within an organization for the development of leaders to succeed leaders.

Quinn (2002) cited the 1998 Educational Research Service (ERS) study confirming the shortage of school principals. He believed it was reaching crisis proportions. He concluded that the nation was losing its administrators, but that it was not clear that a defined strategy to address this problem has emerged. He cited a study conducted by the Principals’ Center of the Harvard Graduate School of Education that sought to determine the most common strategies being employed by districts to address the shortage. The greatest response was the strategy of “nothing.” Quinn stated that government officials were apathetic when it came to school leadership needs. The original draft of the No Child Left Behind legislation contained \$10 million to support principal recruitment. The funding was later removed, and its future is in question. Quinn advocated strongly for succession planning as a more systematic and focused solution to the shortage dilemma. The strategy was to create a cadre of management candidates with strong knowledge, skills, and attitudes who can be trained for future leadership vacancies. Succession planning nurtures the talent pool that exists in every school district and grooms that pool in supervisory experience. Quinn believed that this process planning ensured the continuing operation of school organizations by selecting and training key replacements for important positions in school leadership in advance of openings. It helped schools avoid the experience gap

caused by wholesale retirements of school leaders. The author believed that schools had three options when dealing with the ongoing surge of retirements. These were

1. Cast a net outside the district to recruit hard to find replacements. This can be expensive and time consuming and may lead to hiring unknown leaders that are not a good fit for the school.
2. Do nothing and wait for candidates to appear. This is difficult in today's environment of pressure for schools to produce positive results.
3. Tap quality staff members who may be right within the district waiting for advancement. This is succession planning.

In essence, succession planning accomplishes the following:

1. Provides a coordinated strategy for the identification and development of the organization's key resource – teachers in the schools.
2. Retains the services of upwardly mobile employees within the district.
3. Makes the district more attractive to prospective employees who see the opportunity for growth.
4. Ensures a readily available and inexpensive source of in-house replacements for key leadership positions in individual schools and on the district level.
5. Promotes challenging and rewarding career possibilities through meaningful professional development for potential administrators.
6. Reduces lost productivity since a replacement from the outside needs a time consuming learning curve.
7. Helps to affirm commitment to diversity goals in hiring and promoting.
8. Enhances a positive work culture through ongoing support for employees.

Succession planning has the advantage of sending a strong message to employees that their contributions to the organization are valued and supported. It also implies that career growth is encouraged.

Similarly, Lashway (2003) stated that many schools were beginning to look within to find much-needed candidates. He cited the BELL program of the David Douglas School District in Oregon as an example. This project began with a class of aspiring educators in the district examining the district's culture, operations, and priorities. The class, taught by district administrators was followed by action research projects, group leadership projects, administrator internships, and mentoring of new administrators. After three years, five of the original 43 participants were administrators in the district while eight had gained experience serving as interns, and 16 were in the process of earning administrative certification.

Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Ely, Landon and Schwartz (2009) recommended that schools and districts plan carefully and in advance for principal succession. They also stressed the importance of adequately supporting principals in their new schools regardless of whether the principal is a novice principal new to that school or an experienced insider. Setting the right tone, according to these researchers, before a principal transition within the school community was crucial to the reception of a new principal and the relationship that this principal would have with the faculty. The researchers indicated that an advantage of distributive or collaborative leadership is that it would minimize the impact of a principal's succession on the school if various parts of the role were shared among faculty and staff. This type of leadership needs to be developed over time and assimilated into the school culture.

Financial and Other Incentives.

Harris (2001) believed that urban areas, that already cannot offer salaries competitive with their suburban counterparts, must recruit and retain using other means. This included mentoring, grow your own strategies, the development of district-university partnerships, and national recruitment campaigns.

Potter (2001) outlined several ideas for providing short and long-term incentives to help fill vacant offices with qualified principals. In the short term, Potter suggested hiring recently retired principals along with assistant principals aspiring to the principalship. Long-term strategies included reconsidering early retirement options by rewarding longevity instead, providing monetary incentives, recruiting from local universities, and considering candidates from outside education.

Lashway (2003) also commented on the effectiveness of financial incentives. He indicated that incentives could work although they may have to be as much 20 to 50 percent of a differential which would be cost prohibitive to many districts. The notion of a co-principalship, while advocated in the literature by some, was, in Lashway's view, not possible for practical or financial reasons. He did feel that mentorship, as outlined by the Southern Regional Education Board, provided support and training for principals, particularly in low-performing schools. As for the use of non-traditional candidates, Lashway pointed to a lack of research serving as a guide to the effectiveness or acceptance of non-education principals that the current education community viewed with skepticism. He pointed to school districts in Michigan that did away with administrator certification requirements in 1996 as having been able to continue to hire certified administrators.

This point was echoed by Winter and Morgenthal (2003) who indicated that monetary incentives might be necessary to entice internal candidates with experience to apply for principalships.

Intrinsic and Motivational Factors.

Looking beyond tangible incentives, the literature contains reports on intrinsic factors impacting the principalship and the candidates' decision to pursue it.

In a research study conducted by ERS and reported by Moore (1999), graduate students were surveyed to find the top motivators as well as the top inhibitors to the pursuit of the principalship. The motivators were essentially intrinsic. They intrinsic motivators included the desire to "make a difference," personal and professional challenge, and the ability to initiate change. The inhibitors identified were the amount of increased time necessary to do the job, the influence by outside groups such as parents and even the central office on the principal's ability to do the job, and the amount of bureaucratic paperwork encountered. Similar to others, the study recommended restructuring of responsibilities, a reduced workweek and school year, and added support services as ways to make the job more attractive.

Winter and Morgenthal (2001) conducted an empirical research investigation about factors that influence high school principal recruitment in a reform environment. They conducted this research in response to a call for additional research in a previous study by Pounder and Young (1996) finding that the literature was devoid of research on administrator recruitment. The study's objective was to examine the influence of school academic achievement, as measured by student scores on standardized achievement tests, school location. The study surveyed randomly selected assistant principals in Kentucky. The most significant finding by Winter and Morgenthal was that the assistant principals rated jobs at low achieving schools much

lower than jobs at high achieving schools. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) has had a negative influence on principal recruitment because it places new demands on principals such as increased accountability for student achievement and diminished governance authority. This situation leads to frustration, increased stress and decreased job satisfaction. The authors referenced a recruitment theory called the application attraction model developed by Rynes and Barber (1990). This model postulated that organizational characteristics are among the most important factors influencing applicant attraction to position vacancies. The most powerful organizational characteristic in this study was that of school achievement. The authors suggested future research should focus on how the restructuring of the principalship could make it more attractive to potential applicants. They also suggested studies that might explore the possible influence of mentors on the decision to enter a principal preparation program and the decision to apply for a vacant position.

The school principal plays a key role in creating and sustaining high performing schools. It follows that a shortage of high quality principal applicants would lead to fewer effective schools. Lacey (2002) studied this dilemma as it manifested in Australia. Lacey utilized a survey and focus group interview as primary data sources as she looked to identify factors that influenced teachers to apply or not apply for principal leadership positions. The survey included 1344 respondents, which represented a 67.2% response rate. Nine focus groups were held which utilized 51 participants. The findings included

- Principal's job is an enormous challenge that at times is overwhelming and causes high levels of stress.
- Individuals may not wish to remain in this position for a long period of time.

- Opportunity to motivate others, impact the learning environment, and shape educational vision are incentives.
- Strong evidences to support the hypothesis that perceptions of incentives and disincentives to promote to principal positions influence teacher career decisions.
- Data indicates that perceptions of principals' job satisfaction are a key function in influencing trends to apply for principal leadership roles.
- Career and personal life planning factors significantly influence women choosing to move into principalships.
- Evidence supports the hypothesis that the organizational succession planning process influences teachers' leadership aspirations.

Lacey found contradictory evidence concerning the influence of an alignment of personal and organizational values as an influential factor for teachers to apply for principal positions. The study recommended that organizations undertake strategic succession planning for leadership positions. Recruitment of highly qualified applicants, development of potential leaders, and retention of effective leaders must be part of this succession plan.

Stoll (2003) studied the motivation of principals to continue in their current positions in Colorado. Faced with the impending retirement of baby boomer principals, Stoll saw that it was important to keep current principals motivated to stay on the job. He found that 92% of principals reported that they planned to stay in the principalship. Veteran principals with more years in the principalship reported positive growth of self and others, reinforcement, efficacy, sense of self, and technical skill factors. Charter school principals reported less positively on administrative support, reinforcement, role clarification, and compliance issues. As years in the

principalship increased factors such as value of technical skills, reinforcement factors, and efficacy decreased.

Superintendent Perspectives on Solutions.

Whitaker (2002) studied perceptions of superintendents related to the shortage of principals. The first finding of the study conducted using survey methodology was that 90% of superintendents concurred that there was a moderate to severe shortage of qualified candidates for the principalship. They indicated that, in particular, finding candidates for the high school principalship was extremely difficult followed by filling middle school vacancies. The respondents were also asked about the quality of applicants they do get for positions. Superintendents reported that a significant percentage of applicants were of poor or marginal quality. They lacked experience particularly for an urban diverse community. Weaknesses appeared in a lack of knowledge and skills in the areas of instruction and assessment. As for leadership preparation programs, the consensus was that candidates possess fairly good “book” knowledge but lack practical application skills. Superintendents looked for university preparation programs to play a more extensive role particularly in the type and quality of the internship component of the program. Superintendents referenced time commitment, high stakes testing, school report cards, increased violence, a lack of respect for public education, and overall job pressures as deterrents for many who might otherwise be interested in pursuing the principalship. This survey, like so many others, also found that principal salaries were not commensurate with job responsibilities. Final findings paralleled other studies and professional writings in outlining similar challenges and suggested interventions.

Initial and Ongoing Support.

Boards of education need to recognize that the principal is not the sole source of the positive attributes of a healthy school (Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). These authors suggested school boards educate the community about the changing role of the principal to garner support for principals and, perhaps, lessen the demands on those in the role. The researchers advised boards of education to take the following steps:

- Offer financial support for sabbaticals to give principals in need of rejuvenation a reprieve.
- Create family friendly environment to accommodate principals' personal lives.
- Review salary schedule and find a way to reward principals.
- Determine flexible attendance requests and expectations at school functions.
- Redesign the organizational structure of the job.

Another trend discussed by Torrence in (2002) was the increased use of data by the principal in the role of instructional leader. Torrence noted that the use of data by principals was incorporated into the emerging national standards. This was investigated using survey research and included descriptive and correlation statistics. The survey utilized a national sample of principals selected by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Torrence found that principals were embracing the role of instructional leader and were increasing their use of data in various ways. The study determined that principals' attitudes, self-perceptions, professional development experiences, characteristics of their school districts, and personal competencies with data proved statistically significant with influencing their use of

data. This finding has implications for induction and staff development programs as well as raising awareness of the use of data as an increasing need in the principals' repertoire. In today's schools, testing and other student achievement data are being disaggregated by ethnicity, race, disability, and socio-economic status to assess the impact of reforms on particular groups. Principals need the skills of data collection and interpretation to be successful in today's high pressure, results-oriented environment.

Research indicated that utilizing administrators as mentors can enhance the clinical experience in preparation programs (Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Cohorts are also valuable as they provide an efficient structure as well as create a camaraderie and potential network for educational leaders (Hackmann & Wanat, 2007).

Winter and Morgenthal (2002) call for further study to look at the impact on the recruitment of qualified candidates of offering mentoring programs for new principals.

There exists a lack of interest on the part of teachers with advanced degrees in becoming principals. This lack of interest, combined with statistics indicating that forty percent of principals are nearing retirement, highlights the need to call on the graying generation of school leaders to become mentors (Blackman and Fenwick, 2000).

Restructuring of the Role.

Restructuring of the role of principal was the subject of a study by VanTamelan (1999) in Alberta, Canada. He used naturalistic inquiry, referred to in Canada as qualitative methodology, with a group of twelve experienced principals familiar with the role of the principal before restructuring occurred. The participants participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. VanTamelan found that the study supported the view that restructuring significantly affected the role of the principal. Restructuring would free the principal to focus on the demands of

educational leadership rather than the day-to-day tasks of management. It indicated that the paradox between educational leadership and school management intensified. Financial management, in particular, was seen as taking time away from educational leadership. Workload and effectiveness issues were also encountered. There was agreement that the workload had increased but uncertainty about any beneficial effect for the schools. Accountability and collaboration put strain on the collegial relationships with staff. The study did find that the principals adjusted to their changed roles with differing degrees of satisfaction.

Cushing (2003) suggested systematic support for principals. This restructuring of the position would include a reduction of additional assigned responsibilities, including supervision to teacher leaders. Cushing further proposed the notion of co-principals with duties shared equally as well as rethinking job responsibilities allowing the more technical aspects of the job to be delegated to an administrative assistant.

Usdan, McCloud, and Podmosko (2000) recommended that communities reinvent the principalship in terms of leadership for student learning. To do this, the pipeline must be filled with qualified, effective school leaders, who support the profession by emphasizing leadership for learning in preparation and professional development, improving ongoing training and raising pay, and, finally, guaranteeing quality and results through fair accountability measures that utilize adequate data. Restructuring the job appears to have merit if the politics of traditional demands can be overcome.

Selection Process.

Herr (2002) surveyed entry-level administrators to determine what factors had the greatest impact on their decisions to seek the principalship. She investigated what barriers were perceived as the greatest to seeking and obtaining the principalship, and what changes in the

selection process and job itself may positively influence educators to seek administrative positions. The study focused on randomly selected administrators in Pennsylvania. Herr found that respondents to this survey took on administrative positions to enhance personal and professional efficacy assuming increased responsibility, the opportunity to make a bigger difference in the school system, and the ability to utilize their leadership ability more fully. Respondents reported that the lack of an appealing salary and increased responsibility failed to adequately compensate principals. They further reported that the application and interview process were not obstacles to attaining the principalship. When asked what would help attract more candidates, the respondents reported that increased salary and benefit packages, mentorships, collegial networks, and redesigned preparation programs would help.

The literature contains many potential solutions to the shortage of qualified principal candidates. Not every solution is feasible in all settings for various reasons including economics, logistics and politics. Further there is no guarantee that any one or any combination of these potential avenues will resolve the issue. This makes the perspectives of those in the position to decide to apply for the principalship all the more important to understand and incorporate into the effort to attract candidates. My study sought to uncover and understand these perspectives.

Discussion, Interpretation, and Future Implications

Discussion of the Shortage.

Howley (2002) outlined many factors that appear consistently in the literature as deterrents to individuals entering the principalship. Her strategies for recruitment and retention are more easily said than done. Providing increased salaries and staff development in financially strapped rural districts is a monumental if not impossible task. Recruiting minority candidates to

come to and stay in rural districts appears to be a challenge. I find that Howley is consistent with others in their assessment of the problem but her suggestions for addressing the issues are weak.

Restructuring the principalship has begun to emerge as a way to make the job more attractive to potential applicants. Cushing (2003) and others articulated this in articles and studies on this subject. Restructuring involves the splitting of the instructional and managerial components of the position among individuals. This is probably one of the most viable strategies as job duties could be delineated among individuals allowing more specialization. Splitting the position, however, suggests the addition of positions to a school district's staff. It again comes down to economic realities when attempting to address the negative factors impacting the principalship.

Part of the body of literature advocated for districts to undertake succession planning. This strategy, which often includes a "grow your own" philosophy, requires districts to provide some forward thinking on potential vacancies. It allows those in the district to have a career ladder and districts to enculturate promising candidates so that they are inclined to believe in and support district goals and initiatives.

The "grow your own" concept seems to be gaining momentum. Several of the articles reviewed were showing various types of programs and supports developing within individual districts to support encouraging teachers in-house to become certified and ultimately to take the step into administration. Whether or not this will impact the current shortage remains unclear.

Another concept that has emerged is that of utilizing candidates from non-traditional sources to lead schools. This includes having individuals with either military or business backgrounds lead our schools. These leaders may or may not be certified for the position.

A vast majority of the authors referenced in the professional literature make the case that there exists a shortage of administrators to fill anticipated upcoming vacancies. They cited working conditions, low-pay, high stress and other factors as deterrents to educators taking the step to become certified administrators. Many authors fault principal preparation programs for not adequately preparing potential candidates for the job. Professional organizations also weighed in on the issue although their motives, in my opinion, may be self-serving. If they make the case that a true shortage exists, they can advocate on behalf of their membership for more funding to benefit them.

Another perspective in the literature is the thought that a true shortage of principals does not even exist; rather there are difficulty recruiting quality principal candidates to challenging positions. These positions, therefore, remain unfilled or filled with candidates that lack the skills necessary to meet unique challenges.

It appears from reviewing literature that the concept of the administrative shortage may be as much a political issue as it is reality. Districts, organizations, and individuals all had a different perspective that advanced their own agenda. This topic, in particular, points out how important it is to view professional literature with a critical eye.

Early research studies devoted their scope to the documentation of the shortage. More recent studies acknowledge the shortage, particularly as it applies to “qualified applicants.” As the demands of the job grow, districts seek a more highly qualified candidate pool. The focus of these more recent studies and professional literature analysis centers on finding solutions that will target an already certified and qualified pool of candidates that have either been reluctant to apply or have refused an offer to serve as principal.

The data supported salaries as an issue as far as not being commensurate with job responsibilities and may indeed deter applicants from applying to schools in challenging, critical need settings.

The RAND Corporation has had a history of sponsoring respected, landmark studies. The 2003 RAND study findings on the principal shortage contradict the notion of a widespread shortage and concur that specific areas, particularly high needs areas, are failing to lure principals uniquely prepared for these specific problems. State statistics of certified candidates compared to number of vacancies further support the idea that there are candidates out there; they are just not applying, particularly in various difficult locales.

The data produced by further studies such as Mitgang (2003) mirror the RAND (2003) findings and place the burden of solving this issue back on local districts in conjunction with universities. The research called for true reform of the principalship and the way it is designed. There is a definite lack of study pertaining to what strategies will work to reverse this trend of inadequately prepared candidates for the principalship or what effective programs have been put in place to address the issue. This lack may be related to the special interest nature of many organizations that would normally conduct research. Further research is necessary to determine how to get adequately prepared candidates to apply and accept positions, particularly in high need areas.

Discussion of the Challenges.

There are great challenges associated with the principalship. Challenges have always existed in the role of principal and have been documented as far back as Plato. It is important to look at a sampling of the literature over time to get a feel for recurring themes.

Literature in this area speaks to the ever-growing call for accountability and the related stress that ensues. It documents the changes both subtle and dramatic that have and are occurring in the role of the principal. The leadership of the principal is clearly still the major catalyst for sustained change in a school. The responsibility for developing leaders with the necessary skills to not only survive, but thrive in this environment is increasingly shared between formal preparation programs and local school agencies. It is incumbent upon these entities to look to the literature so that preparation of school leaders may evolve in step with the changing landscape of the principalship.

The authors I have encountered in reviewing the existing professional literature are in agreement on the fact that the principalship is a hard, demanding job. They further agree that the role of the principal is in a state of change. This state of change, however, has been a fact of the principalship since its inception so it should not come as a surprise. The professional literature certainly outlines current and traditional challenges associated with the position of principal. Indeed, the literature also offers suggestions that, if enacted, might provide relief for some of these challenges. The literature is lacking in its analysis of the reasons why the obvious quick fix solutions like "raise salaries" or provide "increased support" are not always feasible in today's economic and political climate. I believe that further analysis may help us understand alternative ways to address the challenges of the job that will ultimately improve our overall ability to recruit and retain highly effective principals to help meet the challenges of today's educational environment.

As in the professional literature, several common themes emerge in the research conducted on the principalship. These themes appear to be the underlying existence of conflict inherent in the role of principal, the constant and continual state of change within the role, and

external political factors that exacerbate the conflict and state of change. Currently, the scrutiny and accountability being thrust at the principalship consumes much energy from today's principal. This requires an increase in the need for professional development to focus on interpersonal skills as well as those technical skills necessary to enhance the principal's ability to lead effectively.

The SAANYS (2005) study referencing the need to have the knowledge and ability to use student achievement data effectively addressed ongoing support for principals and is a clear indicator of the specificity that has helped fuel the accountability debate. It is important that the principal not become mired in the management tasks of the job but develop ways to manage effectively while immersed in providing effective leadership for student learning. Principals also need the support of their superior administrators. This enables principals to effectively take on the challenges of the job. In December of 2012, I suggested to the SAANYS executive director that the organization embark on a third version of this study to both provide longitudinal data and assess further the impact of the more stringent accountability measures for principals and teachers being imposed by the New York State Education Department pursuant to Race to the Top (USDOE, 2009; NYSED, 2013).

Despite the challenges facing principals in the current environment, the SAANYS (2005) study showed that an overwhelming majority of principals, if they could begin their careers again, would still choose to be a principal. Morale among current principals continues to be high with 97% reporting excellent or good morale, though morale is not readily defined. The SAANYS (2001, 2005) studies are the first studies I have encountered that actually provide elements of longitudinal research data. Most of the other studies are focused on a particular aspect, provide findings and recommendations but are never followed up upon. The SAANYS

(2005) study, whose predecessor was completed in 2001 (SAANYS, 2001), shows trend changes in the data in just that brief a period of time. SAANYS reports that this type of study will be repeated regularly and provide even more solid longitudinal data over time.

Recent studies have focused on the role of the principals and the challenges of the job. The idea of the level of increased accountability for student learning has begun to emerge as a significant challenge for principals. This is well documented by Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003). This has translated into the accountability stress being shared with faculty, thus creating more challenging dynamics between principals and teachers.

Since I did my initial literature search in 2008, much has transpired in the field of education pertaining to the increased emphasis on the accountability of principals for teacher and student performance. Additionally, state education departments, including the New York State Education Department, have tied this performance to the evaluation of administrators. The APPR process was first put into place in 2013. My updated review of literature in 2015, for the most part, yields references that, despite increasing the frequency of the discussion on accountability for principals, continue to reference it in more general terms. Recent references still speak to issues of longevity of principals, particularly in high needs, high poverty schools where our most vulnerable students are located. It is my hope that through the participation of a second cohort of certified administrators, more specificity will be added to the discussion of how these more recent aggressive accountability measures are perceived by principals in Upstate Central New York.

As with the articles in the professional literature, the empirical studies I found served to verify the scope and nature of the challenges facing beginning principals. The studies lacked

information that tested the effectiveness of any proposed solutions or investigated what the specific obstacles to solutions are and how they may be overcome.

An emerging theme for new principals is the need to have better preparation in the area of fiscal management and budgeting. This creates stress for administrators and takes their time away from issues directly related to curriculum, instruction, and student learning.

The dissertation literature is similar to that of the empirical studies cited on this topic. Again, conflict, change, and the need for flexibility as well as interpersonal management and facilitation skills are central to the role of the school principal in today's society.

Dissertations on the subject of challenges facing principals mirrored the trends found in both the professional literature and more extensive research studies. One notable issue found in the dissertations was the documentation of the trend by principals to engage in data driven decision-making. This trend provided a whole realm of issues for principals to contend with. First there is the familiarity with data and statistics. Knowing what is significant or not is a huge issue and a steep learning curve for many. It is, however, fast becoming a set of skills that are to be mandatory for principals to have mastered. Stress, issues with shared decision-making, increased accountability, and community relations all emerged in the dissertation literature as it did in the professional literature and studies.

The Woodruff (2004) dissertation study identified the current issues that are faced by principals. Principals are addressing them by adjusting their allotment of time. As time is finite, whatever time one issue gets from a principal is taken away from another issue. Principals are challenged by the increasing trend for the use of data in driving educational decisions. Failure to become competent or comfortable with its use can be an added pressure in a result driven school environment. Special education is another increasingly significant factor in the role of the

principal. It is time-intensive and requires extremely sharp interpersonal skills to manage effectively.

The politics of equity is defined in a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) study group on school leadership (NASBE, 1999). The group raised concern that high quality leaders apply for the principalship in patterns that shortchange the students with the greatest needs in America. This included those in urban, rural, and high poverty school districts. Lower pay and an increase in the challenges faced are cited as compelling reasons why candidates do not apply. The specific challenges cited are poverty, students arriving unprepared to learn, lack of parental involvement, student and parent alcohol/drug use, and student apathy. With competition for quality candidates high, these areas are losing out because they are unable to adequately address these challenges. NASBE proposed offering greater incentives and targeted recruiting. It acknowledged the advantage of the “grow your own” programs but illuminates the fine line between “grow your own” and cronyism. They are concerned this type of program will discourage high quality outside candidates from applying.

Chen (1994) defined an educational leader two ways. First, the leader is a professional capable of setting a direction within the school. Second, the leader is a social and moral agent. Chen believed that the second defines schools as communities with shared social and moral values.

Fullan (2002) defined moral purpose as social responsibility to others and the environment. School leaders who possess moral purpose seek to make a difference in the lives of students. He asserted that concern for closing the achievement gap between high and low performing schools is among the top priority of moral leaders. Moral school leaders are as concerned about the performance of all schools as they are of their own school. That moral

principal strives, according to Fullan, to prepare potential successors to continue to affect moral change as they aspire to the principalship.

The idea of moral leadership and its relationship to educational change for the greater good is an area I explored with the participants in my study. Is the calling of moral leadership an attractant or a deterrent for potential aspirants for the principalship, and what part can it play in the recruitment of high quality candidates to high need schools?

It is apparent from the review of this literature that themes outlining particular challenges have emerged. Addressing time management, financial competence, the development of interpersonal skills, the trend toward data driven decisions related to curriculum and instruction, special education, and the politics of equity and moral leadership will be critical if we are to transform the principalship into a more manageable, effective leadership position. The literature further advocates ongoing support for both new and seasoned principals to support their success in leading fundamental change in schools and the ultimate success of students.

Final Thoughts and Implications.

Success in today's principalship is dependent on several factors that are pervasive in professional literature, studies, and dissertations. The successful principal must recognize that the principalship has been in a state of change and challenge since its inception. Current issues that challenge the expertise of the principal include an increase in the public's demand for accountability of their schools for documented student learning. Managing the increased role of shared decision-making requires a different set of interpersonal skills than in the past. The successful principal must rapidly adapt to change in order to stay ahead of the curve and be in a position to emerge as a leader and not just a manager. This adaption will require principals to demand staff development and support that facilitates the development of adaptive skills,

technological awareness, ability to read and interpret data, and articulate collaboratively developed goals with precision and effectiveness. The data indicate that principals are up to and ready to face these challenges as the educational community moves forward to improve student learning that translates into measurable, concrete results.

The literature surrounding these issues serves to merely document their existence. It is extremely sparse on documenting effective solutions in today's complex and politically charged environment. Future research must seek to identify practical solutions that have potential for implementation in the realm of our modern public school educational system. These solutions must address the professional needs of principals, the practical needs of superintendents, the fiscally responsible needs of local boards of education, and the political realities faced by state and national leaders.

The existence of the administrative shortage is thoroughly debated in the literature. It is attributed to a variety of factors. Certainly the working conditions of the principalship including the increased demands of accountability emerge as a major factor. Monetary issues also continually surface including the compaction of the salary differential between teachers and principals. What is clear is that teachers are no longer freely making the "jump" from teacher to administrator and in particular, building principal. How prospective principals are supported or not both in their decision to make the migration and/or once the migration is made surface as impact issues. This can be examined both in the realm of formal and informal induction initiatives as well as in the realm of formal preparation and certification/licensure programs.

Tucker and Tschannen-Moran (2002) summarized their analysis of challenges and suggested policy initiatives by finding that efforts need to be made in a coordinated, systematic manner to address every developmental stage of the principalship. Recruitment alone, they

asserted, will not address the challenges if there is a lack of meaningful professional development for mid-career principals, just as improved preparation will not solve the problems if the role is not restructured to be more attractive.

Calls for further study abound in the research community. Loeb and Cunha (2007) concluded that we know very little about how accountability has affected the career decisions of principals. They further indicated that, in theory, accountability may be beneficial, especially to effective principals, but we have no idea, in reality if increased accountability and responsibilities are too difficult for even potentially effective principals and whether or not it leads to greater, detrimental turnover.

There has been a distinct shift in the literature over the past fifteen years. Earlier studies supported the notion that a true shortage of administrators existed at a level of crisis proportions. Authors touted statistics showing large percentages of administrators retiring or leaving the job. This has shifted to data attempting to document shortages of well-qualified principals particularly in less desirable high need districts. It is clear that local districts need to address conditions that are impacting the development of high quality applicant pools of candidates for principalships. Intense, local research needs to occur to pinpoint the issues impacting shortages, and feasible action plans to address those issues need to be developed, implemented, and assessed for success.

Particular to New York State, Papa, Lankford, and Wyckoff (2002) found that there are in New York alone, over 2000 individuals under the age of 45 who are certified to be principals but are not currently employed in New York. These researchers stated that we know little about what these individuals are currently doing and if they could be attracted back into the public school system to assume leadership positions.

Further research needs to occur to identify the factors that are influencing the decision of recently certified administrators to seek or not seek the principalship. Only then can local specific plans be developed and implemented to encourage application to the principalship by highly qualified and motivated candidates. Due to the diversity of this issue, a one-solution-fits-all appears not to be the answer.

Chapter 3

Study Design

The methodology in this study was designed to develop rich qualitative data in order to assist both the researcher and the educational field seeking answers to the three primary research questions posed in Chapter 1. Those are

1. How do educators who are certified as administrators in Upstate Central New York describe experiences that have influenced them to pursue or not pursue the principalship?
2. What do certified administrators perceive as the attractants and deterrents to the principalship in Upstate Central New York and which of these are factors in their decision to apply for and accept principalships?
3. How have the attractants and deterrents to the principalship changed in the recent years covered by this study?

This chapter outlines the context of the study, the methodology employed, the selection of the participants, and the procedures employed in the analysis of the data derived from the qualitative interviews conducted. It further describes my use of two separate cohorts spanning a timeframe of five years. Grounded Theory is highlighted, and its relation to this study is reviewed. Finally my role as researcher is outlined and defined.

Context

My study took place in the confines of Upstate Central New York. Inclusion of the Metropolitan New York City area would have, in my opinion, added dynamics and other issues that might not be consistent with those in the remainder of the state. It has been fifteen years since the NYSED (2000) Blue Ribbon Commission statement on the principalship and ten years since the SAANYs (2005) profile on the principalship study. It is my desire to have this study

add to the literature on the principalship in New York State and potentially influence the course of events in a way that will enhance the principalship for future administrators in the state.

Conceptual Framework

Glasser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory, which I will describe below, calls for theory to be developed as research progresses. Hence, using grounded theory to drive a study limits the pre-identification of a conceptual framework to which the research might correlate. The roots of the theory are derived from the work of social theorists such as George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. Unlike quantitative research, grounded theory does not begin with an existing theory but rather generates theory in a specific substantive area (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). Grounded theory explores basic social processes. Symbolic interactionism theory described by Mead (1964) and Blumer (1969) provides the theoretical underpinnings of grounded theory methodology. Speziale and Carpenter assert that in symbolic interactionism theory it is believed that people behave and interact based on how they interpret or give meaning to their experiences.

Grounded theory methodology combines both inductive and deductive research methods (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). From the inductive perspective, theory emerges from specific observations and generated data. The theory can be tested empirically to develop predictions from general principles. Hutchinson (2001) addressed an important difference between verificational (quantitative) research and grounded theory research. Hutchinson's explanation helps clarify the inductive nature of grounded theory:

In verificational research, the researcher chooses existing theory or conceptual framework and formulates hypotheses, which are then tested in a specific population.

Verificational research is linear; the researcher delineates a problem, selects a theoretical

framework, develops hypotheses, collects data, tests the hypotheses, and interprets results. On a continuum, verificational research is more deductive whereas grounded theory research is more inductive. Verificational research moves from a general theory to a specific situation, whereas grounded theorists aim for the development of a more inclusive, general theory through the analysis of specific social phenomena. (p. 212)

Cresswell (2003) supports qualitative studies aligned with the grounded theory approach to provide constant comparisons of data in emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize similarities and differences.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory in sociology is a strategy for handling data in research, providing modes of conceptualization for describing and explaining. They propose that the role of theory is to enable prediction and explanation of behavior, be useful in the advancement of a theory, be useable in practical applications, and guide research on behavior.

