

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF MENTORING
IN MONTANA'S AA, A AND B HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring programs have become a popular source of training and professional development for high school principals over the past few years (Darish, 2001). However, there is little research which investigates the types of mentoring support these programs provide and the effectiveness of this support (SREB, 2007). This mixed methods study was undertaken to determine the frequency of mentoring support that high school and assistant principals in Montana's AA, A and B schools experienced during their beginning years as building administrations. In addition, this study also investigated principals' perceptions of the main sources of mentoring support and to describe the support strategies that principals used in the absence of mentoring.

One hundred and twenty-two high school principals and assistant principals were sent the School Administration and Leadership Skills Inventory (SALSS) (Stout, 2001) and asked to rate their perceptions of mentoring support during their novice years as building administrators. Results from this research found that when averaged across the ISLLC Leadership Skill domains, 95% of lead principals and assistant principals indicated that mentoring support would have been beneficial during their induction years as building administrators. Follow-up interviews were conducted with five principals were to more fully understand the sources of administrative support that were available to the support strategies that they used in the absence of mentoring. Results from semi-structured interviews identified, "Supportive Peer Administrators", "Personality Traits", "Self-Development" and "Experience" as themes that described principals' sources of administrative support. "Creating Supportive Relationships", "Reflection", and "Supportive Peer Administrators" were the themes that principals collectively used to describe the support strategies they used in the absence of formal or informal mentoring. Results from this study suggest that there is a lack of mentoring support networks novice high school principals practicing in the state of Montana. Findings from this research suggest that Montana's school districts and the university principal preparation programs need to make a concerted effort to establish formal mentoring programs for new school administrators. It is recommended that these organizations work collaboratively to mentoring support networks for novice principals and to use the findings from this study to guide those efforts.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Mentoring, in one form or another, has been a form of support to apprentice professionals for decades. The veteran professional helping those new to a profession is a fundamental purpose of mentoring. Mentoring programs that use experienced school principals to support novice principals during their induction years as building administrators are a critical need given the leadership demands required in today's public schools. The need for principal mentoring is critical when considering the complex and demanding nature of the principalship (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006).

One example of the difficult challenges faced by both new and experienced principals is rigorous accountability demands specified by the No Child Left Behind Legislation (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law Number 107-110). The expectation that students show continual improvement toward district, state and national achievement goals suggests the role of instructional leaders now supersedes the traditional role of manager for building principals. Data from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) indicate that Montana students have performed well nationally on standardized achievement tests such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. Additionally, Montana's high school students have consistently performed well on college entrance exams such as the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT). For example, OPI data

shows that from 2002-2004; the average score for Montana students on the ACT English and Math assessments were 