Basing theory on experimental data ties it to the data and makes it irrefutable. In comparative analysis, different groups or subgroups of people are compared and their differences built into theory. In discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories from evidence, and then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept. These conceptual categories can then be explored in other comparison groups, which may support the categorical concept or suggest modifications to make it more able to be generalized.

Comparative analysis can generate two types of theory - substantive or formal (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Substantive theory is developed for a specific area of inquiry such as patient care or professional education. Formal theory is for a conceptualized area of inquiry such as stigma, deviant behavior, formal organization, or reward systems. It is often best to begin with

generating substantive theory from data and then let formal theory emerge from substantive theory. More studies generating substantive theory will ultimately generate and improve formal theory. Most researchers tend to stay in the substantive theory area and avoid going into formal theory. My study was no exception.

Building grounded theory requires an interactive process of data collection, coding, analysis, and planning what to study next. As this interactive process continues, the researcher may explore the same group more deeply or seek out new groups. It is better to pick the groups as one goes along, allowing the data to be a guide, than to choose the group beforehand.

Generating a theory involves a process of research according to Glaser and Strauss. (1967) Bogdan and Biklen (1998) assert that qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products; they echo this emphasis on process. They further indicate that qualitative researchers are concerned with making sure that they capture perspectives accurately. Researchers set up strategies and procedures to enable themselves to consider experiences from the informant's perspective.

Theory generation does not require a significant number of cases. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), one case could be used to generate conceptual categories and a few more cases used to confirm the indication. The job of the researcher is not to provide a perfect description of an area, but to develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant behavior. Generating hypotheses from the data requires only enough data to suggest the hypothesis, not prove it. During the research, the emergent categories will begin to form patterns and interrelations which will ultimately form the core of the emergent theory. When the researcher is convinced that the analytical framework forms a systematic, substantive theory or that it is a

reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied and is presented in a form that others going into the same field could use, then he can publish his results with confidence.

Schön (1983) advocates for reflection in-and-on action. The practitioner, according to Schön, allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation that he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings that have been implicit in his behavior. He carries out an experiment that serves to generate a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. This philosophy also guided my research into the principalship. It is consistent with Glasser and Strauss (1967) in that the researcher will reflect upon each interview before proceeding to the next. Information garnered is then put to use in the next interview developing and testing the emerging theory until such time that the data saturates and the theory has fully emerged. As a former principal, I seek to understand what will attract or deter potential successors to that position so that I can help create the conditions that will allow the succession of a leader that will perpetuate continuous improvement.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.35) indicate that qualitative research focuses on the human experience. Like Glasser and Strauss (1967) and Schön (1983), Denzin and Lincoln assert that this research is guided by human values that give dignity to the person, reduce human suffering, and enhance human well-being. This value system must include the following four components:

1. A commitment to a whole cluster of democratizing values that aim to reduce human suffering. The right to equality is always included.
2. An ethic of care and compassion. This value encompasses sympathy, love and fidelity as primary concerns.

3. A politics of recognition and respect. A value where others are always acknowledged and a certain level of empathy is undertaken.
4. The importance of trust. This value recognizes that no social relationships can function unless humans have some level of trust in each other.

I strove to incorporate these values into my research and in interactions with the participants of this study. I believe it was important to build a trustful, comfortable relationship early on so those informants were free flowing with their ideas and responses.

Method Statement

I embarked on this study in 2008. At that time I planned to conduct one set of about 15 participant interviews. Having completed thirteen interviews, I found my data to have become saturated. Saturation of data occurs when no new data themes are generated from participant interviews. Due to work and family obligations, my study was placed on hiatus. Working with a newly constituted dissertation committee, we collaboratively determined that my original research questions were still very relevant. Being in a period of rapid reform initiatives in the field of education, we determined that I would interview a second cohort with a make-up similar to my first group of participants. With this second, similar sized group of responses, I was able to add a longitudinal perspective to the data as well as identify attractants and deterrents to the principalship that may not have previously been present at the time of the interviews of my first cohort. In addition to this design modification, my literature review was updated to identify current discourse on issues pertinent to this study.

My study is qualitative in design. Using constant comparative methodology from Glaser's Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I identified and developed themes that addressed the central research questions I have outlined above. I sought participants' perceptions of the positive

attributes of both the job of principal and candidates that seek it. I then identified what is attracting some and deterring others from the principalship. While what is an attractant and a deterrent may vary by participant, ultimately I as researcher determined the final categorization for purposes of this study.

After each interview a transcript was created and coded prior to conducting the next interview. Each subsequent interview included questions to inform my study based on codes that emerge during previous interviews. This continued until I was satisfied that my data had saturated. Two cohorts of interviews were conducted. The first set of interviews were in 2008-2009 and the second in 2012-2013. Each cohort consisted of 13 participants which I determined was sufficient to saturate my data. The group of 13 participants interviewed in 2008-2009 is referred to as Cohort A throughout this study. The latter group, interviewed in 2012-2013, is Cohort B.

I concentrated on eliciting the perspectives of each individual participant. After preliminary contact with each participant I had identified through the use of snowball and purposive sampling, I selected a venue for the interview that was most comfortable for the participant. I interviewed participants from rural, suburban and urban settings so pre-consultation with each individual to identify a venue in which they would be most comfortable was essential. Different individuals preferred different settings. My schedule was flexible to accommodate a time that was not stressful or rushed for the participant so that an adequate block of uninterrupted time, of up to approximately 2 hours, was set aside. Each participant was informed that the experience is completely voluntary and confidential. I have completed extensive coursework in qualitative methodology that supported my ability to conduct this research.

As researcher I interviewed participants, tape recorded the interviews with their permission, and personally transcribed the interviews for more detailed analysis and codification. The interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes depending on the flow of the conversation and the comfort of the participant.

Open-ended questions and a relaxed interview style were essential in the development of rich data from these sessions that gave insight to the study research questions. Atkinson (1998) suggested a bank of initiator questions that I had available for use during the session should they be needed. Appendix A and Appendix B outlines the protocol used for the first participant interview I conducted for each group. Appendix A was utilized with participants that were certified, non-practicing administrators. Appendix B was utilized with sitting principals. I sought responses from participants in each group related to six broad categories. These were career influences, preparation, mentoring and support, the principalship (in general), attractants, and deterrents. These questions served as conversation starters and were designed to serve as a guide, not a script. My goal was to have participants openly and freely discuss their views. It was essential that I allow flexibility for some variations during this process. Flexibility was also a key in allowing the expansion of interviews to clarify and develop data as themes emerged. In several cases I conducted a member check which consisted of a follow-up contact with an interviewed participant to clarify their statements.

Participants

Using initial nomination followed by snowball and purposive sampling, I identified New York State certified administrators to participate in in-depth, individual interviews. I conducted interviews identifying themes as they emerged using constant comparative methodology. I gained rich data pertaining to their decisions to seek or not seek the principalship. For this study I

purposely identified two sets of participants for initial interviews. One group was individuals who have become certified as administrators in New York State within the three years prior to being interviewed for the study. Individuals in this first group were not employed as school administrators since attaining their certification. I have included sample initial questions for these interviews in Appendix A. The second group of individuals was certified administrators in upstate New York who were employed as principals. The individuals I interviewed were in their first three years of the principalship at the time of the interview. The three-year limit has been incorporated into the selection of participants so as to not introduce tenure as a factor into the study. I was concerned that tenured principals may present a different view of issues such as job security and accountability. Tenure for administrators in New York State is determined after a three-year probationary period. The sample initial questions are contained in Appendix B. Further, I sought participants that represent urban, rural, and suburban districts in upstate New York so as to have perspective from each of these different demographic areas.

Participant Descriptions and Demographics.

Cohort A participant descriptions.

1A: Joshua (Non-Principal): Joshua is a 38 year old white male high school teacher in a suburban school district. He runs a small craft business on weekends and summers. Joshua became certified because his district paid for his courses at a nearby private university. He was asked to fill in as assistant principal for a period of time during an administrative transition in the district. He fulfilled the role of assistant principal full-time for part of a year as a teacher on special assignment. At the time of the interview, he remained a teacher.

2A: Barbara (Principal): Barbara is a 45 year old white female elementary school principal in a large suburban school district. She is in her second year as principal. Prior to becoming principal,

she served as an assistant middle school principal in the same school district. Barbara obtained her CAS at a nearby public university. She utilized the placement services of her university, and an influential professor assisted her in securing her first administrative position in this district. She previously taught at another large suburban district.

3A: Andrea (Non-Principal): Andrea is a 47 year old white female special education teacher in a rural BOCES. She attained her certification under a reciprocity agreement with another state. Her certification program was completed at a private out-of-state university. Andrea has been applying and interviewing for administrative positions in Upstate Central New York without success for a couple of years. She aspires to be a director of special education either in a local school district or a BOCES.

4A: Robert (Non-Principal): Robert is a 52 year old white male automotive technology teacher at a rural BOCES. He serves as teachers' union president. On several occasions he has assumed the role of summer school principal. He attained his certification from a local public university so he could serve in that role. He also indicated that the successful completion of the required coursework increased his base teaching salary. Robert emphatically indicated that he loathes the suit and tie and that serving as an administrator or principal is not what he wants to do. He prefers hands on activities.

5A: Molly (Non-Principal): Molly is a 50 year old white female secondary science teacher in an urban school district. She is housed in a K-8 building. Molly obtained her certification by starting at public university after having worked in the private sector for over 20 years. She finished her degree at a private university after taking time off for family issues. In addition she possesses an MBA from another private university. She recently lost her husband to cancer. She speaks fondly of her students and their personal and academic struggles. Molly is very concerned

about being able to have a large amount of her student loan debt forgiven after working in a high needs school building. Her need to eliminate this debt delayed her future career plans at the time of the interview. In addition to teaching, she serves as a town board member in the rural town where she lives. Molly aspires to become a business administrator in either the urban district where she currently works or the rural district in which she lives.

6A: Nicholas (Non-Principal): Nicholas is a 27 year old white male high school teacher in a large rural school district. He serves as Department Social Studies Department Chairperson for the district. He was a history major and then enrolled in a two year Master's program that leads to certification. He was motivated to pursue certification in order to become department chair. He completed undergraduate studies at a private university and received his Master's degree at a public university. His CAS was from another public university in the Upstate Central New York area.

7A: Trent (Non-Principal): Trent is a 34 year old white male data management support specialist at a suburban BOCES. After teaching for 9 years, Trent moved to a grant funded position at BOCES as an instructional specialist. He received his CAS from a public university program and then was recruited by his BOCES to his current position. Trent values his current experience but has an ultimate goal of returning to the building as a principal. He plans to search for a building principalship within a year. Trent eventually wants to pursue missionary work in schools in third world countries.

8A: Donald (Non-Principal): Donald is a 46 year old white male district office administrator charged with data management in a small affluent suburban school district. Donald started teaching in a small rural district as a music teacher. Being interested in technology he left public education to work as a certified computer engineer. Despite making a salary much larger than he

could in education, he chose to become certified as an administrator at a public university and apply his technology skills in schools, which he greatly missed. He re-entered public education in a BOCES technology position and then moved to his current job.

9A: Lynn (Principal): Lynn is a 45 year old white female elementary school principal in a large rural school district. She is in her second year of that position. She is married to an elementary principal who is in the process of seeking superintendency. Lynn received her CAS from a public university. She aspires to a district office position in the area of curriculum and instruction.

10A: Marcus (Non-Principal): Marcus is a 29 year old white male who is currently a high school English teacher in a large rural school district. He participated in a Master's certification program at a private university and went on to get certified as a school building leader at the same institution. He has always felt the calling of leadership. Marcus has served two years as a summer school principal during time off as an English teacher. He has two preschoolers at home but still is selectively beginning to apply for principalships. He has been a semi-finalist in a couple of districts.

11A: Mort (Non-Principal): Mort is a 34 year old white male serving as a district level director in an urban school district. He began his career in a medium sized suburban school district. He made the successful transition to a coordinator position in the urban district and then to his current position. He directs the urban school districts program for advanced students. Mort admits that not many non-urban educators make that transition and is quite proud that he did. He desires to improve the academic success of urban students. He received his CAS at a public university.

12A: Art (Principal): Art is a 42 year old white male middle school principal in a medium sized rural school district. Art began his undergraduate education as a computer science major but

found it unfulfilling. He first worked with adults with disabilities before becoming a social studies teacher for five years in a rural school district. He received his certification from a public university in Western New York. Art then taught in an urban setting in the southern tier of New York State. His wife got accepted into a graduate program in Iowa, and Art taught there. While in Iowa, Art became certified as an administrator at a private university. Art returned to Upstate Central New York as a middle school principal in a rural school district.

13A: Lydia (Principal): Lydia is a 35 year old white female assistant principal of an alternative high school run by BOCES in a small urban district. She commutes 35 mile one way each day. She enjoys working with students and administrators from various districts as well as what she describes as “the day to day craziness.” She attained certification a public university. Lydia believes strongly in the value of networking and seeks to build connections through her interaction with many districts as well as her public university program.

Cohort B participant descriptions.

B1: Thomas (Non-Principal): Thomas is a 43 year old white male teacher of music in a suburban middle school. He began his working life in the music industry as an instrument salesman. Inspired by school band directors he met, he pursued his music certification in both New York and Virginia. After substitute teaching in Virginia, he took a music teacher position in a rural school district in New York for four years. He then moved to his current position. Inspired by an administrative intern, he pursued his certification as an administrator at a private university due to availability of free credits through school. When it came time to do his internship he chose to fully immerse himself in that endeavor, taking a full year leave of absence without pay to do so.

B2: Connie (Principal): Connie is a 45 year old white female elementary school principal in an affluent suburban school district. Initially certified as both a health and special education teacher,

she applied for and received elementary school certification. Her first job was as a sixth grade middle school teacher in a small urban school district. Connie loves middle school aged children. She then took a job teaching in the middle school in her current district, using free credits provided by the district to obtain her administrative certification at a private university. She taught ELA and elevated to the teacher-leader position of instructional leader for ELA. Recruited by the superintendent, Connie served as assistant high school principal before being asked to take her current position.

B3: Harry (Non Principal/Principal): Harry is a 41 year old white male in a suburban school district. He is currently a Spanish teacher, having just returned to the classroom after serving as assistant principal for one year. He did this as a teacher on special assignment thus maintaining tenure as a teacher. Harry has lupus and indicates his health condition was exacerbated by the long hours and stress of the assistant principalship. Harry has National Board Certification as a teacher and has been in education for 20 years. He received his administrative certification through the CAS program at a private university. Harry has a background in construction and indicates interest in using his CAS for something different such as a position as superintendent of buildings and grounds. He also indicates an interest in possibly teaching at the college level.

B4: Dominic (Principal): Dominic is a 27 year old white male serving as a newly appointed assistant principal in a suburban school district. It is the same district in which he was teaching. Dominic began his college program of study as an engineer and switched to math after deciding he didn't want to be at a desk forever. He pursued teaching certification through a Master's program. He received his administrative certification by taking courses funded by the district at a private university. Dominic was able to act as teacher on special assignment to pursue his internship in the district. He desires to pursue his doctorate and will look to the principalship as a

next step. Dominic possesses a high degree of comfort with technology, in particularly, the access, manipulation, and interpretation of student achievement data.

B5: Gordon: (Principal): Gordon is a 39 year old white male. He is in his third year as elementary school principal in a suburban school district. Gordon's undergraduate degree was in business from a public university. He went on to get a Master's in teaching from a private university. He received his administrative certification from the same private university. With the exception of a brief stint teaching in western New York, he is now principal in the same district where he did most of his teaching as well as where he grew up and went to school. Between teaching and becoming elementary principal, he served the district in the role of curriculum coordinator.

B6: John: (Principal): John is a 33 year old with male serving as high school principal in a large suburban school district. He attended a local private university for his undergraduate, masters, and CAS programs. He taught in the same district where he is now high school principal. John left to take an assistant principal position in a neighboring large suburban school district for one year. He was invited back to apply for the high school principalship of that district which he did.

B7: Frieda: (Non-Principal): Frieda is a 40 year old white female. She just completed her internship and certification as a teacher on special assignment in a large rural school district. Frieda received her certification at a public university. She serves dually as middle school English department chair. Frieda has begun applying to several administrative positions in the area. She has been in education for nine years. Prior to entering the field, Frieda was a non-profit grant writer, photographer, and auction house administrator. Frieda is very willing to relocate and indicates she would actually prefer to do so. While she would consider a

principalship, her desire is to work in the area of curriculum and eventually aspire to a district level curriculum position.

B8: Cindy: (Non-Principal): Cindy is a 52 year old white female elementary school teacher and reading specialist in a large rural school district. Cindy has taught for 29 years and began taking courses in her 26th year of teaching. She received her CAS in administration from a local public university. She was motivated by her husband losing his job. She believed her CAS might be an avenue to increase her income. While she had been to two interviews, Cindy had not advanced beyond the first round.

B9: Jack: (Non-Principal): Jack began his teaching career in 1983. He is a 53 year old white male technology teacher in a rural school district. He completed his certification in 2012 at a public university. Due to his high salary, he is selectively seeking an administrative position in high quality, affluent school districts near Rochester, NY where his daughter and her family live. He wants to relocate to an economically vibrant area as he views where he is as increasing in economic deprivation.

B10: Darlene: (Principal): Darlene is a 42 year old white female elementary school principal in a large suburban school district. Her school serves only pre-school children in the district. Darlene is a career changer. She initially worked as a retail manager of a large national department store chain then went back to school for teaching certification. She taught for ten years in a private urban Islamic school. Darlene was approached after about four years into that position to take over for the principal who was leaving. She realized the best avenue was to enroll in a public university CAS program leading to certification as an administrator. In the internship component of that program, she served as summer school principal for a pre-school program in the district in

which she now works. When the principalship opened, she was invited to apply by the human resources director. This was the second year she had lead that program.

B11: Nadia: (Principal): Nadia is a 42 year old African American female. She is serving as an assistant principal/dean of students in a rural, mainly white, school district. This is her first year. She has extensive urban teaching experience. Nadia received her undergraduate degree in communications and worked in the fashion industry. She took a fast-track teacher preparation program at a private university and became certified in Spanish and English. She received her administrative certification and CAS from this same private university. Nadia discusses many incidents of what she refers to as racism in the educational setting. She indicated that she feels discriminated against as an African American, Islamic female. She is intent on directing an urban charter school. She has prepared and submitted an application for her own charter school to the State Education Department for consideration.

B12: Lorraine: (Principal): Lorraine is a 50 year old African American female serving as an assistant principal in an urban K-8 school building. She indicates she went back to school after she was married and had children. She began as a teaching assistant. She received her undergraduate degree from a private university in 2001. Lorraine taught for four years in an established urban charter school. She was selected for a scholarship to pursue her CAS in administration at a public university. She is serving in the capacity of assistant principal as a teacher on special assignment.

B13: Tammy: (Principal): Tammy is a 46 year old white female K-8 principal in an urban school district. After teaching for four years in an urban parochial school, and then as a teacher in her current urban school district, Tammy then served for ten years as an assistant principal in her current urban public school district. She had completed her CAS at a public university. Despite

being pressured to take a principalship by both principal colleagues and district office during her ten year run as assistant principal, Tammy refused until her youngest child was in school. She was then asked to become part of a redesign team for a school that was being reconfigured due to being on the state's failing school list. At the completion of that project, Tammy was recruited and accepted the principalship of that redesigned school, where she now works.

Summary of Basic Participant Demographics Collectively and by Cohort.

Below is a chart depicting the basic demographics of the participants in this study. It outlines gender, race, position setting, status as principal, average age, and institution type. While these variables are not a focus of this study, care was taken to select participants who were representative of the Upstate Central New York area. When appropriate, reference is made to some select variables in the findings section of this study.

VARIABLES	ALL PARTICIPANTS	COHORT A	COHORT B
Gender			
Males	14	8	6
Females	12	5	7
Age			
Average Age	40	37.6	42.5
Race			
White	24	13	11
Black	2	0	2
Principal Status			
Principal	13	4	9
Non-Principal	13	9	4
Position Setting			
Urban		3	2
Suburban		4	7
Rural		6	4
Level Setting			
Elementary		2	6
Secondary		6	7
BOCES		3	0
District Office		2	0
University Type			
Private - NY		4	7
Public - NY		8	6
Out of State		1	0

Procedures

Protection of Human Subjects.

This study was submitted to the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as an expedited review. Approval was received in February, 2008. The physical risks to informants were minimal as no invasive treatment or physical contact was required. Since the informants described their educational and job seeking experiences where sensitive issues had the potential to emerge, participants had the option of discontinuing or rescheduling the interview if they became uncomfortable in recounting or recalling certain events. This did not occur during any of

the 26 interviews conducted during the course of the study. All of the participants were voluntary and could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. The purpose of the study was explained to each participant as clearly as possible, and the potential benefits were explored. The expectations of the participants, including the time commitment, were explained. Each informant was given a pseudo name and was identified only by that name throughout this study. No information regarding school districts or their employees was included in the document. My contact information was supplied to each participant as well as contact information for the chair of the committee. Confidentiality of the participant was and will continue to be closely guarded. Permission to use direct quotes in the reporting of the results of the study was secured from each participant. Quotes were modified to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. Tapes were secured at my locked residence. Audiotapes were destroyed as soon as the data analysis was completed.

For purposes of this study, I followed the protocols for expedited IRB approval as outlined by Syracuse University.

Identification and Contact of Participants.

I am a 32-year member of the School Administrators' Association on New York State (SAANYS). During this time I have been active regionally, statewide, and nationally on various committees and boards. This experience allowed me to develop an extensive network of colleagues that I utilized to assist me in identifying initial participants for my study. Initially, I sought to have three to four potential participants in each category nominated through my network contacts. I then utilized both snowball and purposive sampling to attain the remainder of my sample of participants. In social science research, snowball sampling is a technique for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among

their acquaintances. Thus, the sample group appears to grow like a rolling snowball. Using purposive sampling, researchers identify characteristics of a participant or group of participants. Purposive sampling helps build in variety while acknowledging opportunity for intensive study. It assists in rectifying the differences between a recognized large population of hypothetical cases and a small sub-population of cases accessible for study by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Use of these sampling and recruiting methods makes data collection and analysis manageable for qualitative research purposes. For my study, this use enabled me to obtain participants with the characteristics I desired: administrators certified within the past three years; administrators practicing in upstate New York; rural, suburban and urban administrators; and certified administrators actively engaged in the principalship as well as those who are not. Then only those individuals were pursued for interviews in the study. I snowball sampled within a group of potential participants identified through the use of initial nominations gathered from both my colleagues and local university preparation programs. This produced participants meeting the stated criteria for inclusion in this study. I did not include individuals referred by their direct supervisors.

Using either phone or e-mail I contacted each participant personally. During this contact I described the study and reviewed the requirements of their participation. I followed up with a summary letter that outlined the focus of the study, procedures to be used, time frames, and reinforcement of the confidentiality that was inherent in the study. Each participant was provided with informed consent that they signed prior to the commencement of their participation (Appendix C). Only participants who signed the consent form were included in the study.

Analysis of Data.

Constant comparative analysis calls for ongoing analysis of data and the continuous development of codes until the data have saturated. Adjustments to the interview protocol were modified as needed based on emerging data during the interviews. I conducted ongoing and continuous analysis of the transcribed individual interviews using manual manipulation of the data to identify clearly emergent themes. This allowed me to create more in-depth familiarity with the data than might be done with computer analysis. This was followed by a clear analysis of the data in written form and the development of study findings. The transcribed text was used to define meaning through ongoing, open-ended analysis, which, through multiple readings, led to the identification of recurring concepts, categories, patterns, and themes. Emerging themes were identified and codified. As I coded the preliminary themes for each cohort, I found I had identified similar but not exact theme titles. I then consolidated the preliminary themes into a single list of codes which I called blended themes. As analysis progressed, the blended themes were categorized into five final themes (Appendix D). These final themes were the following: Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions, Climate, and Personal Factors. I then analyzed and developed these final themes into an explanatory framework. Data for each cohort were analyzed separately and longitudinally, seeking both similarities and differences between the cohort responses. A Final Theme Development Matrix is illustrated in Appendix E. This demonstrates the number of responses and respondents by cohort for each blended theme. Final themes are a compilation of the blended themes.

I compiled data gained from the “Magic Wand” question asked of both cohorts. These data were also utilized in both the findings and recommendations sections of this study.

Management Plan

Role and Qualifications of the Researcher.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) require a qualitative researcher to draw on past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen. Excellent observation and effective interaction skills are also a requisite. To this study I brought 33 years of experience as a professional educator in the public schools of New York State. I have served as a teacher, assistant superintendent in a small rural district, director of pupil personnel services, and an elementary principal and director of curriculum and instruction in a school district in suburban Syracuse, New York. Further, I have completed all required coursework including considerable work in qualitative methodology. These Syracuse University courses included Introduction to Qualitative Research, Qualitative Research I, Qualitative Research II, Statistical Thinking, and Introduction to Survey Research. Bias cannot be ignored, and a conscious effort to not allow my personal experiences to impact the study was made throughout the course of the investigation. Strauss and Corbin also require a qualitative researcher to maintain analytical distance and social sensitivity in the investigation and interpretation of data. My background as a practicing administrator enhanced my ability to probe the experiences and the perspectives of the study participants. Additionally, my long time participation as a member, executive office, and President of the School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS) provided me with a wide network of contacts as well as unique experiences in interfacing state-wide with educators and state officials that was necessary to conduct this research.

Chapter 4

Findings

Findings

Cohorts A and B each consisted of 13 participants. Each interview was analyzed to identify potential themes of significance as they related to the original research questions:

1. How do educators who are certified as administrators in Upstate Central New York describe experiences that have influenced them to pursue or not pursue the principalship?
2. What do certified administrators perceive as the attractants and deterrents to the principalship in Upstate Central New York and which of these are factors in their decision to apply for and accept principalships?
3. How have the attractants and deterrents to the principalship changed in the recent years covered by this study?

As I analyzed the interviews, I was able to extract specific quotes contained in the participant responses and code them to preliminary themes. Thus, each theme is supported by qualitative data. Each cohort yielded thirty preliminary themes, though slightly different theme names initially were used. As my analysis continued, I consolidated the preliminary themes into what I called blended themes. For example, in Cohort A, preliminary themes entitled BOCES, Discipline/VP Role, Job Variety, Personnel Issues, and Principal/VP Role were consolidated into a blended category entitled Nature of the Job. Similarly in Cohort B, the preliminary themes of Autonomy, Isolation, and Nature of the Job were combined into the Nature of the Job blended theme. After this stage of analysis, I was left with twenty-five (25) blended themes. Of these, there were four that emerged as unique to only Cohort B. These were Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), Discrimination, Fiscal Climate, and Job Security. To make the

analysis manageable, blended themes were condensed further. Five final themes were then developed. These final themes were Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors. Appendix D illustrates how the metamorphosis of preliminary themes to blended themes and then to the five final themes occurred.

In the analysis below, each final theme was explored. The attractants and deterrents to the principalship, as expressed by the participants in both cohorts where applicable were articulated. The blended theme, for the most part, is described using the voice of the participants. The participants' descriptions of the impact of these themes on their decision to pursue or not pursue the principalship were addressed as well. It is noted that every participant does not speak to every element I have identified in each theme. Themes are a compilation of the voices of many participants.

Following the descriptions of each theme that emerged from the participant interviews, each final theme was summarized. That summary includes the highlights and points I, as researcher, have deemed significant. Longitudinal differences between the two cohorts that occur in the data shall be discussed in Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications.

Accountability.

Accountability: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

In both Cohorts A and B, accountability emerged as a deterrent in participants' decisions to pursue the principalship. Cohort A had only two of the thirteen participants comment on accountability. These comments were relatively general and focused on the accountability's impact on the principals' job and time management. A6 told me, "The principal is accountable for everything even if they have no control of the issue." A2 relayed that "Testing is very time consuming leaving little time for other duties to get done."

The theme was much stronger among the Cohort B participants than it was with those members of Cohort A. Cohort B members focused mainly on the accountability inherent in the APPR requirements. There were participants that found that APPR increased their time in classrooms and ultimately resulted in rich dialogue with teachers about the effective elements of instruction and student achievement. In this way, APPR served as an attractant by increasing the instructional leadership component of the role of the principal. There was, however, a difference in the tone of the comments between Cohorts A and B.

Annual Professional Performance Review: This blended theme was unique to Cohort B.

Comments from members of Cohort B were distinctly more pointed. Participant B2 emphatically stated that “Increased accountability threatens my job security” and that “both teacher tenure and APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review) causes major frustration.” Similarly, Participants B9 and B6 both express frustration with not being able to address mediocrity within the teaching staff. They are quoted respectively, expressing the following frustrations, “It is frustrating knowing teachers need to be replaced and not being able to do it.” and “I’m dealing with a mediocre staff.” Participant B12, an assistant principal, further expounds that “It is difficult to delegate many duties as you are ultimately accountable,” and “Anything that happens is the principal’s responsibility. It all falls on the principal.” She goes on to say, “With the increased responsibility, I’m debating if I even want to be a principal!”

All thirteen members of Cohort B expressed ideas and made comments about the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). APPR is associated with a 2010 addition to New York State Education Law. Education Law 3012(c) mandates that both teachers and principals receive an annual performance rating. This rating will be one of the four following: Highly

Effective, Effective, Developing, or Ineffective. This rating system is commonly referred to in the educational community as HEDI. Principals and teachers receiving a Developing or Ineffective score are required to be placed on an improvement plan. Should they receive two consecutive Ineffective ratings they may be subject to dismissal through a process called an expedited 3020a (referring the section of New York State education law governing that process). For principals, these scores are based on a combination of student achievement scores, teacher performance, and leadership performance of the students and teachers in their charge. In addition to receiving their own HEDI scores, the principal is engaged in conducting extensive observations and evaluations of teachers multiple times throughout the school year. This process is extremely time intensive from preconference through written evaluations and summaries. Many principals in this study report having time for little else during the course of a school day, pushing required management tasks and parent communication to after school and evening hours. This significantly extends the work day, ultimately encroaching on personal and family time.

All thirteen Cohort B members produced sixty-two quotes which I attributed to APPR. Of these sixty-two quotes I labeled seven as attractants, fifty-two as deterrents, and three as neutral in nature.

Those viewing APPR as an attractant cited the potential for improvement in curriculum and instruction. Participant B13 and B12 referenced the increased rigor of curriculum and attribute it directly to APPR. B12 stated that, “The advent of Common Core has helped increase the rigor of the curriculum.” While B13 saw APPR increasing rigor and being “ultimately good,” she cautioned that it may be “too much too fast.” B 12 concurred that “APPR and state mandates have caused a lot of change fast.” She added, “APPR has caused a lot of retirements.”

A second attractant of APPR is that it has vaulted the principal into the role of instructional leader. B7 revealed, “APPR has forced conversations about instruction between teacher and principal.” I found comments by B10 to help differentiate APPR’s impact on new administrators compared to those already practicing prior to its advent. B10 said, “Being a new administrator, APPR is the norm for me. It is not as difficult for me as it is for some.” This statement alludes to a “new breed” of school principal that has been schooled in the methodology and accountability demands associated with the implementation of common core curriculum and the APPR accountability concept. This is consistent with the idea outlined in the literature by Stone-Johnson (2014) that generational differences impact the needs of particular generations of school principals.

By far, however, APPR was viewed by a majority of the participants in this study as a deterrent to the decision to pursue the principalship.

The most common issue raised by participants is one of time and workload. Participants conveyed stories of how the mandates of APPR have reallocated their time towards teacher evaluation and away from necessary managerial tasks, student and parent interaction, along with family and personal time. “APPR has demanded an enormous amount of principal time. It has put more on the plate than anyone can handle,” confided B3. He added, “It (APPR) forces principals to pay less attention to details and more to teacher evaluation.” B5 provided insight on the increased workload and time impact of that workload faced by principals. “APPR is a further impact on principal time, making it more difficult to strike balance between school (work) and home.” He went on to say, “The duties of the principal are increasing due to APPR, pushing more required work to out of school hours.” B6 was a bit more candid and stated:

APPR is burning principals out. There is a lack of additional support to be able to get the work done. It causes me to spend more time away from my family due to this work being pushed outside of the school day.

B8 concurred with B6 in regard to workload and lack of support and explained:

APPR has made the job impossible due to the number of observations. It takes three hours to write one up. I have other duties that cannot be attended to while I am doing that. Principals need more assistance with completing the required observations.

B10 reinforced the time issue stating, “The amount of time getting required evaluations completing is impacting the time I can devote to other issues. The time APPR takes to administer is overwhelming administrators!”

Time and workload issues are closely followed by participant perspectives pertaining to APPR’s impact on the recruitment and retention of quality school leaders. B9 offered this observation:

APPR is limiting the upward mobility of vice principals. They simply don’t want to make the jump and subject themselves to the potential detrimental effects of APPR. In addition, principals are reluctant to take new administrative interns. They don’t want to delegate anything that could impact their APPR score.

B9 indicated that potential administrators are being counseled to not pursue the principalship:

My Superintendent actively discourages teaching staff from going into administration. This has caused the significant loss of good candidates. In our district, there are a lot of applicants for vice principal positions because there is no APPR requirement for that position.

There is also a growing reluctance for principals to want to be assigned to schools with challenging student populations. “There is a fear that the schools with the hardest kids will get the lowest scores. This is will negatively impact the evaluation of the principal. Why subject yourself to that?” claimed B5. “In tough settings, APPR is killing morale with great teachers and leaders being rated low based on test scores.”

Closely related to the recruitment and retention concern is APPR's impact on the principals' sense of job security. B2 indicated, "APPR puts your job security in jeopardy. It makes you dependent upon others whose performance is out of your immediate control." "Accountability for principals is scary due to the structure of APPR," echoed B7.

Finally, the stress induced by the implementation of APPR as well as the APPR's political ramifications was evident in the voices of Cohort B participants. "APPR is politically motivated," said B4. B2 expressed a related concern that "The public publishing of APPR scores and principal ratings will be detrimental to the morale and ultimately the effectiveness of public school principals." B10 found, "APPR has caused the District Office to exert much more pressure at the building level on both principals and teachers." She went on to state, "It is increasingly difficult to manage teachers who are under constant stress due to APPR. People's number one concern is their APPR score." B1 offered concern that despite putting a system of evaluation into effect that produces a numeric rating for teachers, little can still be done to remove the teacher who is found to be ineffective. "The teachers' union is protecting bad teachers who end up hurting the principal's APPR score. Your future as a principal depends upon people who you cannot fire!" expressed B10. To this point, B2 added, "Teacher tenure and APPR combine to cause extreme frustration."

Accountability articulated by Tammy (B13).

Tammy is the principal of an Upstate Central New York urban K-8 school. She is a 46 year old white female. Tammy began teaching in an urban parochial school followed by serving ten years as an assistant principal in her current urban district. She revealed that she actually became a vice principal by accident. She was overseeing the summer school program as her internship. Her principal mentor encouraged her to apply for an assistant principalship position

as it would be good interviewing experience for her. She believed that no one ever gets a position in the district on their first interview attempt; however, she was indeed hired. During her tenure as assistant principal Tammy was continually encouraged by principals who were her informal mentors to apply for a principalship in the district. Continually, she refused to do so because she had her own pre-school aged children and felt that the principalship would negatively impact her family. During her last year in the assistant principalship position, she was asked to be on a school redesign team. Her school was labeled by New York State as Persistently Low Achieving (PLA). Due to low student achievement on the required New York State standardized tests, with little or no improvement over time, schools labeled as PLA must redesign the school and develop a state approved improvement plan. This plan calls for replacing the principal and a portion of the teaching staff. Following the completion of the redesign plan, Tammy was asked by the Superintendent to become principal of the newly redesigned school. It was a monumental task and, because her children were now in school and no longer required daycare, and she felt supported by district administration, she believed the time was right to move to the principalship.

As Tammy began her principalship in the newly redesigned school, the urgency to demonstrate improved student achievement increased exponentially with the implementation of APPR. Not only did Tammy need to lead a newly designed school building, she needed to implement all the requirements of the new APPR plan. With the many sanctions attached to APPR, one would think Tammy would be overwhelmed. The opposite was true.

Tammy's story was interesting in that it illustrated both sides of the accountability theme. When asked, "How is APPR impacting you as a principal?" Tammy replied, "In the long run, I think it has been positive." She indicated that the district plan was tied to the Common Core standards. The scoring is very clear. Teachers know what it takes to be rated highly effective.

Professional development is aligned to provide support for the skills necessary to implement the elements of the plan that will allow the teachers to become highly effective. Because of the implementation of APPR, Tammy reported observing much more rigorous instruction which included students being held accountable for their learning. “Instruction is changing!” said Tammy. She added:

I think in the long run it will take us to a richer place with students being challenged a lot more than they have ever been. However, I think it’s going to take a couple of years for us to really get there.

Therein lays the dilemma!

When asked about job security, Tammy said:

It makes me really nervous. You work really hard, and I am intent on doing things right. It’s hard to think that you could be possibly rated (as a principal) ineffective due to the test scores. That, however, is probably going to happen. A portion of our evaluation is based on what we do on a day to day basis, but a big portion is those student test scores. Our kids are making gains, but, because the tests change every year, it’s a moving target! The state keeps changing their stance on what year is going to be the baseline to measure growth in test scores. That’s a problem. We’re working hard, instruction is changing, and children are making growth. We are hoping that translates to proficiency.

Tammy cited that the district has a history of moving principals frequently despite research indicating that sustainable change takes 5 to 8 years to achieve. In addition to the district’s practice of moving principals frequently, schools on the state list as persistently low achieving require principals and teachers to be moved out of buildings. That plan also does not allow for sustainable change to solidify.

In essence, while Tammy was identified into the role of principal as a change agent, she could have been in jeopardy of being removed from the building and program she was instrumental in designing due to district policy and state regulation.

Tammy stated she loved her building, students and staff. She was constantly in classrooms and directly supporting teachers’ instruction. She was deeply committed to seeing

through a successful transformation of her building. Despite that commitment, Tammy was considering the possibility of seeking a district curriculum and instruction position away from the immediate pressure thrust upon the principal because of state and local accountability measures such as APPR requirements.

Nature of the Job.

Job Variety: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Both cohorts spoke to the idea that no two days of the principalship are the same. However, the view of this theme being classified as an attractant or deterrent significantly changes between the cohorts. Cohort A predominately saw variety as an attractant while Cohort B was more pessimistic with a preponderance of their comments labeling it as a deterrent. “There are a wide variety of tasks associated with the principalship, all of which allow me to impact more students than I ever could in the classroom,” boasted A13. “I have the potential to affect change in education in this position,” decreed A8. A9 went on to express, “I enjoy the challenges of the job. The principalship builds an understanding of curriculum and instruction I never had as a teacher. Flexibility to enact change develops and enhances my confidence as principal.” A1 questioned, “Where else can you wear so many hats, work with learning children and learning adults, and have the opportunity to change curriculum?”

A12 was a career changer — from the world of business to education. “Leadership is inherent in the principalship. Good leaders can lead anywhere, in the board room or the school building. Principals have the opportunity to create successful schools and successful students.”

A11 enjoyed the challenge of developing and implementing programs that result in student success but indicated, “I prefer a district office job to affect more change to a greater

number of students across a district.” A11 viewed the principalship as limiting the scope of his potential professional impact.

A number of deterring concerns were enumerated by B8:

The volume of paperwork and emailing is amazing. It is physically impossible to accomplish what the principal is being asked to do. I find it the norm that regular work a longer day with no additional compensation!

B12 bluntly stated, “There is too much paperwork. Those certified are choosing not to pursue the principalship.” She went on to expound upon the vast variety of challenges faced by those in the position of principal:

Principals must be open to learning and using new skills. You need to be much more than just smart; you need to know data and how to use it. I had to give up daily teaching and interaction with kids in order to get all the paperwork done. People want the principal visible. The two don’t mix. As principal, you are damned if you do and damned if you don’t.

B13 summed up the frustration, “The job is now 24/7.”

The impact and deterrent nature of outside forces other than the district office are expressed by B6, “The powerful teachers’ union and BOE make the job much more challenging.”

Leadership versus management: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Participants in both cohorts expressed in various ways the notion that the principalship was a multi-faceted position. Emerging in the interviews from both cohorts was a constant battle between the need to accomplish and stay on top of routine and necessary management tasks and the professional desire to be an instructional leader and impact the education of children. This pull between the leadership and management roles of the principal was foreshadowed in the literature by Richardson (1991) and Williams and Portin (1997) among others.

Cohort A participants viewed management tasks as a strong deterrent of the principalship. “Management tasks consume time that needs to be devoted to instructional leadership,” stated A11. “Paperwork is pervasive and takes time massive amounts of time away from leadership,” he went on to say. A5 concurred noting that “A principal dealing constantly with discipline issues has no time to move the building and district forward instructionally.” A1 expressed the “inability to be a change agent” in reference to the role of vice principal. “It is essentially discipline only”. Management issues impeding the ability to function as an instructional leader were also stressed by A1 and A2. A2 also tagged the issue as impeding more than just instruction. “I want to take on more professional development for both myself and my staff, but it is difficult due to the time spent on management issues.” A7 raised another deterrent issue, that of the invasive intervention into instructional management by the central office. He explained:

My ability to lead is severely constrained by the District Office. Central Office constantly engages in micromanagement that impedes my leadership. I’ve seen districts where there is a lot of micromanagement and districts that are run by fear. My hesitancy to get into a building principalship has been my conversations with principals who are there that said they thought they were going to really make a difference in buildings, and when they get there they find out they don’t have the instructional impact that they thought they could because of politics and personnel, and day-to-day problem solving stuff, as well having no autonomy as their decisions are essentially controlled by the district office, and that has been a frustration for them.

B1 indicated that micromanagement restricts how he would run a building. “It’s like here in this district, it’s ultra-professionalism, everything is controlled. We just don’t talk about things here. Everything’s top secret. I just don’t work that way. I’m a much more transparent person”.

A number of Cohort A participants spoke to the managerial nature role of the principalship and vice principalship. As an entry level position, the vice-principalship has been relegated to deal mainly with management and student disciplinary tasks. While these skills and

duties are necessary daily functions in a school, building confidence and motivation to move on to the principalship within the ranks of vice principals seems significantly deterred. A11, a Program Director who interned in the VP role, stated, "The nature of the VP role is dealing with discipline and class schedules. I see principals as spending much of their time just putting out fires. I want more." A2 pointed out that "The VP position is a stepping stone, one you must do to move up the ladder."

A9 took this idea a step further:

It seems the VP role is a stepping stone to the middle and high school principalship. It is often the position that is part of the required internship. What about those people who want to move into administration but do not desire to be a principal? Having to endure the vice principalship is a very huge deterrent.

A5 and A6 have been totally deterred as a result of seeing the highly routine, management side of administration. "I came from a business background and desire a business position. I have no desire to be a principal, so why should I have to enter as a vice principal?" asserted A5. "A deterrent is the necessity to become a vice principal before you become a principal" admitted A10. A6 has all but ruled out the principalship indicating, "I plan to stay a teacher. I have more ability to make change than does a principal who is saddled with management tasks all day."

The issue of APPR accountability is unique to Cohort B. APPR essentially forces principals into an instructional leadership role. While concern is expressed on just how routine and necessary management tasks can be effectively accomplished, Cohort B participants see the resulting emphasis on their instructional leadership duties as a positive attractant of the principalship. B6 said, "I like the leadership component of the principalship. My changing role includes much more instructional leadership than in the past." B2 added, "The role of the principal is now including the leading of more professional development for teachers." More

interaction with teachers is expressed positively by B12 sharing, “I enjoy being able to model teaching technique for teachers.” Summing up the positive nature of the emerging instructional leadership role of principals in the era of APPR is B13. B13 enthusiastically shared:

I now have the chance to use my skills to lead an educational transformation. Further, I am able to engage in rich discussion around student data with teachers with the goal of improving instruction and student outcomes. It is the instructional piece of this job that I truly enjoy.

Other Cohort B members expressed concerns regarding the managerial necessities of the job. “Principals need a Dean of Students or an Assistant Principal in order to be freed up to make observations and engage in conversations with teachers regarding instruction,” alerted B7. She went on to say, “Despite the need and requirement for the principal to be the instructional leader, hands are tied with discipline and daily tasks.” B8, an administrative intern in the position of assistant principal, indicated, “My day is essentially doling out discipline and putting out fires. There is no time for instructional leadership.” B5 reiterated the need for additional support for the principal role informing us, “There is a strong and urgent need for more people to delegate day to day tasks to.”

Autonomy and isolation: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

References to the autonomous aspect of the principalship were found mainly in Cohort B. B11 had unique characteristics as a participant in that she had the desire to ultimately run her own charter school; “In a charter school I’m able to do more for the community. I want to run my own charter school. In smaller schools, it is easier to make change without pushback.” She spoke positively about autonomy indicating that it would indeed be an attractant. However, she believed that her autonomy was constrained within the public school setting articulating:

A principal has the most ability of anyone to be able to make change. However, a charter school principal is in total charge. Private schools lack growth potential. That is a plus

for public schools. If I were to remain in the non-charter public school, I want to be Superintendent to be able to run things, set policy, and control the environment.

Other Cohort B members saw principal autonomy as compromised. “The principalship lacks the freedom to be creative. One wrong move ruins you and your career,” asserted B1. “With the advent and proliferation of shared decision making one has to take the time to build consensus on matters requiring swift and immediate action and intervention. Consensus building and taking immediate action don’t jive,” B1 indicated.

Isolation is touched upon by participants in both Cohort A and B. A11 mentioned that “There is extreme isolation in the principalship,” and further cautioned that “There is need for continuous and regular support for principals just starting out.” A 10 agreed, noting, “You are out there on an island by yourself.” B10 revealed, “I am extremely disconnected from other principals and the District Office. There is a lack of availability of other administrators to call upon for advice.” B2, an elementary principal found that “The elementary principal position is isolating. There is a lack of connection with my colleagues.” B1 indicated, “There is no contact from the District Office unless you screw up!”

Several participants highlighted the value of experience in being successful in the principalship. A8 indicated that, “The principalship is not for the young or novice. The job is not black and white. You need experience to understand the gray areas.” A12 pointed to the need for experience refined skills to attain success. He said, “There is a need to be detail oriented to be successful as a principal. This skill is developed over time.” B6, discussed his desire to someday seek a superintendency relates the value of experience throughout his career saying:

I think it’s similar to being a principal. Having that classroom experience as a teacher is very important. I knew that by my having only three years of teaching experience it might be a stumbling point, an area that people might question. If so I have to prove myself. I think the same thing holds true for the superintendency. Having to run a building, after having done it now for a couple of years, it’s a huge task. Running a high school building

seems similar running a small school district. If you don't have that experience going in, it makes it a little bit more difficult to be successful.

Personnel issues: This theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Members of Cohort A were much more articulate regarding personnel issues as a specific topic of discussion. While Cohort B participants did not focus directly on personnel issues, elsewhere in the Nature of the Job section references are made to both frustrations and impediments to the principal's mission caused by teachers unions and ineffective teachers. APPR, discussed earlier in the Accountability section, reveals many of the issues discussed here under personnel by Cohort A participants.

Members of Cohort A in general saw personnel issues as a deterrent factor in considering the principalship. This negative factor was directed at both incompetent teachers as individuals and collectively as teachers unions. From the responses, it appears unions are seen as perpetuating the individual incompetence of some teachers by supporting contractual protections.

"My role has become one of facilitating the change of adults in education more than the curriculum to be delivered to children," lamented A10. Individual teacher incompetence weighs heavy on A4, A6, and A9. A4, in brutally honest fashion, asserted, "My greatest issue and frustration is that of incompetent teachers in my charge. It is extremely frustrating knowing that the principal has little to no power to change it." Similarly, A6 expounded upon the deterrent of having to deal with personnel by saying, "I have no interest in solving daily problems or dealing with people issues." Transitioning from the impact of individual to collective personnel issues A9 added:

Disgruntled teachers and the resistance to change by the teachers union impacts our ability to move forward in education. It's like they think they can just wait it out. They are most likely right. Contractual issues exacerbate and magnify personnel problems when a collective bargaining agreement is not settled in a timely manner. It would

behoove a district to get things settled contractually, so we can move forward educationally.

A1 observes that “The administrative role needs to change to allow principals to delegate more routine tasks so they can focus on curricular and instructional change and improving teacher effectiveness through intensive supervision.”

Public, parents and politics: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Public school principals are public employees. A large part of the job is interfacing with and being accountable to the public. A pillar of our democracy is free speech. This right is very broad, particularly when it comes to the public’s right to criticize and speak their thoughts on something as public as education. This public input often comes without the public’s privity to confidential issues or knowledge of the constraints placed upon principals by federal, state and local entities. The principal must often face scrutiny and criticism to which he or she cannot publically respond.

A7 exposed this frustration, saying “The principal is inhibited by local politics and day to day problems.” He pointed, in particular, to parents indicating that “one of the most challenging issues for me is over involved parents.” This was, word for word, expressed also by A5. “I find that there is a pervasive lack of respect for your decisions by parents. They feel you work for them and should implement their wishes,” reported A1. A9 found that “Disgruntled parents take an enormous amount of my time away from other pressing issues. It is, however, a part of the job that cannot be neglected for even a brief period of time.”

While members of Cohort A identified parents and the public as factors impacting their job and time, Cohort B members revealed issues of the public’s trust of schools and public officials that was not present in earlier interviews. “There is a lot of friction between parents and principals,” confided B8. B2 bemoaned that “Parents are controlling many aspects of education.

Superintendents and Board of Education allow this to occur. Parents, and, for that matter, many superintendents and Boards just do not understand the politics of being a principal.” The school experience that parents had themselves had an impact on how they now behave as parents. We heard this from B12, who relayed, “It is an extreme challenge getting “buy-in” from parents who themselves did not have a good school experience.” B4 summed up the public political climate saying, “There is a general lack of trust of educators and the educational system by the public. I attribute this to constant negative publicity by the media.” On a positive note, B4 indicated that there is good parental support in suburban districts.

Mobility: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Mobility, or lack thereof, is identified as a component of the nature of the job of principal. In both cohorts, mobility has different connotations. Participants expressed ideas about physical mobility, that is, the practice of having to relocate to move to a more desirable position. Additionally, there were ideas brought forth about level mobility. That is, being able to move from one level to another, such as from an elementary position to a high school position. Finally, mobility takes on the context of one’s movement in and out of the educational profession. This was seen only in the Cohort B.

Physical mobility means to move for career advancement. Cohort A members recognized the need to change districts to advance but at the same time cite many issues holding them back from doing just that. “Moving districts to get an administrative position is probably a necessity.” cites A1. He went on to say, “I, however, have no desire to change districts.” “You need to change districts to advance,” agreed A2. A3 expressed that “Driving fifty miles is not an option. I can’t move due to my husband’s work.” A5 had similar trepidations sharing that, “Having to move is not an option for me. I am not willing to leave my family and local support group!” On

a positive note, A7 saw mobility as a good thing; “Moving from district to district gives you a broader perspective of education.” A7 went on to say, however, that “Even though it gives you a broader view, I’m not willing to move.” Focusing on salary enhancement, A9 expressed that “You have to change districts in order to see significant salary increase.” A10 is another Cohort A member deterred by physical mobility. He summed up the concern with relocating family saying, “Family obligations limit my job search radius. I make selective applications. Home ownership also deters me. I am not going to move! I only apply to what I like. This keeps my circle of rejection small.” This is echoed by A13 who stated, “I have no need to relocate.” Physical mobility surfaced in interviews with Cohort B members as well. In this cohort, it is noted that comments reflect both family concerns and anxiety related to a tighter job market. B4 indicated that “My job search radius is small due to my family. I would have to move out to move up in my current district. I’m not willing to sacrifice family for my job.” B7 said:

I would have to relocate to get an administrative position due to the lack of open positions. Due to the economy people are not moving; they are staying put. Positions hardly ever open, and when someone leaves or retires, the position is eliminated.

B2 shared the “Moving jobs late in the career is very risky now. You don’t want to sacrifice your guarantee of a position or your retirement health insurance.” B13 indicated that “I would move for a curriculum position but not another principalship.”

Level mobility was discussed by members on both cohorts. Level mobility is the idea of moving between traditional levels of educational organization such as from the elementary level to the high school level. An elementary principal, A2 recalled her change from MS teacher to elementary principal; “It was a difficult change. I was like a fish out of water.” A1, a HS teacher expressed similar trepidation, “Being a high school teacher I am basically pigeon holed into a high school administrative position. I know my leadership skills would transfer to another level,

but perception prevents this from occurring.” The level mobility issue is echoed by A10, sharing “Experience at another level, for example high school versus elementary limits where you can get a job and who will take your application seriously.” A3, a BOCES special education teacher bluntly stated, “I am not prepared to be a high school principal. It is too difficult to switch levels.” Similar perspectives are offered by Cohort B participants. B8 indicated that, “I believe there is a lack of comfort switching between any of the levels, elementary, middle, or high School.” Concurring was B1, “It is difficult for a High School person to move to the elementary school and vice versa.” Finally, B3 offered this perception, “It is hard for a high school person to go to the elementary school. This impedes mobility that could keep a person fresh. There is definitely a lack of flexibility and mobility in relation to future job choices once you have a position at a given level.”

Several Cohort B members spoke of mobility as it pertained to career change. Both B10 and B12 were career changers from business to education. B10 indicated, “I changed from business to a private school. It was an easy transition because I could make a difference.” “I’m a career changer,” stated B12. “I changed from business to education and have never looked back.” B3 expressed concern about lack of potential mobility from education to another career field, saying that, “Once in education, you are locked in forever.”

Stress: This blended them emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Stress is discussed readily throughout both cohorts in this study. While it may be unspoken in other categories of responses such as family, salary, job security and so on, in this section we will see how participants directly recognize and reference it in their interviews. Participants referenced stress in relation to its impact on themselves as individuals, their buildings and building climate, and their leadership capacity.

Cohort A and B members expressed concerns about the impact of stress on them as individuals. “Personally, I am under constant stress. It has caused me to gain weight, and the job has left little time to exercise,” told A12. B3 revealed that, “I have experienced personal health issues related to long hours, no breaks, and general and constant stress.” “There is a big potential for personal burnout,” told B6. “At one point before returning to education I left education altogether. I felt the morals and everything I believed in was being compromised,” expounded B11. Stress’ impact on the decision to retire is summed up by B9, “I will retire the day I am eligible due to the stress and constant pressure of the job.”

Stress impacts the principal’s ability to manage as well as lead. In the management realm, A12 indicated that “Stress is related to the general responsibility of establishing and maintaining a safe environment.” “Micromanagement by district administrators as well as board of education members adds an unnecessary layer of stress to the job of the principal,” said B8. Turnover in top leadership accounts for principal stress also. B13 disclosed, “A stressful challenge for me is acclimating to another new superintendent and all the stress and challenges that come with that.” Two non-principals indicate the deterrent nature of stress to those contemplating the principalship. “I see the principalship as nothing but hassle after hassle,” stated B12. B12 went on to say, “Kids are coming to school with many more severe problems, including mental illness.” B13 concurred, “There is definitely need for more support for students with behavioral problems. When I am dealing with them I know much needed work I have to get accomplished is not getting done causing me much stress.” A8 was significantly deterred from seeking a principalship indicating that, “The stories I hear from sitting principals are horrific! I don’t need that stress in my life.”

Finally stress is seen impacting the principal as he or she strives to function as an effective leader. “Leading change is extremely stressful,” confessed A9. “Cutting through the fat to get to the meat is virtually impossible and consumes you in the process,” A9 went on to say. A10 agreed, reporting that, “Balancing the leadership and management roles of the principalship is stressful.” B6 found great stress due to personnel issues, “I have to make personnel decisions, some of which are unpleasant, in the best interest of the children.” A6 said, “Motivating kids who are not motivated is the greatest stressor I encounter.” References to stress were pervasive throughout both cohorts of this study.

Nature of the Job articulated by Gordon (B5).

Gordon is a 39 year old white male in his third year as an elementary school principal in an Upstate Central New York suburban school district. With the exception of a brief teaching experience in Western New York and an initial administrative job in another local suburban school district, Gordon has been in the district where he went to school as a child and taught for a majority of his career to date. He is now a principal in that district.

Gordon’s account incorporated many factors that constitute the nature of the job of the principal in Upstate Central New York. Gordon was “tapped” to move into administration by his former longtime superintendent who has recently retired. He attributed this to former New York State Education Commissioner Richard Mills’ charge to superintendents to personally tap potential quality leaders to become principals. Commissioner Mill’s efforts to this effect are discussed earlier in this study. This demonstrates the “grow your own” environment being seen as a regular tool of recruiting in Upstate Central New York. Gordon also dealt with the mobility issues articulated by so many others in this study. He wrestled with the decision as to whether or not to leave the Upstate Central New York area to attain an administrative position and shared:

I applied to a district in the Albany area as well as other districts around Central New York. I ultimately secured a position in a nearby school district where I could work but not have to move my family. I loved the job. However, as I began to take on more and more responsibility there, I found the hours I needed to commit to get the job done right were ever increasing. I needed to attend PTA meetings and Board of Education meetings. It is tough trying to commute home and then back to school for an evening event. I was missing lots of things with my family. One thing I always prided myself on was being around for family events. That increasing job related time commitment, coupled with the upcoming changes we are facing with APPR and the implementation of the Common Core, prompted me to apply for my current job in the district in which I live.

Gordon confirmed the intensiveness of the interview process for the principalship. The screening process, the initial interviews, the group interviews were all described, “ Questions were all over the place, and it was stressful and intense.” Gordon concurred with others that the process, though far from ideal, is incumbent in the nature of the position of principal, and those candidates should be ready for it.

Gordon referred to himself as a workaholic. His account demonstrated the fight to find balance between the leadership and management aspects of the principalship and shared:

I find that being an administrator, your work is never done. There is so much on the plate like the implementation of new curriculum, RTI (Response to Intervention), a procedure for documenting interventions to children with special needs, as well as infusing the vast amounts of web based programming that districts are adopting. That aspect of the job is so awesome even though it is time consuming. However, I don't feel the day is done until all the busses have returned, typically about 5:00 P.M. The duties of the principal are going to increase no matter what anyone says. With the new evaluation system, APPR, the amount of time you need to spend in classrooms is going to increase dramatically. I will need to take care of parent phone calls after the day is over. APPR is going to push more routine required management work outside the school day. I find myself working later and later. I think that striking a balance is a really difficult thing.

Gordon further believed that districts are going to have to commit to develop more teacher leaders to assist principals with daily management tasks in order for them to spend the required amount of time in classrooms supporting instruction.

Gordon also highlighted the difficulty in level mobility as it pertains to principals being versatile enough to cross grade levels and lead effective change. He said:

I have had experience working with teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 12. It's a whole different animal talking with high school teachers than it is with primary teachers. I found that primary teachers are more excited about change, and high school teachers are a little bit more entrenched. I believe you should be able to see good instruction in both a kindergarten classroom and a high school chemistry class. I feel that there's not a lot of cohesion in curricula and, with the initiation of the Common Core Standards, we've been given an opportunity to bring that cohesion into play.

Gordon also expounded on morale issues he attributes to APPR. He stated:

APPR is going to kill morale. It is going to grate on principals. Teachers with the most difficult kids will get the lowest scores. I just don't know how to tell a teacher that is outstanding that they have been scored merely "developing." There is inequity in education. Politicians can say that all kids can learn, and I believe all kids can learn, but my district is certainly going to have more resources than a city school to accomplish that. How can ratings be equated? I believe the system is going to do exactly the opposite of what they wanted it to do. Is it going to catch bad teachers? Absolutely. But it is also going to run great teachers and principals out the door!

I asked Gordon if his perception of the principalship had modified after having served in it compared to what he believed prior to assuming it. He responded:

I had no idea what it entailed. I had no idea about the depth of it. It's a whole range, the staff for example, the challenges that they are going through in their personal lives that people have no idea about. It's the political pieces that you really don't know about. It's the parent piece much more than I thought it would matter, no matter what school you are in. Some of the situations that kids encounter, I'm talking child protective issues, it is those situations that stay with you all the time. That's stress. More than I ever knew.

Ironically, at the end of our interview, Gordon received a call from the Superintendent's office asking him to come immediately due to a parental complaint.

Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Terms and conditions of employment is a phrase closely associated with labor contracts and negotiations. For purposes of this study, *terms and conditions* is the theme that encompasses those elements of the principalship that relate to compensation and working conditions, including

the process and pre-requisite requirements leading to ultimate certification as a school administrator in New York State. Participants spoke to both monetary and non-monetary issues impacting their perception of the principalship and what acted as an attractant or deterrent to their decision to pursue it. These issues include pre-service requirements, the hiring process, and compensation.

Preparation programs: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Virtually everyone who is motivated to become certified as an administrator participates in a formal program of study toward such an end. Motivation varies from a true desire to be a principal or superintendent to teachers looking to increase their salaries by accumulating university credit hours. The path can be traditional or non-traditional. Regardless, members of both cohorts had the experience of a preparation program and, therefore, have a perspective on its value and impact on their decision whether or not to pursue the principalship. While responses were spread between negative, neutral, and positive about the value of their preparation experience, the perspectives revealed by participants in both cohorts could be used by local universities and colleges as they plan for the diversity of reasons why students enroll in administrative preparation programs.

A2 was positive about her program. “I am well prepared. My (public university) program was very practical.” A13 appreciated rigor within the program, (same public university), saying, “The preparation program was rigorous and trained me well.” A8 and A12 identified weakness in preparing students whose objective it was to serve as an administrator in a capacity other than principal. “My program was adequate. It was, however, geared to prepare principals and not for people desiring other administrative positions,” indicated A8. A12 pointed out that his preparation program was very team oriented, but that the reality of the principalship is that the

principal is very isolated and needs to know how to function in that environment. A10 was grateful for an alternative certification program sharing, “I was not originally an education major. Without the availability of a masters’ certification program, I would not have been able to attain administrative certification.”

Many other Cohort A participants elaborated on what they perceived to be the shortcomings or gaps between preparation and practice in relation to their programs of study at both public and private universities in Upstate Central New York. Many of these issues were related to the “nuts and bolts” of school management as well as basic curriculum development and implementation rather than the conceptual and theoretical nature of school administration and the principalship. A12 believed, “There needs to be more emphasis on special education, school law, curriculum, and building management.” A1 indicated that, “I definitely needed more information and experience with budgeting, nuts and bolts issues such as school law and the development of a master schedule.” Budgeting was identified as a concern by A2 who articulated that, “My program lacked budgeting information. I need more on that.” Other areas of concern were expressed by A3, who concluded that:

The program I attended failed to prepare me with adequate knowledge of development and implementation strategies related to curriculum. I also felt unprepared to participate in the very stressful and complex interview processes that many districts use to select administrative candidates.

A10 expressed another area of concern, “There is a very long commute to attend a public university certification program. I could not afford private university tuition.” Adding a final perspective on preparation for the Cohort A was A6 who believed, “Coursework will not make a good administrator. Quality is innate!”

Cohort B participants spoke very freely about their administrative preparation programs with polarized opinions similar to the Cohort A members. Unique to Cohort B participants were

reflections pertaining to their concerns about the impact of politics, the economic impact of the internship requirement, and preparation for an accountability focused real-world.

Many expressed the need for practicality over theory in their program. “My coursework (private university) was mainly theoretical. I certainly needed more “nuts and bolts” to become even remotely ready for the principalship,” asserted B1. B2 agreed stating, “I certainly could have used more preparation related to school law. There wasn’t even a course in my (private university) program. It was essentially a poor preparation program, too theoretical. It needs more hands on experiences incorporated.” B3 offered, “My preparation program certainly did not prepare me for the family and student issues I encounter daily as a principal.” B4 concluded, “I was certainly not ready for the principalship, particularly the breadth of tasks I would be required to face. The program (private university), however, did have a quick timeline to completion.” B5 and B7, a principal and non-principal respectively, felt unprepared for the political realities of the job. B7 pointed out, “I was nowhere near prepared for the politics of this job.” Agreeing is B5. He revealed, “The preparation program (private university) failed to prepare us for the politics, the impact of the job on your personal life, and essential interactions with parents.”

Both B11 and B12 are minority educators. B12 shared that:

I was recruited as a minority educator by my district to get certified as a school administrator. My program (public university) needed more emphasis on organizational change and also to provide more information pertaining to urban poverty. The program lacked diversity and preparation for the challenge of urban education. I also feel it was inadequate in preparing me for the scheduling and budgeting experience so necessary for an urban educator.

B11 found positives in the all but the selection of the internship component. She stated:

I won’t do an internship in a place where I feel unwelcomed! I was encouraged when I found a niche here in this district. . . I guess they appreciated me as they created this position for me after my internship was complete. . . I was grateful for a fast track certification program for non-majors as I’m a bit older and have many professional objectives to achieve.

B10 began as a teacher in a private school. She indicated:

It is difficult to find and access internships in private school settings. Basically my own networking got me the internship, not the university program (public university). It was a hardship as I had to do an unpaid internship for two whole summer. . . The preparation program itself was indeed helpful as it was infused with practicality.

The current pressure in the educational community for increased accountability of teachers and administrators led to some comments among the Cohort B members about the incorporation of APPR preparation into their pre-service program of study. B1, a graduate of a preparation program at a private university frankly stated, “APPR was not discussed in our university preparation program.” In contrast, B12 spoke about her public university preparation program. “They prepared me with base knowledge about both APPR and the common core standards.” B7 concurred that her public university program was a “leadership program that actually focused on leadership and current trends of change in education.” B8, a graduate of the same public program stated, “I felt well prepared. The program was a balance between theoretical and practical. The emphasis was on leadership!” A residual effect of incorporating curricula pertaining to accountability was expressed by several who remain in the teaching field post certification. B9 said, “Taking courses made me a better teacher.” Similarly, B6 said, “The program made me a better teacher. I learned what to look for in good instruction.” B3 also recognizes a broader effect of the preparation program. He shared:

The Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) program (private university) helped me be a better teacher through insights I would not otherwise have had. I view the CAS degree as a degree in leadership and not limited just to school administration. It is applicable to many other career paths if one so chooses.

The internship will be discussed in the next section, but ,for purposes of relating it as part of the preparation program, I will offer a preview here. Several participants alluded to job security and continuity issues presented by programs’ internship required component. B12 was

grateful for her district's commitment to allowing her to be a teacher on special assignment during the time of the internship. She said, "It allowed me to maintain tenure." B9 indicated that his district "provided me a flex schedule and teacher pay through a part time internship while still teaching!" He also felt that, "The internship struck a balance between the theoretical and practical components of educational administration."

The internship: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

The internship is a mandatory component of both the administrative preparation and certification processes. Participants in both Cohorts A and B expressed opinions pertaining to the nature of the required internship. The data gathered included the ease of securing an internship, length of the internship, quality of the experience, and personal fiscal and job security issues faced while participating in the internship. In reviewing the responses from both cohorts regarding the internship, it appears that a majority Cohort A viewed it as an attractant to the principalship whereas many more Cohort B members saw it as a deterrent citing the difficulty in securing a high quality internship without taking an unpaid leave as well as the lack of university support in obtaining it. Additionally, with APPR principals express concern about delegating tasks that potentially impact their APPR score to interns.

For quality purposes it appears participants preferred the full-time internship experience if it was paid. If there was no compensation offered, there was appreciation of opportunities to meet the requirement through part time and summer opportunities. A1 reported:

My internship was facilitated by the district. It was full time and paid. It was an opportunity I could not pass upon. It gave me the opportunity to have a hands-on experience which developed my confidence.

A3, A4 and A5 located internships that did not require them to take a leave or resign from their position. A3 said, "I was lucky as I did not have to take a whole semester away from the job."

“In my case, the summer school principalship functioned as an internship,” reported A4. A5 also indicated she felt fortunate that “my internship was one that did not require me to leave my job.” B5 concurred, noting that “A paid internship was critical to my success.”

Continuing to earn income was a key factor for members of both cohorts to be able to engage in an internship and, thus, become certified administrators. “My school district was extremely supportive of me engaging in an internship while continuing to work,” expressed A6. “The key to my success was the paid internship. A full time paid internship was beneficial in preparing me for the principalship,” said A9.

In addition to the critical need of being able to participate in a paid internship, B4 raised the potential job security concern associated with leaving a position to engage in an internship.

He said:

I was able to do my internship while assigned to an actual assistant principalship. During that time, I maintained my tenure as a teacher. It required the administrators’ association to allow this to happen. Safety was definitely a factor for me. I had tenure as a teacher for only one year and did the AP position. As I was successful, I was offered an administrative probationary position in the role in which I engaged in my internship. Without that protection of tenure during my internship, I would have had severe reservations about moving forward.

B6 offered another perspective:

I had a paid internship in my district which was essential for me. Unfortunately, I found that while paid internships are available in my district, the “good” ones go only to the people the district is actually ‘grooming’ for actual administrative positions in the district. Mine was not a real good one.

Others expressed further concerns about the internship. Their concerns were related to quality of the experience, ease of securing the internship, lack of support by both the district and the university with which they were affiliated, and concern for their own as job security.

“I found it very difficult to identify and secure an internship,” indicated A8. B3 shared that, “My internship lacked guidance both by the district and the university (private university).”

“My university (private university) offered little assistance in helping me to secure an internship. This should be a priority in any program!” lamented B1. A slightly different perspective was offered by B2. “It is virtually impossible to secure an internship at the elementary level. I attribute this to the fact that under APPR principals don’t want to delegate any job responsibility potentially tied to their evaluation.”

“The lack of paid internships is a deterrent to getting certified. It is important to have a full time internship, and there are few paid ones!” offered B5. “There was absolutely no monetary incentive for the internship. Not exactly an attractant,” added B12. “I had to take an unpaid leave of absence in order to do a full time internship. To me, having a full time experience was that important. I needed to see if this was for me or not,” told B1. “It was difficult for me to find a paid full time internship experience. I had to take an unpaid leave. The alternative was to quit.” indicated A2. Likewise, A5 relayed, “I had to give up a year of teaching, salary, and retirement service credit to take an internship!”

Concern related to the internship quality was expressed by B7, “My internship was not broad at all. It was mainly doing discipline.” “Evaluation is huge in education today. Conducting evaluations were not even part of my internship experience as it was prohibited by the teachers’ union contract. I needed that experience,” B4 pointed out. A6 believed, “The part time internship is not a classic experience.”

Several others expressed further thoughts on the internship. B1 believed that “having an internship that was not in my current district was a big positive. I was able to leave politics and my in-district baggage out of the picture.” B1 went on to offer that, “I believe multiple internships and multiple levels would enhance readiness for newly certified administrators.”

Finally, A10 offered that, “the hands-on internship translates theory into practice. Universities and school districts should strive to structure internships to make that happen.”

Certification process: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

The process to become certified as an administrator in New York State was discussed by members of both cohorts. They discussed the value of the process and its constant state of change, costs, time to completion, reciprocity, and alternative pathways. For the most part, participants in both cohorts found the process annoying and cumbersome, but a necessary evil if one had any desire to become an administrator.

“The certification process is cumbersome. Too many hoops!” asserted A7. B12 concurred, “The certification process is all about jumping hoops and paying money.” The cost factor was echoed by A6. “Certification is a worthless process. It’s all about the money they collect and the tests. You pay for the tests, and you pay for the certification,” he stated. Agreeing too was B11, “The certification exam is time consuming and costly, about \$400.00 and the certification requirements keep changing. If you miss a deadline, you get inundated with more hoops to jump through!” For business administrators, A5 perceived a double standard pointing out that, “Many business administrators are hired under civil service regulations rather than become [sic] certified business administrators using the prescribed certification process with its extensive coursework. Civil Service is a less rigorous pathway.”

“The certification process has too many changing requirements.” stated B5. Offering a different slant on this was A5. “I was actually motivated by the changing requirements as I would have much more coursework to complete after changes take effect. I wanted to get in under the old rules.” A8 agreed saying, “Increasing certification requirements act as a motivator as people want to get in under the deadline.” The amount of time the process takes concerned

A9 who stated, “The amount of time to get certified is a deterrent. It is extremely difficult to accomplish and work full time as well.”

Those appreciating the certification process and rigor included A3; “The certification process in New York allows our certified administrators reciprocity in virtually any other state. That is not true for people certified in other states.” Career changers appreciate the alternate routes and programs available. A2 commented on alternate routes to certification having not been original education majors in college and explained:

Alternate certification routes are key to providing opportunity to advance and become involved in the field of education. I did all my undergraduate work in Business. The Masters’ Degree certification path without an education degree as a pre-requisite is critical to allowing highly motivated people to become teachers and ultimately principals.

B7 revealed:

Certification is issued only two times per year. That may have worked in the past but now districts want you to have your certification in hand before they will even consider you. Certificates need to be issued by the state on a rolling basis immediately upon completion of your program requirements.

Hiring and interview process: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Members of Cohort A expressed concerns about the hiring process. All viewed the process as a deterrent; however, they saw it as a necessary rite of passage that all will encounter proceeding to the principalship. It is important to note that between the interviews of the two cohorts, the state experienced difficult economic times. Openings in administrative positions became less frequent and much downsizing of the administrative ranks occurred. Cohort B members had less to say about the interview process, rather directing comments toward their concerns for their own job security. Risk taking has become less prevalent when it comes to changing positions, particularly when tenure is already attained.

A3 was particularly expressive about the hiring process and said:

I am extremely discouraged with the job search and interview process. The interview process is intimidating and I never hear back after an interview. Districts either choose not to or refuse to give you any feedback on your interview which would, to me, be beneficial and help me improve my interviewing skills. The districts' practice of hiring from within limits opportunities for me to apply outside of my current school district.

A9 is in agreement about feedback. She said, "Interview feedback is very helpful and very important but rarely received from districts."

Cohort A members expressed trepidation about undergoing the application process particularly if they lacked confidence in their readiness for a position. "I lack administrative experience which increases my anxiety in the interview," reported A5. A10 reported the same nervousness, "I know I lack experience and am concerned when I'm in the applicant pool with experienced administrators." "I'm deterred from applying to positions for which I don't feel ready. It seems these are the only positions open," lamented A13.

"The interview process is very complex." stated A13. A2 candidly stated, "The competition for the principalship is fierce." This idea will also be reported in the section pertaining to the participants' view of a perceived shortage of administrators. These two views are triangulated by A9 and A2. A9 agreed that, "There is always an extensive interview process. There is intense competition for administrative positions." A2 indicates the political nature of the competition confiding that, "The hiring process is extremely political. There are many internal hires for positions. That is an extreme deterrent to outside candidates that could bring in new blood and fresh ideas."

The Cohort B members that had something to say about the hiring process shared similar concerns but ultimately viewed it as a current state fact-of-life. B6 candidly said that, "The process is very nerve-wracking. I believe, however, that it is a smoke and mirrors process. Whoever the Superintendent wants in a given position will be the finalist!" Dismayed by the

process, B7 relayed that “The process I was involved in lacked vision on the part of the interview team. It certainly made me question my ‘fit’ with the district and position for which I was a candidate. The district needs to sell me on them as much as I need to sell them on me!” B5 checked reality sharing that, “In the age of high states accountability, an intense interview process is a fact of life. If you can’t deal with it, don’t apply.”

Tuition support: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Members of both cohorts expressed how important it was for them to have district financial support for covering the rising tuition costs of becoming certified through a university based program. Many indicated that without this subsidy for tuition they might not have ever pursued administrative certification. Tuition support was seen in several ways including reimbursement for tuition costs, tuition vouchers awarded by the district or university teaching centers, and also base salary credit for credit hours earned.

A11 admitted that, “District paid coursework was an important motivator to get me started on the path to administration. Free tuition to a private university just can’t be passed up!” Concurring were B2 and B4. “The teachers’ center paid for all my tuition! They provide free credits to take courses. Even if you don’t or can’t take student teachers there are always credits available in a common pool,” said B2. “Free courses for my entire Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) program was the incentive for me to begin and complete my certification,” admitted B4. A1 candidly proclaimed, “Free credits got me in the classroom!”

In New York State, retirement income for a public employee is partially determined by an individual’s final average salary. Any increase to base salary results in a higher retirement paycheck. Base salary increases are often referred to by those in the contract negotiations world as “The gift that keeps on giving.” Recognizing this, several participants were motivated to earn

credits toward salary increases. “The coursework to get my certification boosted my salary. Get a salary increase and get free credits, why wouldn’t I pursue administrative certification coursework even if I didn’t get an administrative position.” said A4. A2 agreed saying, “Earning credits to boost salary is a definite incentive to take the coursework necessary to obtain administrative certification.” “It’s the salary credit for coursework that lured me,” admitted A6.

A3 works in a district where there is no tuition support. She indicated that, “For me further study is limited because there is absolutely no tuition support here,”

Salary, direct compensation, perks: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

There was no shortage of feedback from both Cohort A and B participants on the area of salary. Given the increase in workload and time commitment, a majority in both cohorts saw little or no monetary incentive in jumping from teacher to administrator. An exception to this is younger professionals earlier in their career. There seems little change in this issue during the time differential between cohort interviews. Participants tie the issue of inadequate compensation for the principalship to their decision not to pursue the position more specifically than any other factor in this study.

Salary can be an attractant for young administrators early in their career before the differential between an administrative and teacher salary narrows. A6 insisted that, “A bigger administrative salary is a motivator to a relatively young teacher.” A12 stated that, “Young administrators are in line for a big salary bump from their teaching salary if they make the move early in their career.” B12 said, “Moving to administration was an increase for me because I only had four years in education.” B6, a relatively young and rising principal, added “Salary was a big bump for me being a young administrator.” “The increased salary for a young administrator is nice, but it is just one factor.” B4 pointed out. He went on to say, “The pay differential is equal to

teachers when the twelve month work year is factored in.” B5 agreed saying, “My salary did increase somewhat, but it was not a driving factor in my decision to become a principal.”

A3 said, “Salary would not be an attractant for me. I would make the move to administration because I like it. The pay differential between teachers and administrators is a disincentive for experienced teachers to go into administration.” “The pay differential just isn’t worth it for me to make the jump,” agreed A4. He went on to point out that, “The regional economy is depressed in our area. It is well beyond the control of schools. You can offer more money, but if the area is depressed no one will be attracted. It is a quality of life issue for many.” A1, a veteran teacher, said, “There would need to be a significant increase in salary to make me consider pursuing the principalship. It is simple math, administration plus extra time equals pay cut!” A2 observed that, “Money is not a motivator. There is no real incentive for making the jump.” A10 introduced the issue of job security, which will be discussed in another section. He said, “I see tenure as a major perk to this profession. I am reluctant to sacrifice my job security, namely tenure, to take a chance on a probationary administrative position.” “There is a lack of monetary incentive to advance your career,” indicated a disappointed B10. B13 added that, “Salary is definitely not an attractant due to the extra hours necessary to do the job.” B3 summarized the sentiment of many reporting, “The pay differential between teacher and administrator is small. The job lacks true benefits!”

Several non-principals weighed in on the subject of compensation and their decision not to pursue the principalship. “The principalship is a brutal job with no pay differential. Why would I put myself through that?” questioned A8. A6 expressed his reasoning for not pursuing the principalship. He said, “I want to stay a teacher. I have a lot more freedom as a teacher and a good salary. The additional salary I receive as department chair is very adequate. I have no need

to become an administrator.” “Salary is a deterrent for experienced people,” stated B6. B9 further asserted that, “I would take a pay decrease to make the jump. With thirty years’ experience as a teacher I am priced out of the market except maybe for some affluent districts. It certainly limits my choice.” Though concerned about salary, B8 does not close the door on the possibility of pursuing an administrative position, saying, “Having years of experience I would have to take a salary cut in addition to working twelve months instead of ten. Lack of salary alone, however, won’t necessarily be a deal breaker.” B1 acknowledged:

The salary differential between teacher and administrator is minimal. Having completed my internship I can tell you that the pay would literally have to double for me to take a principal position and put up with the daily issues principals have to face!

Several other interesting responses related to salary and perks emerged from Cohort A members. A5, a teacher who has attained certification, was concerned about federal loan forgiveness and stated:

Because of the federal loan forgiveness program, I am reluctant to look for an administrative position. I can’t afford to leave my position in this high needs school and lose my ability to have a large portion of my debt forgiven.

A2 was concerned about New York State’s erosion of pension benefits for those entering the profession saying:

The addition of new retirement tiers with reduced benefits and a longer work requirement concerns me. It is important for New York to preserve its pension system. It is an important factor in attracting and retaining high quality principals.

B2 confided:

Having been a principal now for two years I can definitely tell you that principals are significantly underpaid. For me, however, pay is not a factor. I needed a change from teaching in the classroom. I find the principalship exciting and refreshing.

Terms and Conditions articulated by Thomas (B1).

Thomas is a white 43 year old music teacher in a suburban middle school. He immersed himself totally and enthusiastically into the certification and internship process, and he came away very disenchanted with the idea of becoming a school administrator.

Initially, Thomas was inspired by the idea that, “If I can motivate a group of kids the way I can with my band, maybe I can motivate some adults too!” Thomas’ first thought was to seek an internship in the city environment but realized the city would have no part of it. They hire from within using their own employees to fill internships. Thomas chose to seek the city first because of the 30 to 40 percent proficiency rates on state exams. He believed he could motivate teachers to do better. Instead, he did his internship at the affluent suburban district where he worked. Thomas desired to go outside his district for the internship but found little help from the university program in which he was enrolled.

Thomas indicated that his Superintendent set up a couple of internship options for him. Thomas insisted that it be full time so he received the entire experience. He said, “For me, it was something that had to be done. It has to be all or nothing for me to decide if I really want to pursue administration. I could not part-time it.” In order to do this Thomas had to take an unpaid leave of absence for the entire year. Thomas reported:

I actually wasn’t going to do it. I told my wife that I thought it was something I probably wouldn’t want to do. But we both agreed that you don’t start something and not finish it. You always finish what you start. We refinanced our house, and we use that money to hold us for that half a year. We pecked away at repairs, and don’t [sic] buy lot of new stuff. It’s not like we’re poor. Should that money have gone to the kids’ college fund? Probably it should. I don’t know that I’ll ever make the money back with the pay raise I got for having a CAS.

Having been in music sales prior to going into education, Thomas indicated that he, on more than one occasion, observed some “pretty terrible” principals. He believed he could do better, and,

with the verbal support of several administrators in his district, including the superintendent, he embarked on his quest to become a principal.

When Thomas began to explore various principalships, he was shocked by the lack of pay differential between the principal and a teacher with his mid-career level of experience.

Thomas said, “It is not looking good in terms of compensation. It doesn’t make sense from a financial standpoint to leave teaching unless I’m absolutely in love with being a principal. That is unknown at this point.” He went on to say:

I thought, at the beginning the process, that principals would indeed be paid more. And, I don’t mind working during the summer. No problem. Ripe for the internship, I went out and started looking at what people actually were being paid. I probably should have done that, way back before the first class. Because, ultimately at this point in my career, having 16 or so years in, the bump to assistant principal in terms of pay is not substantial. Based on very elementary calculations, the hourly rate of pay decreases significantly. I don’t use tenure as a way to hide, but when you leave the teaching position, you’re forfeiting that. You no longer have that protection. Not that I’m using that protection, but you lose it. Starting as a principal or vice principal somewhere else, in the current environment, those are the first people to go. Financially it doesn’t make sense and job security wise, and family security [sic], it just doesn’t make sense. So even if I wanted to be a principal and even if my heart said be a principal, it’s just not enough to overcome the financial and job security issues with making the jump.

Like many others, Thomas was concerned about the loss of tenure when one makes the jump from teacher to administrator. He also commented on the conditions created by APPR that tie the hands of the principal. Thomas said:

When you look at position cuts, the first to go are the last people in. If they decide to add a position for a second assistant principal, and then later find out their financial issues, that position is the first to go. The second, so called environmental issue, is the new APPR evaluation system. Discussion about the APPR, oddly, did not come up in any of my classes. Not one mention of it. That system came together so quickly, and then I did finish my degree before it was even advanced by the state. Now, apparently principals are part of that too. So, you’re managing people that you can’t fire, you can’t reward, you can’t punish, and their performance based on students that you obviously can’t fire. Your whole future in life is dependent on these people who [sic] you have no real control over financially or otherwise. The principal in the old days had the ball and hammer, but that’s turned into ‘ask nicely’ and ‘don’t upset the teachers.’

When asked if he felt prepared for the principalship after one internship, he responded:

Absolutely not! It is like, were you prepared when you came in for that first day of school when you became a teacher? I know how one school building, in one school district, in one principal's style does it. If could I go to that building and run it like that particular principal? Probably. Would that style work for me? Probably not. Would that work in another school district? I don't know. What style is going to work? It's got to be a two or three year process until you're good at it. I'm not naïve enough to think that I'm going to walk into a principal job and take it over smoothly.

Thomas has indicated he is all but finished pursuing the principalship. He stated:

I think that the only way that I would do it, at this point, is if my school district were to give me a leave of absence. Then I could pursue an administrative job somewhere else for a year. I would just not give up tenure as a teacher; the administrative position is just not that secure. At this point, to quit my job and go be a principal, absolutely not. It just doesn't make sense.

Climate.

Participants in both the cohorts identified issues related to climate as impacting their perceptions of the principalship and their desire to pursue it. Climate is considered the professional working atmosphere surrounding a position. These are the social, labor, fiscal, and political conditions experienced by the administrator on a daily basis. These climate concerns encompassed district and building climate, succession planning, level of district support, urban issues, discrimination, and the fiscal conditions encountered by the participant in the discharge of their professional responsibilities.

District and building climate: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

This area saw a distinct difference in the perceptions of members of Cohort A and B. Members of Cohort A were mainly positive related to climate and saw it primarily as an attractant, a bright spot, of the principalship. A characteristic of a supportive climate articulated by cohort members was an environment when they are permitted a great degree of autonomy in

their decision-making. In contrast, Cohort B members expressed perceptions that identified negative, deterring concerns on the impact of climate on administrators, in particular principals.

Among those expressing positive images of their districts in the support of administrators was A13. She said, “My district provides me with positive support. Supervisors are encouraging, and I am supported with on-going professional development.”

A7 enjoyed the autonomy of his position; “I have the freedom to lead. I’m very comfortable with the climate in my district. The principal is allowed to both manage and articulate a vision.” A11 valued that in his urban district, “The environment is one in which I am not micromanaged from above.”

A number of participants spoke about mentoring; A9 viewed its availability of formal mentoring as a factor impacting the work climate. He said, “There are multiple levels of support in this district. That includes mentoring, both formal and informal, as well as a sense of great trust between central office and building administration.”

A2, a principal in a suburban setting, credited positive building climate prior to her arrival as an attractant and explained:

The building climate was positive when I arrived. I was able to acclimate easy and get right down to teaming with staff to focus on the job of teaching and learning. I find that when there is a positive climate, the principalship is valued by teachers, parents, and district level administration. With that amount of support, the sky is the limit!

On a negative note, A2 added that, “While there is a great climate here, there is a lack of district support and encouragement to go into administration. For that, you are on your own.”

School size was noted by A13:

I find small schools to be an attractant. As an assistant principal, that is where I want to go next. The climate is easily impacted by the building leader, the principal. You can have a greater impact on education when you can establish and easily maintain a positive building climate.

A12 came to Upstate Central New York from out of state. “The climate of my district was welcoming. I needed a job, and there was an open position. I was very grateful that the climate was such that an outsider was considered and welcomed into the fold.”

A1 suggested that in order to better be able to attend to and improve the climate of a school, “Principals need more support to have time to develop relationships and make a difference.”

Those in Cohort B commented on several acts of district support that positively impacted climate in the district. B3 and B4 found the district’s ongoing partnership with both a private university and one of the New York State Teachers’ Centers both valuable and climate enhancing. B3 said, “The district has a relationship with a local private institution of higher learning. That wealth of knowledge is at our fingertips.” B4 added, “The district relationship with the university provides me with an ongoing source of personal professional development. It enhances the professional environment here.” B5 valued the district commitment to helping certified administrators in the teaching ranks elevate to administrative positions with increased job security. He stated, “A positive about our districts culture is the availability in the district of teacher leader roles that aid in the transition between teaching and administration.”

A district’s attention to improvement was contrasted by two members of Cohort B. The proactive addressing of problems heightened the district climate in B9’s district. He relayed that, “The district here recognizes problems and is committed to improvement. That’s motivational for me.” B8 saw just the opposite in play, sharing that, “Our district operates in a culture of complacency, never making strides forward.”

Strength of district leadership seems to play a role in making or breaking the climate with a school district. B11 spoke of the contrast between leaders and their ability to directly influence school climate and stated:

I have worked in two very different places. First, I was in a district that lacked support from above. Nothing got done for kids. People were too apprehensive to try anything new for fear of not being supported. In my current district, however, there is a supportive district administration with a warm, open-minded superintendent. It is critical to the climate that the superintendent is strong and able to evaluate the needs of the entire school community. Within districts that poor climate is reported, it is perceived that the principalship is not valued.

B11 was also critical of her peers admonishing:

Administrators and principals who do not know the specific aspects and characteristics of the community in which they work are a real problem. Current administrators have an unacceptably high degree of arrogance! It is me, me, me, my, my, my, I, I, I all the time!

B2 reported:

The principalship is not at all valued here. That is evidenced by the actions of the Superintendent. I never hear from her unless there is an issue. I always have to be on the defensive. If things go well there is never any feedback or praise.

B10 similarly shared that, “The principalship is not valued in our district. The teachers’ union runs the show. We march to their drum as neither the Board or Superintendent has the backbone to stand up to them.” Other issues impacting climate among incumbent staff is the district’s practices of hiring new administrators. B1 stated:

The building environment can either be an attractant or a deterrent to the decision of one to become a building principal. . . There is never enough time to acclimate to a building before the demands of the job kick in. Now, there is high pressure for immediate results because of increased accountability and APPR. That significantly impairs a principal’s ability to create a positive environment for change and improvement!

B7 noted that, “In our district, previous administrative experience is required for principalship positions. That insures they will look outside when a position opens. It pretty much closes me out. That is discouraging.” B6 saw that districts demonstrate a lack of support for principals by

not providing enough staff support in the form of assistant principals. “There is a need for increased support in through the hiring of more assistant principals. This enables the principal to focus on instruction and climate enhancement in the building.”

The existence or lack of existence of a feeling of district loyalty was a factor influencing the climate in a district for members of both cohorts. Succession planning enhanced loyalty among some. A10 expressed:

There is a 'grow your own' philosophy in our district. It creates a sense of loyalty. Because I know there is a ladder to administration here in the district, I have loyalty to my district. This limits where I will apply outside of the district. I am familiar with my current district, and I want to stay.

“I am encouraged to stay and make my career here because the district has adopted a “grow your own” philosophy for promoting from within,” concurred A6. A13 also indicated, “My familiarity with the district and the possibility of promotion from within gives me a great sense of loyalty.” B2 similarly shared that, “Loyalty to my district makes me reluctant to apply elsewhere.”

The reverse is seen in districts that do not engage in succession planning. A12 said that “Our district has no ‘grow-your-own’ plan; it lacks succession planning. There is absolutely no encouragement of teachers by the district to go into administrations. You are on your own.” A1 related that, “I would consider taking an AP position if the district had a history of internal promotions. It does not. I don’t want to be stuck in an AP job and then have to job search outside the district.” A11 explained:

My urban district believes in growing their own to ensure that incoming administrators have urban experience. The downside is that that virtually closes out successful suburban administrators from applying. Many of these people have had success in raising student achievement and setting high expectations for students. We lose out on that expertise.

Climate and loyalty are factors in career decisions for two other Cohort B members as well. B10 confided that, “I want to be a principal long term. I have no desire to move beyond the principalship. I’m ready to commit my loyalty to one district.” The perceived climate also impacted B4. “My comfort level with a particular district certainly would influence my decision to apply,” he said.

Job security: This blended theme emerged in Cohort B only.

Job security was on the minds of Cohort B members. They spoke of their concerns related to potential loss of tenure either to take an internship or to move from teaching to administration. Of secondary concern was recent accountability requirements imposed by New York State, particularly for certified administrators in high needs districts.

B1 was the first to express concern about job security. “You lose tenure when you make the move from teaching to administration. I need more assurances that I have a fair shot at tenure as an administrator before I give up that security I now enjoy.” B1’s concern was lessened somewhat by his district’s flexibility. “The ability to take a leave of absence from my teaching position and still maintain tenure was instrumental in my decision to move forward.” B2 agrees indicating, “The ability to be a teacher on special assignment as Vice Principal preserved my tenure as a teacher while I tried out the job for a year. The cooperation of the district and the administrators’ association made it possible. Without that assurance I’m not sure if I would have done it.” B4 similarly went on record to say:

The ability to maintain tenure while I interned was huge for me. I am, however, very concerned with job security in the principalship during the first three years. I have to give up tenure and with all the accountability factors in place, I’m not sure if I want to be a scape goat.

B3 also believed that, “My ability to intern without loss of tenure is critical.” Similarly B6 reported, “I was a teacher on special assignment, maintaining tenure, during my internship.”

The concern for the impact on job security on future job mobility is evident in comments by B5 who stated:

I would not be here in the principalship if it had not been for my ability to maintain teacher tenure while engaged in the internship. Principal tenure is also a positive. The principalship is the only administrative job that a district legally has to have. They can't abolish the job, so once you get tenure, you are good to go. It is, however getting more difficult because of the accountability demands. One thing is for certain, I never want a superintendency because there is absolutely no job security!

I'm certified and would like to be a principal." stated B8. She explained, "The loss of job security is a deterrent to me making the jump. My husband just lost his job, and I can't give up my job security to make a jump to the principalship."

B10 said:

My district provided me with the ability to maintain tenure for the purpose of providing job security while I got my feet wet. That was very positive. The district also encourages principals to step up to higher administrative positions. However, there is no monetary incentive attached, and you lose the job security enjoyed in the principalship. They are having real problems finding anyone in the principalship to advance to higher district office jobs.

The job concern intensifies in urban settings. B13 pointed that "Job security concerns are pervasive in the urban setting. This is due to APPR and accountability measures that remove a principal before they have had a chance to turn things around. It is professional suicide!"

The only Cohort B member that mentioned job security but was unconcerned was B9. B9 is a tenured teacher with 30 years of experience. He is selectively considering the principalship in several affluent districts. He currently could retire without penalty should it not work out. B9 said "Giving up job security is not a concern for me!"

Fiscal climate: This blended theme emerged in Cohort B only.

The fiscal climate is another area that emerged only from Cohort B. It is important to note that in the time between the two cohorts the United States experienced a deep economic

recession. New York State was particularly hard hit and schools experienced freezes and decreases in school aid. The State instituted a property tax cap which had the impact of forcing districts to limit their budgetary expansion. Many mandated and contractual items such as health insurance costs and pension contributions made providing increases in employee salaries and benefits virtually impossible. Several Cohort B participants commented on the negative impact the fiscal climate had on their perception of the job of school principals. They highlighted the impact of inequitable funding on addressing student needs as well as their own sense of security.

B11 candidly stated that, “There is a general lack of funding in education. Programs and people are being cut. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.” “There is an inequity in school finance in New York.”, trumpeted B5. He said too that, “Wealthy schools can afford to offer students more academic support. They can make up the difference with local funds. It is evident in children’s test scores that attend the wealthy schools. They are much higher.”

The personnel and professional impact of reduced funding is aired by B6. This high school principal said:

Principals are spread too thin due to reductions in teachers and other administrative of our students. Principals and teachers both have experienced a severe reduction in professional development opportunities because of these budget restraints right at a time when the demand for accountability warrants a significant increase in training needs.

B10, principal of a Pre-K public school lamented:

Funding of pre-school is not a mandated program. Thus, funding is in jeopardy each year. This makes it difficult to maintain consistent staffing. In addition job security issues and perceived lack of respect issues exacerbate teachers’ morale.

According to B9, lack of funding and the problems it creates acts as an attractant for schools in economically vibrant areas; “Highly qualified teachers and principals seek to work in schools with adequate funding and resources. This pulls quality personnel away from high needs schools further expanding the quality education abyss between have and have not schools.”

Perceived shortage: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

The literature review of this study documents the debate over whether or not there is a shortage of school administrators and principals. Is it a shortage of numbers of certified administrators or a shortage of high quality certified candidates who are willing to make the jump to school administration in general, and, in particular, the principalship? Both Cohort A and B members of this study provide perspective on this.

With regard to number of certified applicants, A4 saw no shortage. “We have thirty to thirty-five candidates for every opening we have.” B12, referring to numbers, said, “There is no shortage in the urban districts because they have a ‘grow your own’ policy. This ensures adequate numbers of candidates.” B12 was silent on candidate quality.

A6 looked deeper. He argued:

There is a shortage. All the smart people are going to work in the business world where they can make some money. When I say shortage, there is a shortage of quality, not quantity. The applicant pool for VP candidates is extremely weak. That’s scary.

A9 agreed, stating. “There is no shortage of people applying for positions. The fact is, however, that not all are high quality.” B7 agreed that, “There are people applying for position for which they are nowhere near qualified. I’ve seen teachers applying for superintendencies. It’s absurd.”

B4 summarized, “There are many applicants but few that can be considered effective, quality candidates. This has caused a shortage of effective leaders. By effective leaders, I mean candidates capable of doing a wide variety of tasks in an effective manner.” B13 refined this idea offering, “The shortage is one of principals that possess a good knowledge of instruction.” “A shortage of effective principals,” piggybacked B11. B6 followed saying, “We are faced with a shortage of quality principals.” Adding to the chorus was B3 taking the position that, “The

shortage is of competent, good principals.” This array of comments spans the urban-suburban continuum.

B5 blamed the certification process; “There is a shortage due to the certification process. There are too many hoops and changing requirements.” He was, however, the lone voice with that perception.

Discrimination: This blended theme emerged in Cohort B only.

Discrimination was mentioned only by Cohort B participant B11. B11 is an African American administrator in a predominately white rural school. She has worked in the urban public school setting prior to taking her current position. During the interview, she expressed her desire to leave public education to own and manage her own charter school. Being black, female, and Muslim has, in her opinion, impacted her ability to be treated fairly in the public school environment. While this concern was expressed by only one participant in this study, it merits mention due to the passionate expression of the concerns by the participant. The information in this section pertains to her perceptions of discrimination in the educational setting which seem to underlie her passionate desire to leave public education and start her own charter school at which she would have direct control of curriculum and personnel.

B11 revealed:

I consistently experienced, despite living and working in an urban environment, top down racism. That is, the people who are on top don't reflect the population so there is a major disconnect there. At this level, administrators are predominately European-American males. My being a female, being a woman of color, and my religion is Islam; these are three things that are not openly accepted. The administration didn't treat me the same way they treated other people... I have consistently experienced and encountered poor leadership. I don't feel that the people, meaning both administration and teachers are invested in the population we serve.

Indicating why she left the position in the urban school district, B11 said:

I felt my morals and everything I believed in were being compromised, so I took a leave of absence. I say poor administration and leadership in the sense that people who get into this position have a certain level of arrogance.

During the interview, I asked B11 to cite some examples of the “top down racism” she experienced. In addition to discussing her perception of the poor leadership exhibited by “arrogant, European American administrators not connected to the community,” she shared several examples in great detail. These are contained in the “Climate articulated by Nadia” interview at the end of the Climate finding.

B11 spoke also of the pervasiveness of the racism she experienced over time:

It was the same for me as a child. When I was in school, there was an officer that did the same thing. He would take kids that were wearing their pants low and wearing hoodies and call them niggers and throw them into the wall, spit in their face in front of the principal, and nothing was ever done. When I speak to my family in New York City they have the same exact experiences. So when I say top down racism, it is from flat out experience. This level of disconnect and racism exists between populations in all areas of our country. It’s not just in one building or one district.

Urban issues: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Members of both cohorts offered their perceptions of the urban educational settings impact on the decision to pursue the principalship. The attractant that emerged is that the urban setting is one where an effective principal can have great impact. This was an attractant for both current urban and non-urban administrators. The urban working conditions, bureaucracy, poor public perception, and the perception of ineffective teachers and leaders acted as deterrents. Finally, the “grow your own” practice is seen in both positive and negative lights depending if one is in or out of the system.

A11, an urban program leader, one of the few who had entered the district from outside, said, “In an urban district you have more impact on the kids with the greatest needs. That’s what brought me here.”

Participants from urban districts expressed much different views about the involvement of parents in the educational process than did those participants in rural and suburban schools. In non-urban settings, participants remarked on high parent involvement or, in some cases, over-involvement. B4 stated, "There is good parent support in suburban schools." A7 went further indicating, "One of the most challenging issues for me is over-involved parents". In contrast, urban participants expressed more intense challenges they faced with parent engagement. B12 said, "It is an extreme challenge getting buy in from parents who themselves did not have a good school experience." B11, an African American assistant principal reported, "I want to work here to help my black kids. I can do that by coming back to this public urban district and helping the kids and community." Finally, B6, a suburban educator sums up his perception of parent support and its impact on his ability to relocate to the urban setting. He states, "I think there is a lot of parental support in my suburban district. I think there is a lack of support in the urban districts. One thing about taking a job in the city in terms of my career ladder is the perception among employers that once you are a city principal you are always a city principal. The same goes for BOCES. Once you are a BOCES person you are always a BOCES person. I think a good leader is a good leader no matter where you practice, but do you want to risk it and take the chance of it impacting your career?"

Concern over the conditions impacting the principalship in the urban setting is expressed by both urban and non-urban educators. Urban educator B12 shared, "Principals are not valued. Everything wrong is blamed on the principal. There is an extremely challenging student population here. No one takes that into consideration when talking about the city schools."

Speaking of her time working in the urban setting, B11 offered these comments:

Public schools do not address the needs of students in high crime areas. For example, if there was a shooting in the neighborhood, time is not taken by administration or

counselors to address that issue. If it were a suburban school, it would be a major crisis. I feel teachers and administrators in the urban setting are not invested in students. Many don't live in the community. Further, urban schools are not adequately addressing mental health issues faced by students and family members.

A11 indicated that, "It's a challenge developing literacy in urban students. That is how we are evaluated, and, hence, the public perception is that we are failing." A5, an urban teacher considering moving to a principalship revealed, "I would like to exit the city to become an administrator. There are many less problems to deal with."

Without first-hand knowledge of the setting, non-urban educators expressed their perceptions of the conditions in the urban setting. B4 professed:

I prefer a suburban school over an urban or even rural one. Urban schools are high needs. Change needs to happen at a political level to have any hope of making the urban principalship appear desirable. I believe there is a high degree of frustration among urban administrators and educators in general with their inability to do anything change related.

B7 believed, "The city has too many layers of administration. Therefore, the principal has no real control to make change." B6 added, "I believe the urban schools lack parental support. You can't change without that support." A10 summarized the perception of many non-urban educators indicating, "I would lack any sense of comfort working in an urban setting."

Supporting the idea that urban schools are the best place to recruit urban administrators is urban assistant principal B12. He boldly stated, "Families and kids need people that look like them and live where they live. This is why it is important to grow your own administrators in the city." Non-urban participants expressed frustration with not being able to get into the system. "There is a perception that once a city administrator, always a city administrator and vice versa. This makes mobility of effective leaders difficult both in and out of the urban setting." surmised suburban high school principal, B6. "Urban settings are not even taking interns, so there is no opportunity to gain experience in the urban setting for outsiders," added B5. A10 triangulated

that idea saying, “I lacked an urban internship component. If there had been that opportunity, I might be comfortable and prepared for urban education. There was no opportunity, however, because the city offered that opportunity only to their employees.”

Climate articulated by Nadia (B11).

Nadia is a 42 year old African American female. She is serving as an assistant principal/dean of students in a rural, mainly white, school district. This is her first year. She has extensive urban teaching experience. Nadia’s account of her career is multifaceted and raises issues of climate and race not articulated by other participants in this study. She is a career changer, and an educator in both urban and rural settings. Nadia possessed a strong desire to leave public education to begin a charter school.

She began her career by majoring in fashion, changing first to advertisement and communications and then, ultimately, to English Communications where she earned her bachelor’s degree. Finding it difficult to make a living, she chose to seek her teaching certification when she learned that certification regulations were changing. She took advantage of a fast track preparation program at the same Upstate Central New York private university where she received her bachelor’s degree becoming certified to teach Spanish and English. Nadia secured a teaching position as a Spanish teacher in an Upstate Central New York City school district.

It was during the six years she taught in the city school district that she first experienced poor, ineffective administrators as well as racism. She described that experience as follows:

During that time, I saw just really poor leadership. I experienced, despite being in an urban environment, a lot of top down racism. I didn’t feel the people, meaning both teachers and administration, were invested in the population that we served. I felt that my morals and everything that I believed in was [sic] being compromised, and I took a leave of absence. I wanted to go into the field of administration. I thought that I could change

policy and make school a better place for the children and families that were important to me.

I asked Nadia to describe “poor administration” and her reference to “top down racism”.

She described several experiences further revealing what she believes to be underlying issues of discrimination.

Nadia explained:

Top down racism, I can give you some examples. I would park in the same parking lot as the other European American teachers and my car would be the only one with a ticket on it from the police officer assigned to the building. When I asked about it, it was like you don't get to ask about it. 'This is not an area in which you are supposed to park,' I was told. Another example would be the building police officer was calling the children niggers. The administrators were rough-housing the African American girls. The building police officer was slamming one girl's head into a wall and the administrators were saying 'black bitch' this, 'black bitch' that. When the girl got into the office, she asked if she can speak with me, because I know the kids from the community. The police officer said, 'I don't know what she's going to be able to do for you.' When I went into his office, there was a hole in the wall, and there was a sign over it that said, 'A student's head went here; don't be the next.' This is the year that I left; this was the final straw.

Nadia further explained what she means by top down racism:

I'll give you another example, I went up to one of the high schools, and I was with my son, and they had a security guard was outside. He asked me where I was going, and he asked me for my license. This is a public school; you don't do licenses. He told me to park in the front, but I went around the back as I thought that's where the entrance was. I was met by another police officer with a walkie talkie and he said, 'Did you hear the guard tell you to go around front?' 'I'm going in the building to see a colleague,' I said. 'You don't need to be in the building,' he said. I said, 'Is this how you treat someone from the community who comes to visit the school?' He tells me, 'You are not going in this building' and 'you must turn around and leave.' Had I have been a European-American, his approach would not have been like that. It was the tone that he was using that was basically like he was saying, 'nigger go home He called for an administrator. When the administrator came in, it was someone I had worked was, and I just cried. I explained what happened, and the administrator just kept apologizing. When I wrote to the superintendent and to the board outlining the level of racism that I experienced, I received no response back.

In another incident, Nadia reported students being targeted as gang members solely on the basis of what they were wearing. Nadia shared:

One day in the lunchroom the police officer came in and told us that we had to start identifying children as gang members if they were wearing a white tee shirt. My response was that's not how you identify a gang member. A white shirt, number one it was a new fashion. It's also that they are cheap you can go to the corner store and buy a \$5.00 white t-shirt. And if you understand the dynamics of our community you understand that a majority of our children are living in poverty. The average income for a family in our area is \$10,500 for a family of five so they're 200% below the poverty level. It was little things like that that were very disturbing and discouraging.

Nadia indicated that she and other teachers of color experienced similar situations

indicating that discrimination was regular and pervasive. She said:

There would be times that I would be spoken to about a situation that another employee who was European-American who might have done the same thing nothing was addressed. And it was a pattern. There were only three of us who were of color, and we all have the same story to share with one another."

Nadia's account indicating that this is not just a one building or one district problem but rather a quietly pervasive issue within public education is disturbing. Nadia shared:

My experience as a child was exactly the same. When I was in high school, there was an officer that used to do the exact same thing. He would take the kids that were wearing their pants low and wearing hoodies and call them niggers and throw them it into the wall, spit in their face in front of the principal, and nothing was ever done. So when I say racism top down that is from flat out experience. When I speak to my family who lives in New York City, they have the same exact experiences. There are more teachers of color that are in the inner city, but when you look at the level of interaction between the European-American staff and the staff of color it is exactly the same. When I did my thesis, the case studies showed the same thing, that there is a significant level of racism and disconnect that exists between the populations.

Nadia's experiences in the public education setting have caused her to seek other opportunities that allow her more autonomy and independence to impact the education of African American children and families. She has submitted an application to New York State to begin her own urban charter school. She described her drive to enter the world of charter education. She said:

I think you can be a little bit more creative as you can design it to be more specific to the needs of the students. I'm also looking at doing a trauma informed school. Looking at the Central New York area a lot of students that live in the urban environments are exposed

to crime. And those are issues that are not addressed in the public school. For example, if there is a shooting in the neighborhood, the time is not taken by the administration or the counselors to address that issue. If that had happened in a suburban area, it would be a crisis. Everything for that day would be suspended to address the needs of the students. Part of the problem is a lack of connection between school administration and the community. They don't live in the community, and when a child is shot, they do not make the connection that the child is a cousin of somebody or a brother of someone in that school or a friend of someone in that school, and the day just goes on as business as usual. That is something that we would be taking a look at in our charter school. It will be geared to adding that mental health component into the child's school day.

When pressed about her decision to begin a charter school and leave public education, Nadia described further:

The bottom line is that you're still working for somebody else. You still have to take direction from somebody saying what it is that they want you to do. With the charter school, you don't have that level of top down management. We're able to be more flexible in how we can present the information to the students. That's the reason why I like the charter school idea.

Nadia's story, while unique to this study, raises the question of the current state and pervasiveness of racism within public schools today. In Nadia's case, it is moving her toward leaving public school administration and seeking other avenues to impact the education of children in urban settings.

Personal Factors.

Participants from each cohort reflected on their perceptions of personal factors that influenced them as they contemplated making a decision whether or not to move toward the principalship. These factors included internal motivation and family, as well as their experiences with networking and mentors.

Internal motivation: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

While internal motivation spanned both cohort groups, it varied widely in scope. These motivators included spirituality, as well as the desire to make a difference in the lives of young people, to impact policy decisions, and to advance their career.

A number of Cohort A members attributed their motivation to their spirituality. An urban special education teacher, A5 confessed, “I pursued my certification as an administrator to fulfill a dream. For me, working with kids is spiritual.” A7 likewise shared, “I love kids. I want to have an impact on both kids and teachers. I loved teaching. Moving to administration for me was a spiritual calling.” Aligning was A8 who said:

I am motivated by a higher calling. Motivated by spiritual factors and reflecting on what I want to achieve made me see this is the right route to take with my career. It is a spiritual calling to do good for the community.

A final reference to spirituality was made by A6 who had all but ruled out pursuit of the principalship stating, “For me to become a principal would require a calling from the Lord. Therefore, I don’t totally rule it out.” Spirituality is not limited to the Cohort A participants. B12 shared that, “I had a calling from the Lord. Something kept telling me to get my School District Administrator’s certification. I will go back and attain it.”

Love of children and the job motivated others. “I enjoy the excitement of the principalship. I love just working with children,” recorded A9. A10 indicated, “It’s all about peace of mind and loving what you do. It is not about money at all for me.” “I love the continuous contact with teachers and children.” reported middle school principal A12. Elementary principal B2 explained, “I was seeking an enjoyable change and found it in the principalship. No two days are alike.” A different perspective was offered by B8 who had decided not to pursue the principalship. “Having seen how the job takes you away from the kids in the classroom, I’ve realized how much I love teaching. Why change?”

All but two Cohort B members cited the ability to make a difference for children, families, and community as the main motivator of their pursuit of certification leading to the principalship. Being the change agent is a pervasive idea. B1 said, “I got into this for the main

purpose of motivating kids. I think it is critical in the urban setting. I'm an outsider, however, and it's virtually impossible to break into an urban district, but that's my motivation." B3 shared:

I want to be able to do good. The principalship offers the opportunity to make change happen. I feel a deep connection to kids. I want to ensure that their building climate and program are good. I believe the level of caring by the building leader has a direct impact on student achievement.

The possibility of change motivated B5 indicated, "The principalship affords me the chance to lead an entire building. I can help make change that impacts kids. Helping teachers make changes and improve student achievement is the great motivator." B11 saw policy change impacting positively on the lives of children. She said, "An administrator is best able to make the changes necessary to improve the education and lives of children in the community. B8 found comfort in the potential to make change and explained, "The principalship affords the ability to make change in a building." B13 talked about his job satisfaction. "I harvest great satisfaction from seeing kids succeed. I want to see children achieve." "The principal is a change agent. The principal can make a difference. That is what made me make the jump to administration," said B12. Summarizing was B10, "It is about having impact beyond the classroom, having impact on an entire building. The bottom line is making a difference."

The thought of their own legacy was motivational to some cohort members. "I find very motivational the idea of being able to shape a building in my own image. I want to leave a legacy." said A11. B6 confidently stated, "Principals have a huge role in making a difference for students. I'm motivated by my belief that I can do a much better job than the current principal." B9 explained, "I can have more of an influence and a longer lasting impact as a principal that I could as a teacher on just a small group of students." B5 stated a desire to, "... make changes that impact kids. In the principalship I have that ability to make that impact." B4 shared the desire to make a "... long lasting impact."

Many participants were motivated by career related issues. B6 candidly said:

I want to be a superintendent. The principalship for me is a steppingstone to the superintendency. I now feel I need an additional challenge, I need to move to the district office. I confess I needed the building level experience of the principalship prior to moving to the district office and ultimately the superintendency.

B7 also saw the principalship as a career steppingstone, adding:

For me the principalship is merely a stepping stone to a district office position. Ultimately, I can have a greater impact on kids in the district office. Principals' hands are tied to make any significant change. I would by-pass the principalship to get a district office position if I could!

A similar position was outlined by B8; "The principalship is necessary for a district office position. If I can't get a principalship, there will be no district office." "I initially got certified for the sole purpose of getting a job in professional development. That's all I'm interested in doing," offered B2. B12 proudly stated, "I have confidence in my ability. I know I can do the principalship! I have no desire to go to the district office or beyond as it takes you away from the kids. After all, that's what it is all about."

Cohort A members also found various forms of motivation in their career ambitions. For the most part this group lacked desire to become superintendents. "I don't think I want to move to the principalship or beyond. The good does not outweigh the bad," stated A10. Principal A2 said, "My ultimate goal is personnel administration. I have no desire to be a superintendent as there is too much stress with the increased responsibility." A3 concurred and added, "There will be no superintendency for me! The stress, the long hours, and the pay differential are not at all worth it." A8 was content in his current administrative position and said, "I have no interest in the principalship. I believe my technology skills can be put to better use elsewhere." A3 indicated, "I seek to be a Director of Special Education. Maybe I'll do a principalship along the

way, but special education is my goal. No way do I want to be a superintendent!” However, A2, a current principal frankly indicated, “I’m doing this to ultimately get to the superintendency.”

B11 was driven to directly influence policy. In order to gain unfettered autonomy to do so, she has chosen to develop her own charter school application. She said, “I want to be in a position where I set policy, and I can control the culture and climate of the district. I want to be able to do what is best for what I see the community, families, and students need.”

Family influence: This blended theme emerged in Cohorts A and B.

The impact of moving to an administrative role along for the need for strong family support is reported by members of both cohorts. Previously participants shared the impact family had on their decisions pertaining to mobility. Here, participants expressed how they perceive the administrative role impacting their family relationships and how they sought to mitigate the negative aspects of that impact. Further, participants spoke of the importance of the support of their family of their career success as an administrator.

Both A1 and A2 quoted the same phrase, “Family support is critical.” A2 also indicated, “There is no way to meet with success as a principal without unwavering support from your family.” “It’s critical to have strong support at home with the amount of time I need to devote to my job.” added A6. B11 shared, “The biggest support system for a building administrator is the family.” B10 said, “My decision to become a principal was greatly influenced by the support and encouragement of my husband and family.” B6 indicated that he aspires to move from the principalship to the district office and, ultimately, the superintendency. He shared, “My wife knows my career goals and accepts what goes with them.” Family support was also important during the internship period of preparation as B1 candidly stated:

Family support and sacrifice is extremely critical to the success of the internship. It is particularly important when the internship is unpaid. As I immersed in the internship and

took a leave of absence to do so; we lost my salary and had to cut back at home considerably. For me, there was no other way to do it.

Weighing heavy on the minds of both cohort participants was the conflict of balancing work and home obligations. Several spoke out on how this dilemma has either delayed or curtailed their plans to move into administration and the principalship.

B3 was a teacher who was on special assignment for a year as assistant high school principal in a suburban school district. He ultimately chose to return to the classroom and shared, “It is very difficult to find a balance between home and school. I believe this stress caused my health problems to exacerbate. For the good of all, I chose to return to the classroom and am considering leaving public education altogether.” A1 discussed, “I saw early on that the job of principal was going to require me to give up a considerable amount of time on nights and weekends. I declined the offer by the district of a full time administrative position. I want to meet my family obligations and keep my summers free.” A7 was torn between staying in his BOCES training position and seeking a principalship. He stated:

Time involved in work impacts my family right now. I am hesitant to take on more hours. I can see late nights, longer hours, and weekends impacting my family further. I want to be involved in the lives of my kids.

The deterrent nature of time impacted A6’s decision to not seek the principalship. He said, “Happiness is number one for me. The principalship is not a happy place. I want to have time for my kids.” Family health issues were a contributory cause for A5 to abandon her pursuit of the principalship. She said, “Dealing with family health issues on top of work obligations was way too much for me. I am not able to devote adequate time to a career as a principal.”

Delayed entry to the principalship was described by B13. She stated, “I had young preschoolers at home. Despite being strongly and continuously encouraged to make the move by colleagues and supervisors, I had to delay my entry into administration until my youngest child

was in Kindergarten. I almost missed my opportunity.” A2 also delayed entry to the principalship and said, “There is no way I could do the principalship with small children. I had to wait.”

The time away from family showed as a source of personal guilt for some participants. B4 lamented that “There is a vast loss of personal time. Nights, weekends, and family activities are compromised. It tears at me.” A9 and A10, both spoke of their view about the greatest deterrents to pursuing the principalship with the same response, “Time away from family.” A10 added that a district office job required even more time and stated, “There are an unbelievable amount of meetings after regular school hours.” A12 expressed that, “It is hard to leave school at school. It’s a 24/7 job. The time required including evening obligations significantly impact a young family.” A13 agreed indicating, “Having to take work home impacts my family on a regular basis.” B5 shared that, “I missed many family events due to the requirement to attend board of education meetings and evening events. This obligation also controlled where I could live. I needed less travel time to and from work.”

Mentoring and networking: These blended themes emerged in Cohorts A and B.

Participants across both cohorts cited mentoring and networking as important factors in seeking and securing an administrative position as well as meeting with success once employed in the job. Responses described how study participants were encouraged or tapped by others to make the jump to administration. In addition, participants revealed how they were or were not mentored and the effectiveness of that mentor relationship.

Virtually every participant recalled the impetus for their initial foray onto the path toward becoming an administrator. While some were internally motivated by a past experience, a majority were encouraged or “tapped” by a colleague or supervisor who was a practicing

administrator. There was variety also in the role of the individual that initiated the participant's first interest.

Principals played a key role in tapping teachers and teacher leaders to pursue administration. A1 recalled, "I was approached to take on some administrative tasks by my building principal. After a while, he encouraged me to take courses toward my certification." Likewise, A2 said, "As a teacher, I was strongly encouraged by my principal to go into administration." Both A11 and A12 expressed that they were tapped by a principal to get started on the path to certification. A9, whose husband was a sitting principal, shared:

I was essentially tapped and encouraged by my husband to move toward becoming a principal. He saw the qualities in me that he knew were necessary for success in the job. He felt I would excel. That encouragement was key to me not only meeting with success but being able to excel in my current job as principal.

B13, an urban principal, recalled:

I was tapped and pushed aggressively by my former principal. She arranged for the central office to put me on the design team for a school being reorganized. I was then pushed to be the principal of that redesigned school. She basically would not take no for an answer!

Similarly, B12, the urban assistant principal relayed:

I was called by the district office and told my name was given to the public university administrative preparation program as a potential candidate. I then received a call and grant money to get certified, and now here I am. I found out later that my building principal was behind all this.

A private school principal was the one who tapped B10. She shared that, "A tap on the shoulder was my trigger into administration."

Administrators in positions other than the principalship, including the superintendency, also played a significant part in encouraging many others. A10 indicated:

A number of administrators in various roles in my district suggested I enter the realm of administration. I received strong encouragement from a co-worker. The fact that someone

I worked with and could eventually supervise as an administrator recognized my potential was motivating for me.

A6 said, “The personnel director in my district encouraged me. He indicated that he saw weak applicant pools for administrative positions and that he actively wanted to encourage people he felt would make strong candidates for future positions.” Cohort B members cited encouragement by superintendents as a factor. B2, B5, and B6 all indicated that their initial commencement to the administrative ranks was initiated by their respective superintendents. B4’s experience was similar. She remembered that:

I was initially approached by my principal to do an internship in the building. When an assistant principal position became available in the high school, the superintendent contacted me and encouraged me to apply. Later, the superintendent asked me to take my current position as a principal of one of our elementary schools. I feel honored by their confidence in me. That is a big motivator.

While not mentioned by participants in the interviews, it was interesting that between the Cohort A and Cohort B interviews, the New York Commissioner of Education was encouraging superintendents to “tap” worthy individuals to consider the principalship and superintendency as a career goal. This was an effort by the New York State Education Department to recruit high quality educational leaders.

Past experiences as well as internal motivation also contributed to some participant’s decision to become certified. A1 revealed that, “I was initially inspired into education and, ultimately, the path to certification as an administrator by a former teacher who later became an administrator. I wanted to follow in his footsteps.” A high school experience with Future Teachers of America (FTA) inspired A4. “My decision to become certified is self-motivated.” proudly asserted A8. Similarly A13 recorded that, “It was internal motivation for me. I’ve always wanted to be an administrator.” Adding to that idea was A5 who boldly stated, “I am self-motivated, I was never tapped by anyone. It was my own decision!”

Few participants in this study report any formalized mentoring for new principals and administrators. Most prevalent in the interviews conducted for this study were reports of a vast web of informal mentors and networking options for those becoming certified as administrators. In many cases those administrators that tap and encourage an individual to pursue certification serve as their informal mentor once they attain an administrative position.

Informal mentors were single or multiple for a given participant and may have varied over time. A2 reported being mentored by a fellow principal and stated, “She basically took me under her wing. I knew I could call upon her for advice at any time. Our informal relationship got me off to a great start.” Both A1 and A5 reported being mentored by both their assistant principal and principal while they were teaching. A5 had an added push and said “I was actually pushed to get my certification by another informal mentor, a superintendent from a nearby school district. I had a lot of encouragement and support informally.” BOCES employee A3 relayed being mentored by “the director of special education.” A4 stated he was mentored by an assistant special education director. A6 shared that he experienced informal mentoring from, “both my department chair and our personnel director. I feel that I am being recruited into an administrative position through the offer of ongoing support.” “The superintendent is my mentor.” stated, A12. “She says I would make a good superintendent and is providing me with support. We have frequent informal meetings where I am encouraged to try new things and widen the depth and breadth of my professional experience.” he added. B6 included his superintendent as an informal mentor yet confided, “I still seek mentoring support from other area principals not in my district.” B13, whom I earlier detailed, was tapped and pushed to apply to the principalship by her former building principal. She viewed that person as her professional mentor. She stated, “My informal mentor kept giving me leadership roles when I was a teacher.

I didn't realize until later that she was grooming me for the principalship!" The building principal emerged as the informal mentor for B1, B4, B7, B9 and B12. Evidence in this study shows that that building level leaders both are sought after as mentors as well as seeking out potential protégés to mentor.

A7 reported multiple mentors and indicated, "I've had several mentors so far. Their roles have been fluid as my needs change, and I advance in my career. I take a bit from each to make my own professional persona." A8 saw similarities in mentoring between the public and private sectors of employment. He stated:

I have worked in both the public and private sectors. In each job setting I've called upon multiple people for support and guidance. I see these people as my informal mentors.

They are not in a supervisory capacity, and I can confide in them confidently.

Some participants experienced formal mentoring. Their reviews of these programs were mixed. A11 said:

In my previous position in a suburban district I was mentored and encouraged informally by my building principal. When I came to the city district, there was a formal mentoring program. It utilized retired administrators from the district. I found their knowledge and expertise superb!

To the contrary, A9 was less than impressed with her formal mentoring program. "I had a mentor assigned to me by the superintendent. That person was uncompensated for that duty. I rarely saw her, and she was clearly not invested in being my mentor." B10 said, "We have a formal mentor program in our district. It is totally ineffective. My informal mentoring relationship with the director of personnel is much more beneficial to me professionally." B2 was grateful for being mentored by several of her principal colleagues. She said, "We have three elementary schools in the district, so I have two other colleagues I look to for guidance. We meet

and communicate regularly. They offer support, and I accept it. I've also been effectively mentored by the high school principal prior to coming to the elementary level." Despite this positive informal relationship, B2 yearned for more saying, "This district lacks a much needed formal mentorship program for administrators. The teachers have one. Why don't we?" A3 expressed disappointment with the lack of mentoring support. She said:

I was encouraged by higher administration to get certified. I did it, but there was no follow-up support. I feel a bit betrayed. Maybe if there were a more formal program in place I would have had some support.

This idea was affirmed by B5. He supported the idea that principals need more formalized support. He said:

I had an informal mentor here in the district. That was great, but districts make the wrong assumption that a new principal is an immediate expert in all things. There is a need for more formal, prescribed mentoring to ensure everyone has a common base of understanding about the district expectations and mission and had training in the skills necessary to implement them.

A7 and A4 confirmed that no formal mentoring programs existed in their district but were neutral on whether or not a formal program would be beneficial.

The value of networking was reported mainly by Cohort A members. They outlined the impact of their networking, or lack thereof, on their career development. Additionally they discussed networking's impact on professional development mainly through professional associations and local gatherings of like professionals. Participants reported the role of networks in both career advancement and professional development.

A2 was first to speak about a particular professor of educational administration, at a public university in Upstate Central New York State. The professor A2 spoke of was well connected with superintendents in the region and published a monthly list of area job openings with commentary on the positions. A2 said, "It is important to be on the particular professor's

list. If you want in, you need to be involved in a quality internship and job placement service through the university.” The particular professor influence surfaced again with A7. He stated, “Networking is critical if you want to break in, especially in a district other than where you work. Being on the ‘Professor’s List’ is important.” A13 echoed, “Networking is of extreme importance but being on the ‘Professor’s List’ is crucial. That’s where the good jobs are and his people get them.” In similar fashion, A8 reconfirmed, “It is important to be networked and on the ‘Professor’s List. It is difficult for me to move from the private sector to public education because I lack that network relationship.” In disgust, A3 said, “I’m well aware of the ‘Professor’s List’ and his university network. I know it is important career wise to be a member, but I have no inside track. The good old boys network always pulls candidates from this network and affluent schools located in the suburban areas. I have no chance.” In a final reference, A10 reluctantly admitted, “Networking is important for both job seeking and professional development. Not being a graduate of the particular professor’s program, I’m not in the right network for this area.”

A9 discussed the importance of networking as it relates to professional development. He stated, “Networking is of high importance. I find that belonging to a statewide professional administrative association that provides high quality professional development is very worthwhile. I also value professional groups that meet locally for support and idea sharing.” Several other participants praised the statewide professional association for providing relevant professional development. A2 shared, “Professional associations provide me with curriculum support and materials I can’t get in district.” Another participant, A12, reported, “I can get the professional development I need in areas such as human resources that I can’t in district and didn’t in my university program.” A 13 also reported, “My professional association keeps me up

to date on issues and trends that directly impact me. It's stuff I don't get elsewhere and at minimal cost." Noncommittal was A12 who said, "Professional associations have minimal influence on my practice."

The only Cohort B member to comment on networking was B13, the principal who was pushed and mentored by her former principal. She commented on the network associated with her urban district's formal mentoring program. She shared, "The initial and ongoing support from current in district principals as well as retirees is outstanding!"

In the time between the Cohort A and B interviews, APPR was instituted and the economy in New York retracted significantly. Participants in Cohort B had previously reported an increased workload and time commitment due to APPR. In addition, the Cohort B had reported less willingness to engage in job mobility in part due to job security concerns. This researcher surmises that these reasons which have also forced less person-to-person contact and more email communication to save time have resulted in less networking opportunity.

Personal factors articulated by Donald (A8).

Donald is a 46 year old white male district office administrator charged with data management in a small affluent suburban school district. He is a double career changer. He moved from education to the private sector and then back to education. Donald's story provided some insight into the internal motivation that drives individuals to make the jump into administration and/or the principalship.

Donald began his career as a music teacher in a rural school district in Upstate Central New York. While teaching music Donald became interested in technology and infused it in his teaching. This interest led him outside of education. Donald stated:

I wanted to do something in technology, and they were sort of 'this is your position and there is no room for you to do this other stuff because you are kind of locked into doing

that so how can you do both?’ So I took an opportunity to take classes at a business school in Syracuse. I got certified as a Microsoft systems engineer. I then got hired by Cable Express working the client server environment. I did that for 2 and a half years, and then I was recruited by Sure Group which is a Cisco Gold partner, a networking company, and I was a network engineer which provided remote support for hospitals, Mercedes Benz, Verizon Wireless, huge companies in the United States such as Clipper-Chance, the number one law firm in New York City. I became certified on Cisco as a network professional and certified in firewall advance configuration and certified in wireless field engineering. I was making far more money in the private sector that I could make in education...even now! Six figures!

Donald spoke of a spiritual calling back to education. This spiritual calling is articulated by a number of participants in this study. Donald described his story:

I quit teaching. People thought I was nuts. How can you give up tenure and all this other stuff? But there is more to life...you know you feel this calling, you really do, like there is more than I could be doing. You ask most people why they get into principalships and find most of the time it’s because they think they can do a better job from what they have seen others do, or they think they can give themselves to a higher order of good to serve the community. It’s like a spiritual calling! There might be some that do it for the money. If you are already locked into that path where else can you go except the administrative path to move up financially? But you know, there is quite a bit of work involved with that so you really need to make sure it is the right thing. ... I became really fascinated with the principalship. At one point I thought it might really be nice to be a principal, especially when you talk about instructional leadership. But the reality is that there are very few principals that have the technical aptitude that I have developed...so for me to really serve a community well it would make more sense for me to stay in the technical area and use my skills and knowledge and merge it with the instructional side. It really was the perfect match.

Donald also shared that education was inherent in his nature. He said:

To be honest, I knew when I was in high school, going down to elementary school and helping with lessons with French lessons with the younger students. I remember going down and helping with band lessons. I was teaching trombone, and I went to the high school band teacher and said, ‘there is no way I’m going to be a teacher. They keep forgetting what I teach them. I keep showing and they keep forgetting it.’ Of course, I didn’t have any patience with that. But I used to do private guitar lessons in high school, and I enjoyed those because those students were interested in lessons, and I enjoyed the guitar. In some ways I was always a teacher.

Donald’s motivation actually lead him away from the principalship as he indicated that his skill set in technology as well as his desire to make a difference was better suited to the

position of the Director of Technology. When asked if he would consider using his technology skills to move a building forward as principal, Donald replied:

After watching the principals do what they do and reflecting back that I went into Director of Technology, it confirmed to me that I was in the right position. There is nothing to make me consider a principalship right now. A few years ago I turned down a \$110,000 job in the private sector to work at the BOCES. So to me, it's not about the money. That's the nice thing about my public university preparation program...it's almost like a spiritual, philosophical program. You go in there, and you really get to learn yourself more.

Finally, when pressed on the spirituality of leadership Donald related back to his perception of his public university preparation program:

We talk about the philosophy of leadership... we talk a lot about the ethics, being ethical and how you approach all these challenges. And they are not tangible. They are not going to tell you this is the right way to do it. It is never black and white. What do you do? How do you know it is right? How do you handle stress? How do you handle a million things coming at you? How do you know your personality? And then you reflect and then you have your peers reflect. So is there congruence between how your peers view you and how you view yourself? I enjoyed that part of it because we are so busy in our lives most folks don't have time to really sit down and say, 'What am I really about? What do I really want to achieve?' We just go from one task to another task.

The Magic Wand Question.

Throughout my career, I have used the "Magic Wand" question in interview situations. My purpose is to attempt to get at what one thing is most important to the interviewee about the subject incorporated into the question. Over the years I have found that people, when confronted with this question, are forced to pause and think about the one thing that is important to them about the subject. In the case of this study, the "Magic Wand" question was as follows: "If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about the principalship today, what would that be?"

The responses appear below:

Cohort A

- A1: Teachers need to understand the role of the administrator.
- A2: Managing fear of change.
- A3: Principals need more discretionary decision-making power.
- A4: Eliminate the dress code for administrators (Suit and tie).
- A5: Principal role must change to focus on developing community relationships.
- A6: More contact with stellar students and less day-to-day mundane tasks.
- A7: Reduce teacher union influence to improve the building climate.
- A8: Less management and more instructional leadership
- A9: Need to involve all teachers, parents, and administrators in educational process.
- A10: Teachers need to better understand role of principal
- A11: More teacher accountability. Daily operations impede ability to demand it.
- A12: Change job to 11 months for more family time.
Eliminate duties like technology and data from job. Takes too much time.
- A13: Need more time...a longer school day.

Cohort B

- B1: Eliminate constant second guessing of principal decisions.
- B2: Less time doing 35 page evaluations on teachers. Take APPR away!
- B3: Principals need more time with peers.
- B4: Free up principal to be instructional leader. Need more AP's.
- B5: Principals being able to be in classrooms more.
- B6: Teachers will have full buy-in to new initiatives.
- B7: Limit on the amount of APPR evaluations principal is responsible for.
- B8: Additional personnel to assist principal.

- B9: The ability to delegate miniscule tasks and attend to important ones.
- B10: Less management...more leadership.
- B11: Change type of people entering principalship. Need understanding of community.
- B12: Ability to select own staff due to APPR.
- B13: Reallocate duties: More instructional leadership; less emphasis on budgets.

The main difference between Cohort A and Cohort B in the pointed responses to the “Magic Wand” question is a switch in emphasis from management to instructional leadership. The participant responses in the Accountability finding of this study point to APPR as the catalyst for this transformation in Cohort B since APPR was non-existent during the timeframe of the Cohort A interviews.

Summary of Key Findings

As discussed earlier, five final themes emerged from this study. They were Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors. For each final theme the key findings are compiled below.

Accountability.

Student testing has been utilized in New York for decades to compare student achievement levels in buildings and districts throughout the state. At the elementary and middle level, it dates back to the Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) tests and Program Evaluation Tests (PET) of the 1980s and 1990s. While results were public, few consequences were tied to their results for school buildings, districts, or individual teachers and administrators. Regents’ examinations have been administered for decades. They have mainly been utilized as a summative assessment of an individual student’s achievement in the particular course for which they were administered.

When No Child Left Behind legislation was enacted in 2001, public scrutiny of school performance based on standardized testing increased. This legislation required the public reporting of student test scores. In New York this resulted in the issuance of an annual school report card. These testing results, along with other selected demographic information such as free and reduced lunch participation, ethnicity, and per-pupil expenditures to name a few, were publically reported and were disaggregated by school building and district. Similar schools across the state were also compared.

Further change occurred in 2011 with the advent of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system of individual and school accountability. For the previous decade, schools were being evaluated by the state based on student performance on basic state developed evaluations. With APPR, student achievement began to directly impact the professional evaluations of teachers and administrators. APPR was instituted during the course of this study, between the interviews of Cohort A and Cohort B. The Cohort B participants had more to say about APPR than any other issue.

On the positive side, participants reported that APPR has increased the principals' focus on teaching and learning. Principals have become intensely engaged in both conversations with teachers about what constitutes effective instruction and direct observation of teachers in classrooms, providing feedback and suggestions for improvement, both informally and formally. For those who are looking for opportunities to affect teaching and learning, APPR has created many new opportunities to do so.

The downside, as reported by participants, is indeed intense. The amount of principal time dedicated to the direct supervision of teaching and student achievement has increased exponentially. This has left less time to attend to all the other tasks inherent in the position of

principal. These include establishing and maintaining positive building climate, student discipline, engaging families, program and instructional planning, and completing the massive amount of paperwork required by the district and state. Essentially, a vast number of items have been placed on the plate of the principal with few, if any, being removed. Participants complained about their need to work well beyond the school day and on weekends and holidays. Many reported not being able to utilize vacation time. Participants clamored for more administrative help in the form of additional assistant principal positions to allow them to be able to engage in instructional leadership while shifting basic, but essential, management tasks to others. The economic reality is that this is not taking place.

The new APPR system was promulgated by changes in 2001 of New York Education Law and New York State Education Department regulations. The Legislature, Governor, and Education Department indicated the changes were necessary to improve instruction and ultimately student achievement. The voices of the participants in this study attribute a significant change in the role of the principal to the enactment of APPR. The principal is reported by participants to have become intensely immersed in the process of being an instructional leader. While there has been nothing removed from the principal's plate relating to the required management responsibilities, these tasks have taken a back seat to the principal's now primary responsibility of being a high quality instructional leader.

Is this role change, therefore, viewed by participants as a cause or effect of APPR? Participants indicate that, by far, APPR is causative of the role change. The national dialogue pertaining to the improvement of student achievement and school performance has persisted for years through many legislated changes. Principals have become accustomed to the scrutiny that has resulted from public reporting of test scores and the resulting comparisons of schools against

each other. APPR may indeed have been a result of this public scrutiny. To the practicing principal, however, APPR has changed the game from collective accountability to individual accountability. Principals are directly subjected to the regulatory provisions of the APPR law. They received an individual score upon which a significant part of their annual evaluation is based. Their job security is impacted by their evaluation score. Despite research such as that by Fullan (2001) that indicates that lasting change takes at least five years to take hold, the participants report being under intense pressure to facilitate immediate, significant improvement in student performance. This was reported particularly by participants in high needs schools. Participants also indicate that APPR has caused them to dedicate large blocks of time to observation and written evaluation of teachers. This has left less time for them to attend to management tasks that impact building climate such as student discipline and parent interaction.

Participants also positively indicate that as a result of APPR they have been thrust into the instructional leadership role, a desire they have held for a long time. Participants are engaged in rich conversations with teachers pertaining to teaching and student learning. Further they report being in classrooms much more frequently and engaging in the provision of feedback and evaluation of teaching effectiveness to the teachers in their charge.

APPR appears, at least for many of the participants in my study, to be negatively impacting the perception of the principalship. Prospective principals are wary of pursuing the job and subjecting themselves and their career to the issues caused by APPR. Rather, they choose to either remain in the classroom or seek administrative positions other than the principalship. Many incumbent principals reported merely counting the days to retirement.

While APPR appears in the Accountability theme, the research recognizes that its impact encompasses elements of all final themes including Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors.

Nature of the Job.

Within this finding area participants from both cohorts described the variety of components inherent in the principalship; their perceptions of the constant yin and yang between leadership and management, autonomy and isolation; the influence on the principalship of parents, the public, and politics. They also offered perspectives on both physical and level mobility and articulated their perspective on the stress related to being principal. While dealing with personnel issues was only specifically referenced by Cohort A members, Cohort B found personnel issues and decisions tied closely to their implementation and administration of the new APPR accountability requirements.

The personnel issues articulated by Cohort A participants, as well as by Cohort B members within the scope of their comments about APPR, dealt mainly with the increasing influence of teachers' unions in all aspects of education and the perception that the principal is increasingly powerless when engaged in a difference of philosophy with them.

Many participants enjoyed the variety of tasks principals engage in on a day-to-day basis. Part of the attractant factor of the job is reported as knowing that no two days are the same. Participants stay fresh knowing that everything they do ultimately impacts the education of the children in their charge.

Both cohorts sought balance between their desire to be instructional leaders and the necessity to attend to the multitude of management tasks required to create a positive, efficient learning environment. Several factors emerged as inhibitors to the principal being able to balance

leadership and management. The increasing volume and relentless nature of associated paperwork was an aspect referenced by many. Others articulated the ever increasing frequency and severity of issues related to the discipline of students. Micromanagement of both the managerial and instructional aspects of the principalship by district office administrators and Superintendents were identified in some cases. The greatest shift between Cohort A and B participants, related to leadership and management, was that the earlier cohort seemed majorly engaged in their management role and fought to carve time to increase their engagement into instructional leadership. The latter cohort, due to APPR, had been thrust into the instructional leadership role and actively sought ways to make sure that the required management tasks were not neglected. This, as stated earlier, had increased the workload and anxiety of Cohort B members. Cohort B increasingly articulated the need for more administrative assistance in balancing leadership and management.

Many of the participants found the requirements of their expanded role as instructional leader to be burdensome. Many complained and some alluded to looking forward to retirement or working in a position other than principal where the APPR requirements were not targeted. The increased time they must now spend in the process of teacher observation and written evaluation is significant. The management tasks that were and still are a requirement of the principal are reported by participants to have not been diminished. There were, however, those participants that were excited by the challenges presented by the new role requirements. The prospect of being in classrooms, facilitating meaningful change, and being viewed as an instructional leader rather than a building manager appeared motivating for a number of participants. The concept of generational theory advocated by Stone-Johnson (2014) could possibly be a factor in these different views of the impact of role change resulting from the

initiation of APPR. Generation X, Stone-Johnson argues, places greater value on being part of long term change and less on the authority of leaders. Baby-boomers are less flexible with change and put in the time it takes to get the job done no matter how long it takes. The participants in this study articulate both generational characteristics as outlined by Stone-Johnson. We indeed may be seeing generational theory in play based on the perceptions of the changing principal role outlined by participants. Indeed more study will be needed on this point as it could have significant implications for incentivizing the principalship.

Participants offered a variety of perspectives related to principal autonomy and isolation. In general, when the principal possessed autonomy to make and implement decisions, a feeling of accomplishment was present. When that autonomy was impeded by district office bureaucracy or inflexible policies, frustration ensued. Isolation was expressed, in particular, by elementary school principals. They mentioned the concern that there was little interaction with central office supervisors when things are going well, but when an issue emerged the principal was placed in an immediate defensive position. This was exacerbated by the accountability characteristics related to APPR and the increasing public scrutiny of schools in general and student test scores in particular.

Mobility was expressed in terms of physical mobility and level mobility by both cohorts. In this study physical mobility is considered the need to physically change jobs or move ones residence to attain a different job. Level mobility pertains to movement between elementary, middle and high school positions. Most participants that commented on physical mobility had a self-imposed radius that eliminated their need to relocate their family. Cohort B members had heightened concern about job security in light of a declining economic climate between the times of the two cohort interviews. Those that considered a physical move sought to escape locations

with heightened economic deprivation or were aspirants to the superintendency. The CAS degree and related administrative certifications in New York permit holders to work anywhere in a K-12 setting. The perception that, for example, once a high school person...always a high school person was encountered by those that desired to administrate at a level different than where they taught or interned. This pervasive perception impacted their ability to successfully get through the interview process and be appointed to positions in other levels. They encountered this perception with teachers, district office personnel, and even their peers.

Parents, politics, and the public are all aspects of the public nature of the principalship. Participants recognized the need to positively deal with these elements of the job in order to be professionally successful. It was expressed in interviews that, in order to become and remain effective in this area, a large commitment of principal time was required. Participants indicated concern with the increasing negative public perception of public education which is inaccurately enhanced by the media. They blamed public reporting of test score results, the placing of school buildings on improvement or failing school lists by the state, and, in the case of Cohort B participants, the initiation of APPR. "Over-involved" parents attempting to micromanage building processes and policies as well as their child's in-school activities presented a number of participants with challenges.

Job related stress topped the list of comments pertaining to the nature of the principal position. The causes of stress were outlined throughout this study and included job security concerns, lack of support, restrictions on autonomy placed by district office and teacher unions, student behavior, parent demands, and ability to manage time in relation to the expected workload. Principals reported that there was an increase of stress related to leading the current educational change initiative in their buildings. Participants expressed the impact of stress on

their health, family and future career decisions. The perception of high stress related to job of principal appears to significantly impact the decision of non-principals to refrain from seeking the principalship.

Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Participants in both cohorts were keenly aware of the requirements they faced along the path to certification as well as the tangible benefits that are associated with their attainment of an administrative position. All recognized that university preparation programs, internships, and a certification and interview process are all rites of passage on the road to the principalship or an alternate administrative position. Benefits such as direct compensation and tuition support were identified as significant areas that study participants articulated during interviews.

Participants reported that university preparation programs provided some balance between theory and practice. They appreciated the practical experiences that were provided to them. Participants who reported that their university programs gave inadequate attention to practical, nuts and bolts experiences felt negatively about the experience and reported needing to gain critical perspective on issues on the job. In many cases, they needed to take the initiative, as on the job support, such as mentoring, was also non-existent. The practical items participants valued were special education, school law, budgeting, master schedule development, and basic curriculum development and implementation. Many, though not all, were caught off guard, lacking preparation for the implementation of APPR and the Common Core curriculum. Also lacking was preparation to face the many political issues encountered, particularly in the principalship. Participants who lacked interest in pursuing the principalship expressed that their university programs were highly focused on principal preparation and lacked a broader perspective that was necessary for them to be successful in alternate positions of school

administration. Career changers spoke highly of the availability of certification programs for people who were not originally education majors. They indicated that without the masters' program path leading to certification they would not be in the position to be an administrator. Several indicated that the university was uninvolved in their identification and selection of an appropriate internship site to meet that requirement of the program. Urban educators as well as those who aspired to become urban educators indicated that more emphasis on issues specific to the urban education setting need to be incorporated into university administrative preparation programs. Both African-American participants commented on the lack of diversity among university preparation program peers. Interestingly, several cohort members who indicated that they have decided not to pursue the principalship commented that their university administrative preparation program had served to make them better teachers by helping them focus on curriculum and instruction, as well as giving them a perspective on the issues faced by principals.

Participants in this study valued the full-time internship that provided a broad, diversified experience. Their ability to locate and participate in that level of experience was an extremely difficult and rare reality to secure. This study found that in cases where the district was grooming, formally or informally, particular individuals for administrative positions, flexibility was provided allowing the intern to maintain his or her teacher status while engaged in the internship. This preserved their tenure and seniority rights providing job security during the internship. In some cases, they were given *teacher on special assignment* status allowing them to work in an administrative position for a year after certification was attained. This allowed both the district and new administrator a year to determine if there was mutual agreement that they were meeting with success prior to their relinquishing teacher tenure and entering into a

probationary administrative appointment. Others reported difficulties in securing an internship that provided a high quality experience and was both secure and financially feasible. These difficulties included internships dealing solely with student discipline; the requirement to take unpaid leave for up to a year; part-time settings where a full or minimally reduced teaching load needed to be maintained; and lack of university support before, during, and after the internship.

The apparent consensus among all study participants who spoke to the issue was that the state certification process was a series of hoops that needed to be jumped through in order to work as an administrator. They reported the requirements to be somewhat of a moving target with the state changing requirements frequently, causing them to either rush their program or risk having to meet more requirements, thus delaying their start and causing them more expense. They basically viewed the process as a money maker for the state. Several viewed the fact that New York certification was reciprocal with virtually every other state as a positive factor. Problematic for some was the reality that New York only issues certification documents twice during a year. These participants indicated that they encountered districts demanding that they have the actual certification document in hand before they would even be considered for an interview. This resulted in their not being contacted for openings for which they were qualified until they were in receipt of the document. This was a delay and what cohort members described as an unnecessary bureaucratic impediment to their career advancement.

Members of both cohorts found the hiring process for administrative positions as extremely complex and saturated with political overtones. Emerging was an argument for and against a “grow your own” policy of administrative succession planning. The plus side was that districts could groom whom they want through incentives and favorable internships, thus guaranteeing a supply of administrative protégés that stood ready to fill vacancies. The negative

side was documented by participants who told of outside candidates not being considered for open positions and those out of favor with the more powerful in the district being screened out of the process early on. In urban settings, only the rare exception from outside the district was permitted in. Unsuccessful candidates reported never receiving feedback on their interview even when it was requested. They were frustrated with not knowing how to improve either their experiences or interviewing skills for the next time they were in a position to interview. With participants reporting that they never experienced instruction on the job search in their university preparation programs, a poor interview experience was difficult to improve upon, leaving these participants failing to be able to make positive strides toward actually securing an administrative position and having no one in a position to provide assistance to them.

Only relatively young administrators indicated that moving from teaching or business to school administration represented a significant increase in their financial compensation. Those cohort members with several years or more of experience point to little or no salary differential between teachers and administrators when accounting for the longer work day and work year which is inherent in administrative positions. The majority of aspirants to the principalship and other positions are attracted by non-monetary aspects of the position including their perceived ability to make a difference in the lives and education of children. Both Cohort A and B members made the case that the salary was a deterrent for career advancement. Experienced teachers who wanted to move to administration found the move to represent a pay cut. The risk of giving up tenure as a teacher as well as the long hours and little extra pay trumped many of the positive non-monetary job perks. Cohort B members expressed concern about the recruitment and retention of future administrators given New York State's creation of two new retirement

tiers resulting in a significant reductions of retirement benefits in recent years for incoming members of the profession.

A benefit that aided in the recruitment and retention of administrators was the provision of low cost or no cost vouchers for university course credit. This one benefit was significant in enticing teachers in this study to take university courses. This resulted in their attainment of certification as school administrators. In a number of cases, these university credits also translated into salary credit. Thus, they were able to increase their salaries while earning their certification. Those participants whose district did not make university credit courses available indicated that they met with increased hardships in completing their certification.

Climate.

The climate of both the school building and the school district influenced the perceptions of members of both cohorts related to the principalship and their desire to apply. There was a difference in the tone of responses between various participants in the study. This theme yielded responses from only Cohort B members in the area of Job Security, Fiscal Climate, and Discrimination suggesting a shift in these areas over the course of the two cohort interview sessions.

Members professing positive climates appreciated ongoing district support of their professional development. They also indicated that they enjoyed a vast degree of autonomy in how their building was run and in their ability to make decisions relative to both personnel and program in their buildings. Characteristics of a positive climate, as reported by these participants, included ongoing support by district level administration, lack of micromanagement by superiors, and teaching staffs that were eager to team together to move forward in the area of teaching and learning. Here too participants saw the district's support of their ongoing education

through the provision of tuition benefits as a climate enhancer. Smaller sized schools were an environment commented about positively as the setting was more easily and positively influenced by building leaders. There were fewer layers of central office administration in rural settings thus allowing principals more autonomy. Participants valued strong district leadership that articulated a vision for the district. Districts engaging in “grow your own” succession planning have participants that report increased loyalty among those promoted from within.

Participants also described characteristics of schools and districts where poor climates exist. A big factor is that they perceive the principalship not to be valued. The fear of not being supported in their decisions as principal is reported to suppress creativity and the new initiatives that involve any type of risk taking by the principal. Urban educators articulated that climate was negatively impacted when the principal was not in tune with specific aspects and characteristics of the community. Others indicated that in districts where a strong teachers union basically ran the show that the effectiveness of the principal was diminished significantly. Often their perspective was not listened to. Participants in this situation conveyed that they rarely saw or heard from their superintendent unless there was a problem.

Job security emerged as an issue of climate with a number of Cohort B members. This was coupled with concerns about both losing tenure when switching from teaching to administrative positions, as well as in relation to the implementation of APPR as discussed earlier. How districts approached allowing teachers to intern and initiate into administrative roles was determinate of either a positive or negative climate factor in a district for participants commenting on this issue. The concern for job security, in particular not being removed due to their APPR score as well as avoiding having their position eliminated, has impacted the career

mobility of both teachers to administrative positions as well as entry level administrators to higher level administrative positions, including the principalship.

Fiscal climate issues emerged in comments and responses from B Cohort members. They discussed how lack of funding has created a climate of *have* and *have not* school districts. Participants, particularly in urban areas, attributed this inequity in funding and fiscal support to the lack of student achievement as measured by the standardized tests tied to APPR and other accountability measures. Affluent districts were better able to recruit high quality teachers, which deplete high-needs districts of many talented teachers and principals. The fiscal climate has not allowed districts to add additional administrative positions such as assistant principalships that could pick up management tasks and allow principals to fully engage in instructional leadership. Non-mandate programs, such as pre-school education are consistently in jeopardy.

This study began with questions about whether or not a shortage of principals and school administrators actually exists. Participants in both cohorts explained their perceptions. From the vast majority of those commenting on the existence of a shortage, the finding was that there were indeed an adequate number of applicants for open positions. This was the case for urban, suburban and rural schools. The shortage issue for most Upstate Central New York participants in this study was an issue of high quality applicants. Participants reported candidates applying for positions for which they were nowhere near qualified either by appropriate certification or experience. They equated this to a shortage of effective leaders prepared to lead instructional change that would translate into improved student achievement. Cohort B participants, faced with the reality of principals needing to lead the educational reform movement including the implementation of common core curriculum and the APPR system, indicate that just having adequate management skills is not acceptable. Urban educators pointed to their system of “grow

your own” administrators designed to ensure a supply of principals familiar with the nature of the district and its unique issues. While urban participants reported an adequate supply because of this, they were virtually silent regarding the quality of and the ability to lead change by candidates in this pool.

While only one participant commented on discrimination issues, it warrants mention in the findings of this study. The perception of the Cohort B African-American who raised this issue was that racism is deeply and systemically rooted within our education system. This, in her view, was true in urban, suburban, and rural areas. She referred to “top down racism” explaining that those in charge of our schools fail to recognize the needs and issues faced by not only students, but also by their families and the communities in which they reside. This disconnect from the community translates into poor leadership. She believes that the existence of pervasive racism is denied and ignored by those European-Americans who are ultimately in a position of power and could, but don’t affect change.

Urban issues emerged within both cohorts. Positive perceptions included the idea that the urban environment is one where it was possible for an individual principal to have a great impact on the education of children. Essentially, there is a great need for improvement in urban schools and one individual could make a real difference there.

There were, however, many negative aspects of the urban principalship that were highlighted by participants. Cohort B members viewed that APPR system as stacked against them. They seemed to believe that the pressure for immediate change and improvement in student test scores is so intense that any one principal is not given an adequate amount of time to bring it about. Concern is expressed that principals come and go so frequently either by choice or by force that there is little continuity of building leadership. Further Cohort B members feared

for their job security with historically depressed student test scores a major component of their evaluation. The focus has become raising test scores while pervasive social and community issues such as student fear of gun violence get little attention.

High quality non-urban educators either have no interest in subjecting themselves to working in an urban environment because of APPR or are deterred because of the “grow your own” hiring policies of urban school districts.

Personal Factors.

Various personal factors impacting the perceptions of and decision to pursue the principalship were uncovered by the participant interviews contained in this study. Internal motivation was widely identified by members of both cohorts and varied widely in form. Spirituality was identified as a motivator by several participants. They referred to their decision to pursue their certification and ultimately aspire to a principalship as a “spiritual calling.” These participants reported wanting to be able to do good for both individuals and society in general. Others expressed their love of working with children as a motivator. They found fulfillment in the excitement of the job and the fact that no two days are the same. This variety acted to keep the principal fresh and motivated. They believed their enthusiasm motivated both teachers and students to challenge themselves to go above and beyond expectations. Often mentioned as a motivator was the belief that the principal is a change agent. In some cases participants’ internal motivation included their desire to leave behind a personal legacy. They valued having particular accomplishments attributed to the fact that they were instrumental in their successful implementation.

Several members of both cohorts were internally motivated to pursue the principalship because of their career aspirations. They wanted to be either district level administrators or superintendents. The principalship, for these participants, represented a career steppingstone.

The influence of family on the participants' decision to pursue the principalship and to be successful after attaining it was immense. Many participants expressed that they would be unable to be successful in the principalship without strong family support. They articulated that the job routinely included long hours, and evenings and weekend days away from the family due to school events. Cohort B members also expressed that they have had to take home more work due to their increased responsibilities pertaining to the implementation of change initiatives and APPR. Recognizing the potential impact of the principalship on family time, several participants decided not to pursue it. Still others indicated that they delayed their foray into the job until their children were grown so as to mitigate the impact on the family. Those participants who engaged in internships where they were forced to take unpaid leave spoke of the financial hardships and sacrifice endured by their family. These participants reiterated the need for family to be behind the decision to pursue the principalship from the onset of the journey.

Despite formalized mentoring being in place and even legally mandated for teachers, those pursuing the principalship and other administrative positions lacked formal mentoring support. Mentoring support for incoming principals was minimal at best. Most participants in both cohorts pointed to one or more informal mentor relationships that have supported them in their entry into the profession. In many cases, these informal mentors were the individuals who initially encouraged them to begin their preparation to become principals. They were colleagues, supervisors, and, in some cases, family members. Most mentors were practicing or retired administrators. A rare few participants were engaged in a formal program of mentorship in

which they found no lasting value. The exception was an urban mentorship, which is a component of the “grow your own” succession planning that was in place. Participants in that setting were very positive about the ongoing support they received from their assigned mentors who were compensated, retired administrators who previously worked in the district. Despite formal mentor programs being developed by professional associations such as the School Administrators’ Association of New York State (SAANYS), no participants in this study expressed awareness of their existence or possessed any information on how to access them.

The value of networking was exposed as an important factor particularly in navigating their entry into the administrative job market. Of particular interest was the influence of one public university professor who was engaged in the career development of his protégés. He acted as a job broker for many participants who participated in his program. Those who were not privy to his network expressed resentment. Those not affiliated with this particular public university program indicated that they felt essentially on their own in their job search with little university support. While participants confessed that face-to-face networking opportunities were infrequent, some valued regular regional meetings of peers to discuss and share achievements and concerns.

Responses to “The Magic Wand Question” revealed what appeared to be a subtle shift in the responses from Cohort A to Cohort B. Participants in Cohort A who were asked to identify one change they would most like to make in the principalship focused on management issues expressing having to deal dealing with teachers, parents, and seeking more time to deal with daily management issues. Cohort B members, in contrast, focused their comments on the area of instructional leadership. This shift appeared to be initiated by the commencement of APPR and the requirement for principals to focus intently on teaching and student learning. They sought

ways to limit management tasks in order to focus on the improvement of instruction and student achievement.

The findings of this study identify attractants and deterrents associated with the principalship in Upstate Central New York. Findings support the perception that there is a shortage of quality leaders, many of whom are unwilling or unable to make the jump to the principalship. Educational constituent groups can be informed by this research to craft policies and create environments that maximize the attractants and diminish the deterrents to certified school administrators that are potentially high quality candidates for the principalship.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do educators who are certified as administrators in Upstate Central New York describe experiences that have influenced them to pursue or not pursue the principalship?
2. What do certified administrators perceive as the attractants and deterrents to the principalship in Upstate Central New York and which of these are factors in their decision to apply for and accept principalships?
3. How have the attractants and deterrents to the principalship changed in the recent years covered by this study?

The study utilized data supplied by two separate cohorts of participants interviewed approximately five years apart. Participants had been recently certified as school administrators at the time they were interviewed. All were working in school districts in Upstate Central New York State. They represented urban, suburban, and rural schools, were both male and female, and were employed in the field of education in a public school district as either a principal or non-principal (central office, director, or teacher).

Conclusions

Chapter Four of this study presents the findings as described by the participants during the interviews. These findings produced five final themes through which the participants lead us to a number of answers to the research questions as they pertain to certified administrators in Upstate Central New York State. These themes were Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors. Within those final theme areas, this researcher found several ideas that represented strong influences impacting the participants'

decisions regarding the pursuit of the Upstate Central New York principalship that were either attractants or deterrents. In many cases they were common to members of both cohorts and, in some cases, unique to just one. Below I outline the factors significant to the participants and identify those factors that represent a notable change over the longitude of the two sets of cohort interview data.

Continuing Metamorphosis of the Principal Role.

The literature reviewed in relation to this study clearly documents that the role of the principal has been in a continuous state of change since its inception. In order to understand the changes in responses this study uncovered between Cohort A and B participants, it is important to understand the context of principal role change in the history of the principalship in America that was extensively outlined by Rousmaniere (2013). The history of the role has been an ebb and flow between management and instructional leadership. The role started strongly weighted toward management tasks. Throughout history these two aspects of the role have competed for supremacy. At some points in time the principalship was weighted toward management and at other times toward instructional leadership. This study exposes that we appear to currently be witnessing the role of principal moving further toward that of instructional leader. Principals appear to not yet be comfortable with this shift.

Wanzare and DaCosta (2001) found major challenges to the principal's role as instructional leader. The conflicts of role, accountability, autonomy, and responsibility further outlined by Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003) continued to influence the perceptions of participants in this study but they took on new and different kinds of significance.

During the course of this study, spanning two cohorts over five years, it was found that the role of the principal appears to have again shifted significantly. The principal's role as an

instructional leader has increased exponentially. The role of the principal being an effective manager has seen less emphasis during the course of this study but remains a significant part of the job responsibility. The factor most articulated by the Cohort B participants in this study was the extent to which the initiation and imposition of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) was codified by the State of New York to raise the principal's accountability. The data reported in this study suggests that this single development intensified participants' concerns, as articulated by Cohort B, related to APPR accountability and climate in particular.

The five final themes: Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors which are documented in the review of literature for this study, manifest themselves in the perceptions of the principalship expressed by participants in both Cohorts A and B. There are attractants and deterrents inherent in each theme. Enhancing the attractants and modifying the negative impact of the deterrents formed the basis of the recommendations and implications produced by this study. Kolek (2002) who identified a number of deterrents to the principalship called for future researchers to identify attractants. This research study answers Kolek's call.

Significant Factors Impacting Career Decisions of Both Cohorts.

The theme of accountability emerged in both cohorts in the study. In Cohort A, only two participants mentioned it, and then only in general terms. For these participants accountability was not personal. Test scores reflected the progress of the principal's building and school district from year to year but, except for persistently poor performing schools, there was little to no mandated consequences. In contrast, Cohort B participants all referenced accountability. These participants were found to be under intense pressure to initiate significant changes quickly. The accountability perpetrated by APPR impacted their very job security. In the case of Cohort

B, accountability was personal. While Cohort B participants discussed some of the generalities of accountability, their greatest emphasis was directed at the impact APPR has on them. For purposes of demonstrating this significant shift of emphasis between the cohorts the theme of Accountability is differentiated by addressing participants perspectives related to accountability in general within this section (Accountability-General). Participant perspectives pertaining to the impact of APPR on accountability appears in the next section, Significant Factors Impacting Career Decisions Unique to Specific Cohorts: Accountability-APPR.

Accountability-General.

Attractants.

A positive outcome of the nationwide focus on accountability of schools, teachers, and administrators is that principals are spending more time in classrooms with a focus on teaching and learning. There are quality conversations happening between principals and teachers with the emphasis on how to improve the design and delivery of high quality instruction and the use of data to drive improvement in student achievement levels. This positive comes at a price; principals still have all the other management components of their job to attend to. It creates a Catch 22 situation in which, when time is spent on one aspect of the job, corners get cut on another. Both the instructional leadership and management components of the position are critical and must balance. Districts need to find ways to make that happen.

Deterrents.

Accountability is an inherent component of the principalship. With the exception of APPR that is discussed below and has essentially required principals to become active instructional leaders, this study found that accountability was viewed by principals as something that they are powerless to address. They have little or no control over the essential tasks they are

required to perform in either the realm of management or instructional leadership. No additional help is on the horizon and the essential tasks need to be done. They are increasingly responsible for the performance of their faculty and staff. Principals perceived that they have little or no control in removing ineffective teachers even though they are responsible for the teachers' performance and have to deal with negative ramifications from other faculty, district administration, parents, and the community. This was a frustration to many principal participants in the study. Their performance was evaluated, in part, upon the performance of the teachers in their schools. While they could suggest and encourage improvement in their teachers, they lacked the authority to remove poor performers. Principals are pushed to make significant changes in relative short periods of time. This rush to accountability is in direct contrast to the finding by Fullan (2001) that significant change needs at least five years to affect.

Nature of the Job.

Attractants.

The idiom, "Variety is the spice of life!" seems to capture how participants in this study positively viewed the principalship. This study found that Upstate Central New York administrators truly enjoy that no two days are the same in the principalship. In many cases, this variety keeps principals fresh and helps them focus on students and their needs. For those that did not become principals, the journey to get certification was rewarding in that it helped build a greater understanding of curriculum and instruction that has helped them improve their own classroom teaching.

What this study found to be an extreme deterrent, APPR, appears to be a catalyst to propel principals into a direct instructional leadership role that had been minimized prior to its implementation. A number of Cohort B principals appreciated being able to use their skills

toward improvement and positive transformation of the educational system. This was found to be a positive development for most principals but, with no reduction on the management side of expectations, is leading to burnout of principals. This is consistent with the Hess and Portelli (2004) who found that successful administrators establish accountability systems. To some degree principal autonomy has increased with APPR, but the ability to direct financial resources, change personnel, and embellish curriculum remains suppressed.

In districts with widespread positive parental support for and involvement in schools, it was found that administrators' perceptions of the principalship are positive. There is a stark difference between suburban and urban schools related to parental involvement. In an attempt to micro-manage their own child's education, actively involved parents are consuming more principal time in the form of increased interaction. Principals, however, preferred that scenario to the lack of parental involvement that is widely reported by participants in urban settings.

Deterrents.

A theme that persisted was the amount of paperwork and documentation that is required of the principal by ever increasing state mandates and the gathering, organization, and maintenance of data upon which educational and policy decisions are made. Many comments were made in the interviews of this study pertaining to the balance between the leadership and management aspects of the principal position. It was evident that the ever-increasing management tasks required of the principalship detracted from the principal's ability to engage in meaningful instructional leadership. This helps confirm the finding by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) that the principal's ability to function as an instructional leader is compromised by external factors. The main focus of the vice or assistant principalship has become that of maintaining student discipline and handling routine, mundane management tasks. While these

tasks are indeed essential to the overall success of a school building, those in that role report to be professionally unfulfilled. Because the assistant principalship is utilized as an entry level position as well as a job for administrative interns, those new to public school administration become quickly disenchanted. This study found that this factor seemed to deter newly certified administrators from pursuing the principalship, as they would have to pass through this entry-level obstacle.

Isolation was found to be a concern of principals. This was particularly true for elementary school principals who are often the only administrator in a building. There is a perception that, as principal, one is on one's own to make many decisions. There is little connection with colleagues. Email has replaced the face-to-face networking meetings of the past, further increasing the isolation of the principal. Principals in Upstate Central New York perceived that they receive very little direct support from district office administrators unless a decision they make is unpopular at which time they are immediately put on the defensive.

Personnel issues emerged as factors that impact certified administrators' perception of the principalship. In particular, the principal's interaction with teachers they perceive to be incompetent and with teacher unions is a constant underlying challenge of the principalship. Principals professed great frustration in their inability to remove incompetent teachers from the classroom. They viewed teachers' unions as entities that support and protect the incompetent teachers. This concern gained louder voice with the increased accountability required by APPR. Teacher performance directly impacted the evaluation of principals. The inability of the principal, due to factors beyond their control, to remove poor performing teachers is a factor that deters some certified administrators from pursuing the principalship.

Public perception of schools and their lack of understanding of the principalship are found to be challenges for principals of public schools. Both over-involvement and under-involvement of parents' increases stress on the principal. This study found ever increasing concern by certified administrators about the negative public perception of the state of education. Parents and the media are critical about student and school performance. They base this on the public reporting of standardized test results and public media reports of mediocrity of the professional education workforce.

Mobility of principals took on two forms in this study. These were physical mobility and career mobility. The perception of certified administrators was that moving from level to level was extremely difficult. While principals are certified to administrate at any level, districts and faculties look for candidates who have had experience at the level of the position they are seeking to fill. This practice excluded many qualified candidates. A difference over the course of this study pertaining to physical mobility was also found. In the first cohort, there was a sense that if one wanted to move up to the principalship, one needed to move out of the district. In the latter group, potential principals were reluctant to move districts. This was due to concerns about job security and the loss of tenure that comes with a move, as well as districts use of "grow your own" succession plans. These succession plans provide support for some internal candidates through the use of internal internships that preserve a teacher's tenure while allowing him or her to experience the administrative position. This study expands the finding by Li (2012) that increased accountability by principals promulgated by NCLB has impacted their mobility, thus diminishing the availability of high quality principals to students in high needs schools.

Fink and Brayman (2006) identified increased accountability as contributing to increased stress of school principals and thereby a decrease in the pool of high quality applicants. My

study's data identified stress as one of the most powerful deterrents to certified administrators in Upstate Central New York pursuing the principalship. They further indicated that stress presented itself in many ways. In many cases, stress was caused by increased workload such as long hours, creating and maintaining a safe environment for staff and students, and parental interactions. In other cases, stress was triggered by concern for one's own health and job security. In still other cases it showed up as the stress of leading change in an institution that has traditionally not embraced quick and dramatic change. There is no evidence that school administrators and principals are prepared to deal with or manage stress so as not to have it negatively interfere with their job performance or impact their perception of the principalship.

Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Attractants.

Certified administrators in Upstate Central New York were found to have a positive perception about their required university preparation program when it focused on preparing them for the practical aspects of the principalship. This refutes, in part, previous studies by Levine (2005), Hess and Petrelli (2004), and Murphy and Orr (2009) and Militello, Gajda, and Bowers (2009) citing widespread inadequacy in administrator preparation programs. Positive perceptions in this study included providing experiences pertaining to school law, special education issues, budgeting, curriculum development and leading change. Those who engaged in programs that emphasized the theoretical were less positive. Programs giving positive perceptions pertaining to the principalship also had the characteristic of addressing cutting edge current issues such as the implementation of APPR and the Common Core Curriculum. These reforms are consistent with the call for revised accreditation of programs and processes by NCATE (2008).

Internships emerged in the data to be most valued by prospective principals when they were easily accessed, provided a quality experience, and eliminated fiscal and job security barriers. Participants cited their continuing concerns regarding the internship component. For the most part, participants perceived that they received little or no help from their universities in seeking placement in a high quality internship. Rather, they secured these on their own. Participants offered suggestions for improving the internship experience including paid internships, maintenance of tenure during a leave to pursue an internship, and multiple types of experiences during the internship.

Career changers positively perceived flexibility within the certification system that allowed them to pursue a master's degree in school administration that leads to certification. These degree programs allowed for individuals previously employed in the private sector to parlay their leadership skills into a career as a school administrator.

Support with tuition for leadership preparation programs by districts and university based teaching centers was found to be critical to many participants' decisions to pursue the principalship. Either access to free tuition vouchers or the availability of receiving salary credit for the successful completion of coursework leading to administrative certification was widely instrumental in the decision to become certified by many participants in this study.

This was particularly true for those enrolled in private university preparation programs.

This study identified that young administrators who choose to make the jump to administration early in their careers would experience a large salary bump when compared to the teaching salary they are receiving. Beyond the initial career years, salary appears to be either neutral or a deterrent in the decision of certified administrators to seek positions in public school administration.

Deterrents.

Several deterrents related to the internship experience were uncovered by this study. The main concern was that of losing one's tenure as a teacher in order to participate in the experience. Other issues encompassed being assigned to an internship that had no relation to one's desired career goals. An example is being assigned to an assistant principalship when you wanted experience in the field of curriculum development or business administration. It is found that many are assigned to less desirable internships that perform a function advantageous to the district rather than the intern, such as student discipline.

The process of certification was articulated to be an ever-changing moving target of requirements. It is perceived that the process is a series of hoops to jump through and the required tests and fees are strictly a revenue source for the state instead of any type of quality control mechanism for the profession.

The nature of the interview process for the principalship and other administrative positions is acknowledged in the data to be extensive and intimidating. While all viewed this as a necessary pre-employment experience, many found it difficult to prepare for and politicized. There was a perception that if one was not part of the right network, one would not advance to the final stages of the process. These networks spanned the range of university placement networks to the perceived "good old boys networks." In Upstate Central New York, they are linked to specific universities, both private and public, and are regional in nature.

This study makes apparent that the salary differential between teacher and administrator appears to be a significant deterrent in participants' decision to seek an administrative position. Participants equated the 10-month salary they receive as a teacher to the 12-month salary they would receive as an administrator. There was little if any differential after several years of

teaching. Participants perceived that money was not an incentive. Those not in the principalship indicated that it was certainly not worth the increased stress and workload to become a principal. Some utilized the principalship as a steppingstone to more lucrative administrative positions and decided to endure the lack of monetary benefits for that purpose. Those in the principalship pointed to other non-monetary factors that drove them to embrace the position of principal. Roza (2003) had previously found that there is a need for incentives to attract high quality principals to the job.

Negative climate factors were also found. Factors contributing to a negative climate included principals not connected to the community, weak superintendents who allow the teachers union undue influence into all aspects of administration, high pressure to produce immediate results in student test outcomes due to APPR, lack of support for principals in the form of adequate numbers of assistants, and absence of career ladder opportunities.

Urban educators perceived that they were saddled with negative working conditions, a vast bureaucracy that was not responsive, and poor public perception of their quality. Despite attempting to implement changes to increase student achievement, urban principals did not feel that they were given adequate time to yield positive results. The public and political demand for immediate results is virtually impossible to achieve. They perceived that they are set up for failure. Those participants who were non-urban administrators but truly desired to become one were extremely frustrated by the apparent closed hiring practices of urban districts. They perceived that the idea that only urban educators can be successful in urban schools is pervasive and also inaccurate. They believed that this philosophy severely excludes motivated and highly qualified candidates from being able to improve.

Climate.

Climate of both the building and the school district was perceived by study participants as an influential factor for those considering the principalship. In this study, the initial cohort interviewed found climate as a positive motivator in the decision process to pursue the principalship. Cited were positive school environments that principals had the autonomy in their decision making to impact and mold. In addition to a high degree of principal autonomy, positive climates were found to contain visible, consistent support for principals at the district and board level; ongoing availability of professional development opportunities; lack of micromanagement by superiors; and a districtwide commitment to ongoing improvement of planning, policy, and instructional protocols. Multiple levels of support, including the availability of mentoring, either formal or informal, were cited as positive factors by the participants in identifying districts to which they were interested in applying. The existence and ability to access services from local teaching centers, such as free or reduced tuition vouchers, was credited by many as a motivator to pursue their certification to become principals. Positive district climates were found to contain certified administrators who were reluctant to leave the district for another administrative position. These districts were found to retain high quality employees who could potentially step into administrative roles now and in the future. The positive climate could also encourage and support “grow your own” career ladders from the teaching to administrative ranks. Quinn (2002), Lashway (2003), and Weinstein, Jacobowitz, Ely, Landon, and Schwartz (2009) all trumpeted the concept of “grow your own” succession planning. My study, in contradiction, raises the idea that urban schools in Upstate Central New York need to expand beyond their boundaries in order to recruit motivated, high quality principals to bring their expertise to urban districts. This idea stands in direct opposition to Harris (2001) who specifically advocates for “grow your own” planning in urban school districts.

Urban districts face unique challenges in recruiting and retaining high quality principals, particularly in high need schools. Urban are subject to the same accountability measures as their non-urban counterparts. An added challenge includes finding ways to effectively engage parents in support of their child's learning. There appears to be much more emphasis in the urban setting on garnering the support of the entire school community toward the goal of raising academic achievement and developing children into productive, contributing members of the community. Further, urban principals are under extreme pressure to produce measured improvements in student achievement in a short time frame. Failure to do so results in the reassignment or removal of the principal. It is incumbent upon university preparation programs as well as the school district to provide principal candidates with the skills, professional development, and mentoring necessary to be able to hit the ground running from day one in the urban principalship. The voices of the participants in this study call for urban districts to review their recruitment process, including the "grow your own" strategy in order to assure that high quality candidates, no matter where they come from, have every opportunity to engage high needs students in the urban setting.

Responses gathered suggest that urban principals, as well as those yearning to be urban principals, were drawn to their jobs overwhelmingly by their desire to make a positive impact on the lives of children with the greatest educational needs. Additionally, they perceived that their role as urban administrators went beyond the confines of the school building. It reached into the homes and lives of the students' families. They believed that student success equates with family success.

Attractants.

Participants working where they perceived ongoing support and were allowed wide autonomy in their decision making identified the climate in which they worked as positive. They further articulated freedom from upper level micromanagement was a factor contributing to the establishment and maintenance of a positive climate. School and districts size were positive when that size was small.

In urban settings, many principals were attracted to the schools most in need of positive change. They desired the challenge of making an impact and difference in the lives of students. The urban setting was found to be an extremely closed environment. While this lent itself to promotion from within, it excluded highly effective educators from suburban and rural settings.

Deterrents.

A climate where principals perceived themselves as undervalued by administration, parents, and the public was a distinct turn off for principals. The same emerged for districts where a strong teachers' union seemed to call the shots. In these types of districts, principals felt unsupported, vulnerable, and suppressed. Olsen (2008) previously identified that demands and the expectations of the public have contributed to the shortage of principals.

Urban principals who were perceived by their constituencies not to be in tune with the entire school community failed to develop traction in their positions as they never could gain the trust of their constituencies. This, coupled with the demand by the public for immediate results created a sense that no matter how hard they worked, failure was inevitable. The urban culture of high needs and minimal parental support proved to be a distinct deterrent for high quality leaders who could essentially be recruited by affluent districts outside of the urban setting.

The concern for a shortage of administrators and school principals which initially launched this study appears to be justified, in part. The number of administrators holding

certification to be school principals routinely exceeded the number of principal job openings, which was reported by Roza (2003). The shortage is, rather, the number of certified administrative candidates for the principalship who are perceived to be high quality candidates. This study supports Mitzgang (2003) who asserted that districts difficulty in recruiting candidates of quality, particularly those in high needs areas, is a problem of conditions. Mitzgang believed that high quality candidates have skills beyond those required for initial certification. Those high quality candidates are those that are prepared to move into a principalship and have an immediate positive impact on student achievement. This incorporates building and maintaining a positive school climate, balancing instructional leadership and essential management tasks, and leading lasting positive change in a school building and district. Many of the deterrents outlined in this study keep many quality candidates from applying to the principalship, thus decreasing the overall quality of the applicant pool available to districts. This conclusion supports the finding by Archer (2003) that schools with needy student populations attract fewer applicants with the key skills deemed critical for turnaround success. Winter and Morgenthal (2002) along with Surapura (2012) further questions why any principal would either pursue a position or remain in a low performing school.

Personal Factors.

Attractants.

This study revealed that numerous participants were internally motivated to seek either the principalship or a position as an administrative leader. Some felt a spiritual calling to the principalship. A predominant motivation was a desire to make a difference. This was translated to a difference in student scholastic achievement, building climate, the lives of children and their families, and society in general. Moore (1999) previously cited internal motivators as impacting

the recruitment of individuals into the principalship. My study expands this idea to include the element of spirituality.

Career advancement drove many to and through the principalship. This was based on the perception that one needed to advance through the principalship in order to move to higher office such as a district level position or the superintendency.

Deterrents.

The role of family in the decision to pursue the principalship was immense. In many cases, it limited the desire of the potential administrator to pursue the principalship. The long hours and the potential to have to relocate in order to obtain a principalship or advance to a higher administrative position, along with the impact on family time, weigh heavy on many interviewed. Those who were successful attributed strong family support to their success. That support translated to living with the lack of family time, increased stress, and mobility issues associated with the job.

Formal mentoring for principals was very rare. While many pointed to an informal mentoring relationship in which they had engaged, there appeared to be little or no support for the issues and challenges principals face day to day. They are placed into a setting, are expected to be expert at all aspects of the job, develop positive climate and culture in a school building, and deliver strong student achievement results. The ability to access appropriate professional development to address any need that they might have was severely limited by their need to be engaged within their building and the time commitment that takes, the additional time it takes to properly administer APPR, and the limited professional development budgets available for ongoing training. Administrators were reliant on the availability of appropriate professional development offerings through their districts, BOCES, professional associations, and/or their

teacher centers. There were many nuts and bolts issues of the position that were reported to be not covered in university preparation programs. Universities need to strike a balance between theory and practical preparation programs during the course work phase of programming. Further, a more active university role in the selection and development of internships to ensure exposure to the rigor of the daily principalship is imperative to the new administrator's ability to hit the ground running in principalship, particularly given the lack of support available to a new administrator when they begin a position in a school district.

The data support the establishment and maintenance of mentoring opportunities that focus on the enhancement of the attributes that correlate to the high quality effective principal. Working in tandem with school districts and universities a mentor program can assist principals in filling the gaps where a particular attribute is weak. Mentorships could be district specific or regionally developed and administered through partnerships involving school districts, BOCES, universities and professional associations. Practitioners, functioning as mentors, can thereby assist in developing principals into even more effective instructional leaders. This is critical to the success of principals in their newly expanding role.

Significant Factors Impacting Career Decisions Unique to Specific Cohorts.

Accountability-APPR.

Extreme Deterrent.

The imposition of APPR by the State of New York upon public educators, including school principals, stands as the most significant change in the condition of the principalship that occurred between the cohort interviews of 2008 and 2013 that comprise this study. While the Lower Hudson Council of Superintendents (2014) revealed that the APPR system in New York was inadequate and unequally applied, this study uniquely informs the literature regarding the

impact APPR has on principals in Upstate Central New York. Within this study, APPR has been included under the final theme of Accountability. This was done because APPR has the direct effect of generating a numerical score for principals that directly impacts their performance evaluation. The performance evaluation is directly tied to district decisions related to the continued employment of the principal. The principal is therefore directly accountable for the performance of the students and teachers in his/her charge. Poor student performance can result in a poor evaluative score and, ultimately, impact the decision to grant the probationary principal tenure or move to terminate a tenured principal. The impact of APPR extends to other final themes, however, including Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors.

Participants reported principals experiencing an increased work load and time commitment affiliated with APPR. With little or no reduction in the other essential elements of the principalship, work was being pushed off to extended hours of the day or being delayed and neglected if not immediately essential. Additionally, APPR had increased principals' concerns about their own job security. They were concerned that factors beyond their control were impacting their performance evaluation. Student test scores, particularly in urban settings, cannot be turned around with the degree of significance necessary in a short enough timeframe to allow the principal to see an increase in his or her APPR score. Principals experienced a decrease in available family time, impacting their personal lives. Despite the call for more assistance in the form of additional assistant principal positions, few new positions are forthcoming. These factors have resulted in certified school administrators either avoiding the principalship by staying in teaching or seeking administrative positions other than the principalship. Many of those who remain are looking to either get out or are counting the days to

retirement. This has impacted school districts' ability to recruit and retain quality principals. This study concludes that the shortage of quality leaders in Upstate Central New York identified above is exacerbated by APPR. This study helps demonstrate that the finding of Portin and Shen (1997) that principals will be able to just absorb new duties assigned to them is not applicable to the vast requirements imposed by APPR.

While APPR may have been initiated to improve student achievement and teaching effectiveness, it is viewed by participants in this study as a cause of significant role change for the principal in Upstate Central New York.

Attractant.

While the study documents much negativity expressed with the addition of APPR to the principal's plate, it is not all doom and gloom. The data suggests that principals found that they are engaged in meaningful dialogue with teachers, often one-on-one, about good teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Further, principals perceived that the rigor of both curriculum and instruction has increased despite the short time frame in which APPR was required to be implemented. More principal time was devoted to the evaluation of teaching and instruction and its relationship to student learning outcomes. APPR required principals to be in classrooms to a much greater degree than previously. Richardson (1991) indicated that successful educational reforms met with success when the role of the principal shifts to that of instructional leader. Evaluations of principals became, in part, based on ISLLC standards which were called for by Baker (2004).

Climate.

Deterrent-Discrimination.

Fuller and Young (2009) found that race had little impact on the retention rate of principals. My research uncovered an account by a participant which suggests that future study should revisit the impact of race on the recruitment and retention of high quality principals. While only articulated by one participant in this study, the account rendered is significant as it raised the question of the pervasiveness of discrimination in Upstate Central New York as well as statewide. The participant spoke of domination of the profession by white-European males. Further, she articulated that current leaders lack understanding of the needs of families in urban communities due to their non-residency in their work setting. She calls this “top down racism.” While this perception was articulated by only one participant and was not found to be a pervasive concern throughout the study, this participant’s concern is worthy of further study and investigation. If other potential principals of color share her perception, school systems could be denied access to an important source of high quality leadership.

Deterrent-Fiscal Climate.

Fiscal climate issues were prevalent in the interviews of Cohort B. Gao (2012) indicated that the pressure for increased accountability resulted in the movement of resources to tested grades and away from other grades and traditionally vital programming. The issue of inequitable funding in my research was found to be of utmost concern in urban and low-wealth districts. The data finds that it is possible that the tax cap imposed by New York State is driving the development of school budgets. Funds are allocated first to address mandated expenses such as employee salaries and benefits. The increases in these mandates costs are exceeding the amount that districts can raise through additional taxation. The only way to make up the gap is through cuts to existing program. This comes at a time when schools are being asked and required to implement a new common core curriculum and produce higher student achievement results. New

curriculum requires major expenditures in the area of materials, supplies and staff development. Wealthy districts have a better chance of providing funding over and above the requirements if it is so voted by their communities. Tax cap mandates are more easily addressed by affluent districts. Even these districts, however, suffer from the negative public perception of education, educators, and public employees.

Deterrent-Job Security.

Job security issues were expressed by members of Cohort B. These cohort members were interviewed after the 2008 national economic recession and in the mist of districts needing to make spending cuts to meet a state mandated property tax cap. Members of Cohort B were found to articulate multiple concerns pertaining to job security of school administrators. This study found concerns directly related to the current climate of accountability and the imposition of APPR requirements. Administrators were concerned that APPR scores determined on measures beyond their control would compromise their own job security. In addition, potential administrators were reluctant to pursue first administrative jobs for which they had to relinquish their teacher tenure, even if those positions were in their own district. The study data appears to imply that principals valued their tenure as a critical element of the position. They believed they could not successfully and aggressively carryout their duties without it.

Lessons Learned from this Study

This study adds to the literature pertaining to the role of the principal. It confirms previous research that defines the challenges and rewards of the position. It identifies attractants and deterrents faced by those who have already completed the certification process and who may or may not be considering the principalship. The study identifies APPR as a significant factor keeping highly qualified candidates from applying for the principalship. In addition the study

addresses the question of the existence of a principal shortage in New York State. While there are adequate numbers of educators certified to become principals, their decision to do so is impeded by deterrents related to accountability, nature of the job, terms and conditions of employment, climate, and personal factors. The data reported in this study suggests that shortage in New York is not one of numbers but rather of high quality candidates applying for the principalship, particularly in high needs schools. The study contributes further to the literature by identifying attractants to mobilize this already certificated population into applying for open positions and helping to eliminate perceived deterrents.

The changing role of the principal which is referred to in the literature is illustrated by the identified differences revealed by members of the two separate participant cohorts in this study. Several important lessons have been learned as a result of the contrasting the two cohorts in this study.

Principal Role.

The literature has documented the metamorphosis of the principalship role since 460 B.C. (Noe, 1998). The review of literature in this study highlights numerous accounts of a fluid principal role. Richardson (1991) indeed articulated the historical conflict between the administrative and instructional role of the principal. Indeed we have learned from this study that principals in Upstate Central New York perceive their role to be in the midst of change again. Instead of a shift away from instructional leadership toward administrative management, the opposite emerged in the data generated by the two separate cohorts in this study. Principals in the initial cohort clamored to engage more consistently in the instructional leadership role but reported being hampered by endless management tasks. Many of these management tasks were promulgated by federal, state and local mandates. A marked difference, however, was noted in

the later cohort of participants. The requirements of APPR thrust the principals in this group into the instructional leader role as a job requirement. This change came at the expense of principals being able to devote adequate time to building management and positive learning climate maintenance. This reverses the trend identified by Portin and Shen (1998) whose research pointed to managerial responsibilities supplanting principal leadership. Principals are struggling with this role conflict in ways beyond what was identified by Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003). Principals are engaged heavily in what they perceive to be their main charge, that is, instructional leadership. They compensate for the lack of time during the school day available to attend to management tasks by working longer hours, taking less vacation time, and impinging on time previously devoted to their families.

It is important to recognize that the role of the principal is changing. The principal is engaging more heavily than ever as an instructional leader. Management tasks, though undiminished, have become secondary in concern. Further, we must realize that this new role is reviled by many current principals yet embraced by others. We must seek to understand how the role change is perceived by different generations of principals and what can be done at the national, state, local, and university levels to best prepare and maintain high quality leaders that adapt to and embrace this new role. If we are to avoid burnout of current principals and create a climate conducive to the recruitment and retention of high quality principals, the school community needs to find successful ways to support principals in their quest to balance instructional leadership and management.

Accountability.

The relatively recent national focus on school accountability began with a published report, *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983). We have learned through the contrast of the two study

cohorts that the emphasis by federal, state, and local educational entities on the accountability of principals is the most significant change in the Upstate Central New York principalship during the past several years. The initial cohort's articulation of accountability was essentially limited to the public perception of published student achievement data. This is consistent with the findings of Hunt (2008) who indicated that NCLB mandates increased pressure on school administrators to deliver positive indicators of school improvement. The later cohort was directly impacted by the imposition of APPR. These participants expressed concern that excessive emphasis on accountability created by APPR adversely impacts their job security, their ability to create and manage a positive school climate for students, their family time, and creates increased stress. There was also an increase in the articulation of reluctance to enter the principalship by non-principals in Cohort B. Olsen (2008) had found that demands and expectations, accelerated by accountability mandates contribute to the shortage of school leaders. This study found that APPR has expanded the definition of accountability as it pertains to school principals. Every member of the B Cohort commented on their perception of the impact of APPR. We learn from this study that APPR is now the major factor driving the conversation on teaching and learning in Upstate Central New York.

A positive outcome of the APPR initiative was the report by some principals that they have been more engaged in deeper and richer conversations with their teachers pertaining to teaching, learning and student achievement. Stone-Johnson (2014) asserted that different generations may find different attractants and deterrents to the principalship. This study adds to that idea in finding that the accountability, increased interaction, and instructional leadership required by the APPR initiative, which is viewed negatively by many, serves as an attractant to some recently certified administrators.

Moving forward it will be necessary for the APPR system to be revisited and modified to restore the confidence and support of the educators charged with its implementation and management. It must become a catalyst for improving student learning outcomes and not as a politically motivated punitive measure aimed the very professional educators responsible for facilitating educational improvement.

While the study by the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents (2014) recommends that the APPR system be improved and refined, the literature is void of data that documents the perception of administrators on the impact APPR has had on the principalship. This study begins to fill that void.

Fiscal Climate.

This study taught us that the fiscal landscape of education has changed significantly during the duration of this research study. Tax caps have limited revenues available to both adequately fund the training and materials necessary to implement mandate curriculum change. The gap between affluent and high needs districts has not closed leaving the most vulnerable of our students at continued risk of failure.

Discrimination.

The account of the Cohort B member that experienced discrimination at multiple levels of the educational system in Upstate Central New York teaches us that we must continue to be vigilant that equity remains a priority in our schools for both children and adults. This study calls for future research to determine the pervasiveness of this issue and to recommend potential solutions for adoption by our communities.

Principal Shortage.

Clarification to the debate about the existence of a principal shortage in Upstate Central New York is provided by this study. The data here suggests that while the numbers of certified administrators are adequate, school districts, struggle to recruit and retain high quality candidates for the principalship. This is of particular concern in schools with concentrations of high need students. This study also answers the call of Kolek (2002) for further research on what factors attracts applicants to the principalship.

The data from participants appears to define the characteristics of the high quality, effective principal. They perceive that principal to be one who, first and foremost, increases and promotes improved student performance. That increased student performance relates not only to academics but their healthy growth, development, and emersion as productive, contributing members of society and the community as well. The data suggest characteristics of the high quality effective principal include the following abilities and experiences:

- Promote and sustain high academic student performance
- Effective planner
- Make school part of the community
- Articulate a vision
- Multi-tasker
- Communicator
- Motivator
- Assertive
- Confident in ability to incorporate management tasks into schedule
- Implementer of effective curriculum and instruction
- Engages parents in support of their child's learning

- Completed yearlong rich, robust internship
- Able to hit the ground running

The educational community in Upstate Central New York should seek to agree on a set of common attributes possessed by high quality leaders and recruit and retain those principal candidates most closely aligned with that definition. These attributes should also define the scope of professional development offerings so that principals may strive to engage in activities that improve their ability in these areas.

Previous research by Mitgang (2003) and Roza (2003) suggests that adequate numbers of certified administrators exist and that factors such as compensation, human resource recruitment policies and procedures, and challenging working conditions, particularly in high needs schools, impact the application of applicants to the principalship. In many ways this study supports those findings. On the other side of the debate earlier studies that predicted a shortage of numbers such as those conducted by ERS(1998), Anderson (1988), the New England School Development Council (1988) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1998) do not pan out based on the data in this study. Additionally, while the SAANYS studies of 2001 and 2005 highlight many of the economic factors impacting the principalship, this study provides evidence that the recruitment and retention of quality school principals goes far beyond the mere terms and conditions of employment. Rather, the attractants and deterrents to the principalship are populated throughout the identified study themes of Accountability, Nature of the Job, terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors which emerged in this research.

Persistence of Previous Deterrents.

Yerkes and Guaglianone (1998) and others cited factors such as long hours, workload, minimal pay differential between teachers and administrators, high expectations, paperwork mandates, and increased societal and social problems as factors creating high stress in the principalship. Indeed many of these factors persisted in this study of Upstate Central New York administrators.

Final themes identified through this research include Accountability, Nature of the Job, Terms and Conditions of Employment, Climate, and Personal Factors. Attractants and Deterrents related to each theme were identified. Many of the deterrents articulated by participants persisted between both cohorts. Attractants emerged that provided insight into what continues to motivate educators to become certified as school administrators and ultimately pursue the principalship. A series of implications and recommendations for educational constituencies has been incorporated into this study. It is hoped that the data generated here will help drive policy and practice changes that effectively minimize the identified deterrents while allowing the attractants to flourish. Mitgang (2003) asserted that the recruitment of quality principal candidates is a problem of conditions. Studies by Archer (2003), Winter and Morgenthal (2002), and Surapura (2012) draw further attention to the issue of recruiting quality principals to schools with high need student populations. The ultimate goal of the recommendations in this study is to increase the recruitment and retention of quality principals to lead our public schools in Upstate Central New York, thus helping to provide equity of quality throughout the region.

The factors uncovered in this study that impact the decision of certified administrators to apply and accept principalships are not locked in stone. They represent conditions that can either

be changed or enhanced by the joint efforts of the constituencies of our educational community. This study offers recommendations to do just that.

Implications, Recommendations, and Limitations

This study can be boiled down to one main issue that needs to be solved through the efforts and coordination of all educational constituencies. That is, how can Upstate Central New York school districts recruit and retain quality educational leaders that will apply for, be hired into, and remain in the school principalship?

The findings of this study have implications for a number of educational constituencies that have political and policy influence within the Upstate Central New York area. Among these constituencies are The New York State Education Department and State Government; Public and Private Universities with preparation programs in Educational Leadership; Superintendents and Boards of Education; Professional Associations (SAANYS, NYSSBA, NYSCSS); and The Study Council at Syracuse University.

Based on the findings and conclusions outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, I believe this study has implications for a variety of educational constituency groups. I am making recommendations to those constituent groups in Upstate Central New York that I believe can utilize this study to improve the quality of the principalship. In previous research, Portin and Shen (1998) also called for significant modifications in policy and code to the role of the principal in order for the new role to meet with success. These actions will help to reduce the deterrent issues identified in the final themes: Accountability, Nature of Job, Terms and Conditions, Climate, and Personal Factors. These recommendations are described below by group.

Superintendents and School District Boards of Education.

The climate within a school district was cited by study participants as a factor that can either attract or deter quality leaders. Among other conditions that are under the control of the district and the superintendent are terms and conditions of employment for principals as well as ongoing professional development for both career and aspiring administrators. Based on the findings of this study, this researcher believes superintendents and boards of education in Upstate Central New York need to take the following actions:

1. Recognize and address inequities related to the salary differential between 10 month teachers and 12 month principals and administrators.
2. Create and fund rich, robust, and rigorous internships that provide compensation and job security for internal participants.
3. Create and maintain cooperative, professional working relationships between the central office and the principals that recognize and support the principal as the primary instructional leader. These relationships will harness the internal motivation characteristic of school principals that is documented in the findings of this study. The APPR process will be negotiated and revisited annually to ensure accurate assessment of the job performance of the principal.
4. Plan, develop and implement professional development adequately funded that will provide relevant and timely support for new and ongoing initiatives related to the improvement of both instruction and the leadership skills of principals and other administrators in the district. The district will partner with BOCES, professional organizations, and local universities in this endeavor to maximize resources and provide comprehensive offerings.

5. Establish mentoring opportunities, both formal and informal, utilizing a cooperative relationship with professional associations and local universities.
6. Urban school districts should open internships to outside aspiring administrators, thus expanding their pool of potential quality candidates for the principalship and providing an opportunity for quality principals currently outside the urban system to practice within.

School districts and superintendents have the most direct opportunity to improve the nature of the job, terms and conditions of employment, and school climate. These areas, documented in the literature and found as final themes in this study, are in need of improvement in order to minimize deterrents to high quality educators applying for and accepting the principalship.

New York State Education Department and State Government.

The New York State Education Department is directly responsible for the implementation of Education Law 3012(c). This is the legislation that required the development and implementation of New York State's APPR plan. The greatest difference between the responses of the two cohorts interviewed in this study was the overwhelming impact the implementation of APPR has had on the role of the principal and those actively in that role or aspiring to it. Based on the findings of this study, this researcher believes the New York State Education and/or State Government needs to take the following actions:

1. Implement a thorough review of the current APPR system throughout the state. This review needs to be independent and impartial conducted by reputable investigators with no ties or conflicting interests with any constituency involved. The review should encompass an assessment of the effectiveness of the APPR system on the

- achievement of students and the effectiveness of teachers and educational leaders. It should pay particular attention to the impact APPR has on the role of the principal. Further, it should evaluate the requirement and time frame of principal removal based on the required New York State test achievement scores, particularly in urban settings.
2. Provide financial support to local school districts to provide a dedicated increase in compensation to school principals responsible for the implementation of APPR. The state currently caps the salaries of BOCES Superintendents that in turn suppresses salaries of district level superintendents and, ultimately, principals. New York State should consider removing that cap.
 3. Provide additional fiscal support to school districts dedicated to the hiring of additional assistant principals to provide support for the daily management of school buildings. This additional support would allow building principals to immerse themselves more fully into the instructional leadership role required by the implementation of APPR. Further the role of the assistant principal should be expanded beyond that of mere disciplinarian. Principals will continue to serve as lead evaluators but introduce assistant principals to this role. This will serve to make the job more professionally rewarding and, thus, more attractive.
 4. Insure that approved programs run by both private and public universities incorporate the curriculum necessary to make sure that individuals attaining certification as school leaders have the skills necessary to lead effective change and reform in schools. These skills include building management, personnel, school law, curriculum

- development and implementation, effective evaluation of teachers, the engagement of teachers in collective discussions of their performance, and public relations strategies.
5. Modify administrative tenure requirements to allow for a teacher to undergo a probationary period as an administrator without losing tenure as a teacher. This would encourage those in the teaching ranks to make the jump to a school leadership role without fear of losing their role as a tenured teacher.
 6. Provide dedicated fiscal support to school districts to provide paid full time internships to aspiring principals. This could be in the form of a grant or even a tax credit to be received upon completion of a term of services as a school administrator.
 7. Improve the fiscal climate as it pertains to education in New York. That includes fully funding current and future mandates and improving the equity in funding between school districts. In addition, state aid that was taken away from districts during the state's most recent fiscal crisis should be restored to pre-crisis levels.
 8. The New York State legislature should fully initiate the policy recommendations outlined by The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL, 2012). NCSL, supported by the Wallace Foundation initiative, recommends state legislatures initiate a multi-faceted approach to preparing a pipeline of effective leaders. Initiatives include
 - a. Improve principal standards.
 - b. Recruit, select, and retain quality principal candidates.
 - c. Redesign rigorous preparation programs.
 - d. Strengthen certification requirements.
 - e. Evaluate candidate and program effectiveness.

- f. Provide meaningful mentoring programs and quality ongoing professional development.
- g. Allocate funding to the most effective programs.
- h. Develop a statewide commission or task force to redesign principal preparation and on-the-job support for principals.
- i. Foster strong University-District partnerships.

Private and Public University Educational Leadership Preparation Programs.

The literature pertaining to the preparation programs for principals advocates modifying these programs to ensure principals possess the skills necessary to be highly effective leaders in twenty first century schools. Throughout this study, participants commented on their instructional preparation program. These responses incorporated both the classroom and internship sides of the path to certification. Many participants commented on the difficulty they encountered securing an internship that was comprehensive and meaningful. The study also found that participants' perspectives on the nature of the curriculum in educational leadership preparation programs varied widely. Hands on program elements that emphasized leadership skills and specific "nuts and bolts" skills were valued while theoretical components were not. Based on the findings of this study, this researcher believes the public and private universities in Upstate Central New York need to take the following actions:

1. Review and revise their educational leadership curricula to insure that students are acquiring the leadership skills necessary to be successful in today's principalship. These include working knowledge of management, finance, law, curriculum, public relations, child development, and stress management.

2. Take an active role in developing and encouraging meaningful, comprehensive full time internships. This includes developing partnerships with districts which define the type of placement that will occur. The internships will be full time and at least a full year in duration. Diversity in the internship must provide both an urban experience as well as a suburban and or rural experience. In Upstate Central New York, this will take careful but deliberate negotiation with urban districts to modify the current practice of only providing internships to in-house candidates. These efforts should be coupled with active career development and placement services that encourage networking and career support.
3. Partner with school districts, BOCES, professional associations, teaching centers, and school study councils to provide a comprehensive network of professional development and both formal and informal mentoring opportunities for principals and other educational leaders engaged in practice.

Professional Organizations (SAANYS, NYSSBA, NYSCOSS).

Mentoring and high quality ongoing professional development is supported by the literature as a key component to the development and success of quality principals. Professional associations, partnering with school districts, BOCES, and the New York State Education Department, can be an excellent vehicle for the development and delivery of high quality professional development.

Participants expressed several needs that can, to some extent, be met by professional associations. In New York, the biggest players among professional associations are the School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS), the New York State School Boards' Association (NYSSBA), and the New York State Council of School Superintendents

(NYSCOSS). While each of these professional associations has member specific agendas within the political and educational landscape of New York, there are many common interests, too.

Among these common interests are the recruitment and retention of quality educational leaders; the improvement of instructional and student achievement; and the provision of high quality, relevant staff development for professional staff members. Based on the findings of this study, this researcher believes statewide professional associations need to take the following actions:

1. Convene a summit of professional associations to identify common ground in support of educational leaders and jointly advocate for that agenda at the local and state levels.
2. Develop and support mentoring programs, in harmony with the other identified constituencies, which include a robust induction for new administrators as well as formal and informal mentoring. The associations need to advocate for requiring that these programs be mandatory in each school district and state funding to support them.
3. Develop and endorse common, statewide, professional development options for principals and other administrators related to the improvement of teaching and learning. Professional development for school boards and superintendents related to creating positive working environments for school principals is also recommended. These professional development modules can be delivered by either the professional associations themselves or franchised to BOCES throughout the state. Mandatory and optional modules of study should be identified and implemented statewide.
4. Associations must advocate for increased state financial support for school districts to provide incentives for quality individuals certified as school administrators to make

the transition to the principalship. Advocacy must also address the negative impacts of APPR on the morale and effectiveness of school principals.

The Study Council at Syracuse University.

The Study Council at Syracuse University, according to their website and constitution, is a membership organization within the School of Education consisting of more than 170 Central New York school districts that join annually for educational services (School Study Council at Syracuse University, 2014).

The general purpose of the Study Council at Syracuse University, as outlined in their constitution is:

1. As part of the School of Education, Syracuse University, to promote educational improvement and to promote mutually supportive relationships between schools, school districts, educational agencies, and higher education.
2. To accomplish this purpose through the cooperative study of common education problems through professional development and the stimulation of active participation of administrators, school board members, teachers, school personnel, students, and the community in educational planning and activity.

At their September 19, 2014 meeting the School Study Council at Syracuse University identified six themes for a research agenda to address current concerns and questions of their members. The charges put forth by this group were as follows:

1. Defining high quality school leadership and preparation.
2. Outlining leadership labor market issues.
3. Defining the transition from teacher leader to administrative leader.
4. Identifying effective leadership preparation program design.

5. Creating and supporting rigorous internships for aspiring educational leaders.
6. Influencing state policy regarding the preparation of educational leaders.

These initiatives by the study council are clearly congruent to and informed by this study. The Council, partnering with other constituencies and using this and other related studies reviewed herein, can advocate locally and statewide for reform that will help create an environment conducive to the encouragement of high quality educational leaders to get off the sidelines and move into the principalship.

Based on the findings of this study, this researcher believes The Study Council at Syracuse University needs to take the following actions:

1. Provide a forum, through networking, seminars, and institutes for the discussion of issues raised by this and other studies pertaining to the decision of certified candidates to pursue or not pursue the principalship. This includes how best to institute informal and formal mentoring and induction programs for new administrators, how districts can improve the attractiveness of the principalship, and the identification of rigorous and pertinent professional development that is necessary in the region to support principals in the improvement of teaching and learning.
2. Advocate through networking and support of research initiatives for improvement in the conditions of the principalship that would increase its attractiveness to potential candidates.
3. Provide support for seeking and writing regional grants that support the initiation of pertinent recommendations in this study.

4. Encourage further future study pertaining to attracting and retaining high quality public school principals in Upstate Central New York urban, suburban, and rural school districts.
5. Support partnership with the Wallace Foundation to initiate improvements in professional development opportunities and preparation programs for high quality principals, particularly those interested in working in high needs schools.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

Limits inherent in all qualitative work applied here. Several limitations to this study existed. Below are the limitations of the study recognized by the researcher:

1. This study was confined to participants from Upstate Central New York.
2. The relatively small sample of participants limited the application of traditional research and sampling criteria. Though the participants represented males and females, urban, suburban, and rural principals and non-principals, and elementary, secondary, and BOCES administrators, their numbers could not be proportionally representative of the general population of Upstate Central New York.
3. I also chose to include only those certified within three years of being interviewed to minimize the impact of tenure as a variable in the responses as all administrators are subject to a three year probationary period in New York. The study did not include those in teacher leader roles that chose not to pursue certification as a school administrator at all. Further the perspectives of school superintendents were not part of this study.
4. The results cannot be generalized beyond the defined population.
5. Limits included both time and financial resources for data collection and analysis.

As researcher, I intended that this study would result in an extensive understanding of the research problem through the hearing, understanding, and analysis of the perspectives of the participants. This study was exploratory in nature, and its results are not intended to be prescriptive or predictive but rather informative and inspirational. This study may, indeed, have raised more questions than it answered.

These limitations reveal a number of opportunities for further research and additional studies should be undertaken to address them.

Many participants interviewed as part of this study, particularly those who have decided not to pursue the principalship, as well as those negatively impacted by the APPR requirements, were quite vocal in their frustration and displeasure with the current state of the principalship. This included both those participants who were employed as principals and those who were certified as school administrators but not practicing principals. Many issues revealed by the participants, related to the two research questions posed, resulted in specific findings and recommendations. There were potential questions raised by this study which would be worthy of future research by others. These are as follows:

1. A future researcher may want to examine if principals' accounts of their job to others increase or undermine potential candidates' desire to seek the principalship.
2. While only one participant offered a detailed account alleging that racism is embedded in the Upstate Central New York educational landscape, the concerns expressed are worthy of further study. Is the top-down racism described by the participant metastasized throughout the school districts in Upstate Central New York? If so, how does the entire educational community in Upstate Central New York engage in dialogue on the matter and begin to formulate plans of action to address it?

3. How do urban school districts attract and retain the best and brightest high quality principals available?
4. Several participants expressed frustration with the hiring process in Upstate Central New York. Is the good old boys network alive and well? Is it impeding the mobility of high quality principals between urban and non-urban settings and vice versa? How can mobility of high quality school principals between suburban and urban school settings be increased?
5. There was significant discussion in this study about the need for high quality applicants for the principalship. A future researcher, working with the ISSLC Standards could seek to further define quality as it pertains to the needs of the Upstate Central New York area. This could serve to inform both school districts and local universities on possible focus for professional development offerings targeted at current administrators as well as curriculum modifications for those in principal preparation programs.
6. While this study examined two key populations, future study should incorporate teacher leaders who may have rejected the certification option pursued by all the participants in this research.

Additional future study should also be undertaken to address the identified limitations identified above. Future researchers could potentially:

1. Include a broader population of participants. This may encompass more diverse regions of New York State and/or be expanded to the Northeast United States or even nationwide.

2. Utilize an increased number of participants with a focus on the perceptions of the principalship as articulated across more diverse populations with emphasis on race, ethnicity, and gender.
3. Determine if the perceptions of principals who have been awarded tenure are consistent with the participants in this study who were within their first three years of attaining certification.
4. This study may be duplicated with non-certified teacher leaders and/or school superintendents to determine their perspectives on the research questions that drove this study.
5. Seek to generalize the results of this study beyond the population utilized in this study. This might be accomplished utilizing quantitative and or survey research methodology.
6. Seek additional funding through grant sources that would enable a more expansive research study, possibly utilizing multiple researchers and analysts.

Final Thoughts

Prior to the initiation of the study, I hypothesized about the potential significance it would have to the educational community in New York State. I indicated it would help school districts, higher-educational institutions, state government leaders, and the consuming public to understand the perceptions of potential candidates for the principalship. They could develop a better understanding of the attractants and deterrents to the principalship through the perspectives of the participants in this research. This might allow them to address issues that may be currently keeping highly qualified potential applicants on the sidelines and develop the conditions that may attract high quality applicants to schools, particularly in areas experiencing shortages. It

was, and remains, my hope that local school districts, state decision-makers, and, most importantly, those talented educators contemplating immersing themselves in the challenges of the principalship will seriously review findings and recommendations from this research and take decisive action based upon them. It is critical that we attract high quality principals to lead our public schools. I believe the educational constituencies, working in tandem, can significantly enhance the attractants and decrease the deterrents to the principalship. This will serve to mobilize the newly certificated population to engage in the principalship and ultimately lead schools to higher levels of student achievement.

Appendix A

Sample Initial Interview Questions for Certified Non-Practicing Administrators

Career Influences

1. Review for me the highlights of your educational career. What brought you to this point in your career?
2. Tell me about the influences that guided you to this point in your career.
3. Why did you pursue administrative certification?
4. Describe external factors or life events that have had a significant impact on your career.
5. To what administrative position do you aspire? Why?
6. From what position do you hope to retire? How will you get there?
7. Is there anything you wish to tell me about your decision to seek (or not) an administrative position to assist me in my inquiry?

Preparation

1. Describe your experience of attaining certification.
2. Are you prepared for the principalship? Other administrative positions? Why or why not?
3. Are you prepared for an administrative position? The principalship?
4. Describe the role and influence your university preparation program and those involved with it has had in your journey?
5. What do you still need to learn? How will you learn it?

Mentoring and Support

1. Who has had the most influence on your career? How? Why?
2. Were you tapped by someone to pursue certification? Describe how this developed?
3. Outline how your school district encourages teachers to pursue administrative positions?

4. Who is your mentor? Why? Describe the relationship. Has this relationship changed over time? How so?
5. Who or what has developed your confidence as a potential administrator?
6. By whom do you feel supported to seek an administrative position?
7. Have professional associations played in your career? To what associations do you belong?

The Principalship (In General)

1. Are you considering the principalship? Why? Or why not?
2. Do you think it is necessary for aspiring administrators to switch districts to advance their career? Why? Why not?
3. Do you plan to enter the administrative field? Describe how you plan to pursue an administrative position.
4. Is the principalship valued in your school district? In your region? By what constituencies? How is this evidenced?
5. How did you perceive the principalship when you began your administrative certification program? How do you perceive it now? What, if anything, has changed?
6. Is there a shortage of principals? Explain your response.
7. If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about the principalship what would it be? Why? What would have to happen in order to bring about this change?

Attractants

1. Are you attracted to the principalship? Why? Why not?
2. What one thing, if any, calls you to the principalship. Are there others?
3. What is good about being an administrator?
4. Describe the ideal administrative position. Does it exist?

Deterrents

1. What factors did you encounter that were deterrents to certification along the road. How did you deal with each of these?
2. What do you see as the least favorite parts of an administrative position? How about the principalship, in particular?
3. Why are you not currently serving in an administrative capacity?
4. What change in the principalship would make it more attractive?

Appendix B

Sample Initial Interview Questions for Currently Sitting Principals

Career Influences

1. Review for me the highlights of your educational career. What brought you to this point in your career?

2. Tell me about the influences that guided you to this point in your career.

Describe external factors or life events that have had an impact on your career?

3. From what position do you hope to retire? How will you get there?

Preparation

1. Were you prepared to assume the principalship? Why?

2. What do you wish you had learned or experienced before taking the job?

3. Describe the role and influence your university preparation program and those involved with it has had in your journey to your current position.

4. Are there gaps in your knowledge or experience that are necessary to do your job? What are they? How do you anticipate filling these gaps?

Mentoring and Support

1. Who has had the most influence on your career path? How? Why?

2. Outline how your school district encourage teachers to pursue administrative positions

3. Were you tapped by someone to pursue certification? Describe how this developed?

4. What do you still need to learn? How will you learn it?

5. Do you have mentor? Why? Describe the relationship. Has this relationship changed over time? How so?

6. Who or what has developed your confidence as a principal?

7. Where do you find for support for yourself in your role as principal? Describe the support you receive.

8. Have professional associations played a role in your career? If so, describe their role. To what associations do you belong? Are you active in the association?

The Principalship (In General)

1. Why the principalship?

2. To what other positions did you aspire before you accepted the principalship?

3. Do you think it is necessary for aspiring administrators to switch districts to advance their career? Why? Why not?

4. Is the principalship valued in your school district? In your region? By what constituencies? How is this evidenced?

5. Is there a shortage of principals? Explain your response.

6. How did you perceive the principalship when you began your administrative certification program? How do you perceive it now? What, if anything, has changed?

7. If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about the principalship what would it be? Why? What would have to happen in order to bring about this change?

8. Is there anything you wish to tell me about the principalship?

Attractants

1. Are you enjoying the experience? Why?

2. What attracts you to the principalship? Why?

3. What one thing, if any, calls you to the principalship?

Deterrents

1. What factors did you encounter that were deterrents along the road. How did you deal with each of these?
2. What are your least favorite parts of the job?
3. What change in the principalship would make it more attractive?

Appendix C



**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT**

The Decision to Pursue the Principalship: Perspectives of Certified Administrators in
Upstate New York

My name is Frederick P. Kirsch and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Syracuse University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. This sheet will explain the study to you and please feel free to ask questions about the research if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail if you wish.

I am interested in learning more about how certified administrators make the decision to apply for the position of principal. You will be asked to participate in an audio taped interview with a possible follow-up interview. Each interview will take approximately 60 – 120 minutes of your time. All the information that you share with me will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear on any documents or transcriptions and no one will know about your specific answers other than me.

In any articles I write or presentations that I make, I will use a made-up name for you, and I will not reveal details or I will change details about where you work to protect your identity. Documents and transcriptions will be locked in an office at all times and upon transcription and data analysis, all audiotapes will be erased and destroyed.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping us to understand the attractants and deterrents involved in the decision to apply for and accept the principalship in central New York State. This will provide a better understanding of how school districts and the state can better support certified administrators to pursue the principalship once they are certified.

The risks to you of participating in this study are minimal. I realize the time you need to take for this interview may be difficult and I will work around your schedule and arrange a time convenient to you. You may be concerned with the confidentiality of the information you share. As I explained earlier, I will keep your name and institution confidential. If you do not want to take part in study you have the right to refuse without penalty. If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the

study, without penalty, at any time. If you have questions or complaints about the research you may contact the investigator at 315-655-8608. If you cannot reach the investigator contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at 315-443-3013.

All of my questions have been answered, I am over the age of 18 and I wish to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree to be audio taped I do not agree to be audio taped

Signature of participant

Date

Print name of participant

Date

Name of investigator: Frederick P. Kirsch

Phone number: 315-655-8608

Name of faculty sponsor: Dr. Gerald M. Mager

Phone number: 315-443-4752

Appendix D

Conversion of Preliminary Themes and Blended Themes to Final Themes

CORRELATES TO BL THEME #	COHORT A PRELIMINARY THEMES	CORRELATES TO BL THEME #	COHORT B PRELIMINARY THEMES	BL THEME#	BLENDED THEMES	FINAL THEMES**	
	1 ACCOUNTABILITY		1 ACCOUNTABILITY		1 ACCOUNTABILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY	
	11 BOCES		2 APPR*		2 APPR	ACCOUNTABILITY	
	6 CAREER GOAL		11 AUTONOMY		3 CERTIFICATION	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	3 CERTIFICATION		7 BUILDING CLIMATE		4 FAMILY	PERSONAL FACTORS	
	11 DISCIPLINE/VP ROLE		3 CERTIFICATION		5 HIRING PROCESS	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	7 DISTRICT CLIMATE		22 DISCRIMINATION*		6 INTERNAL MOTIVATION	PERSONAL FACTORS	
	4 FAMILY SUPPORT		7 DISTRICT SUPPORT		7 CLIMATE (bldg or dist)	CLIMATE	
	4 FAMILY TIME		4 FAMILY SUPPORT		8 FISCAL CLIMATE	CLIMATE	
	5 HIRING PROCESS		8 FISCAL CLIMATE*		9 MENTOR	PERSONAL FACTORS	
	9 INITIAL CONTACT		6 INTERNAL MOTIVE		10 LEAD v. MANAGE	NATURE OF JOB	
	6 INTERNAL MOTIVE		14 INTERNSHIP		11 NATURE OF JOB	NATURE OF JOB	
	14 INTERNSHIP		5 INTERVIEW		12 PARENTS PUBLIC	NATURE OF JOB	
	11 JOB VARIETY		11 ISOLATION		13 NETWORKING	PERSONAL FACTORS	
	19 LEVEL MOBILITY		21 JOB SECURITY*		14 INTERNSHIP	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	10 MANAGEMENT TASKS		10 LEAD v. MANAGE		15 PREP PROGRAM	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	9 MENTORING		19 LEVEL MOBILITY		16 TUITION SUPPORT	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	23 MOBILITY		7 LOYALTY		17 STRESS	NATURE OF JOB	
	13 NETWORKING		6 MAKE A DIFFERENCE		18 SALARY	TERMS & CONDITIONS	
	12 PARENTS/PUBLIC		9 MENTOR		19 LEVEL MOBILITY	NATURE OF JOB	
	11 PERSONNEL ISSUES		11 NATURE OF JOB		20 SHORTAGE	CLIMATE	
	12 POLITICS		13 NETWORK		21 JOB SECURITY	CLIMATE	
	15 PREP PROGRAM		12 PARENTS/PUBLIC		22 DISCRIMINATION	CLIMATE	
	11 PRINCIPAL/VP ROLE		15 PREP PROGRAM		23 MOBILITY	NATURE OF JOB	
	18 SALARY/PERKS		18 SALARY		24 URBAN	CLIMATE	
	20 SHORTAGE		20 SHORTAGE		25 WAND		
	17 STRESS		17 STRESS				
	7 SUCCESSION PLAN		9 TAPPED				
	16 TUITION PAID		16 TUITION SUPPORT				
	24 URBAN		24 URBAN				
	25 WAND		25 WAND				
			*UNIQUE TO COHORT B			*FINAL THEMES	
						ACCOUNTABILITY	
						NATURE OF JOB	
						TERMS & CONDITIONS	
						CLIMATE	
						PERSONAL FACTORS	

Appendix E

Final Theme Development Matrix

THEMES	# COHORT A RESPONSES	# COHORT A RESPONDENTS	# COHORT B RESPONSES	# COHORT B RESPONDENTS
ACCOUNTABILITY*				
Accountability	2	2	7	4
APPR	0	0	62	13
NATURE OF JOB*				
Nature of Job	42	12	14	10
Lead v. Manage	11	6	38	12
Parents & Public	5	4	6	4
Stress	7	6	10	8
Level Mobility	4	4	4	3
Mobility	11	8	8	7
TERMS AND CONDITIONS*				
Certification	9	7	2	2
Hiring Process	12	8	4	3
Internship	13	9	15	8
Preparation Program	12	8	39	12
Tuition Support	7	6	3	2
Salary	15	9	17	11
CLIMATE*				
Climate (Building/District)	19	7	16	10
Fiscal Climate	0	0	6	5
Shortage	9	3	10	8
Job Security	0	0	18	10
Discrimination	0	0	3	1
Urban	5	3	15	6
PERSONAL*				
Family	19	9	8	8
Internal Motivation	23	11	36	13
Mentor	32	13	15	10
Networking	15	8	2	1
*FINAL THEME				

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PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS), Latham, New York
 2012-Present Negotiator; Labor Relations Specialist
Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
 2012-Present Academic Encourager, Athletic Department (Football)
Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District, DeWitt, New York
 2007-2012 (Retired) Director, Curriculum and Instruction
 1995-2007 Principal, Moses DeWitt Elementary School
Sherburne-Earlville Central School District, Sherburne, New York
 1990-1995 Director, Pupil Personnel Services
Mount Upton Central School District, Mount Upton, New York
 1985-1995 Assistant Superintendent
Bainbridge-Guilford Central School District, Bainbridge, New York
 1982-1985 Elementary Administrator
 1979-1982 Elementary Teacher

NEW YORK STATE CERTIFICATIONS

School District Administrator (SDA) – Permanent
 School Administrator and Supervisor (SAS) – Permanent
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PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

School Administrators' Association of New York State (SAANYS)
 President (2010-2011), Board of Directors, Government Relations Committee
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NAESP – National Association of Elementary School Principals
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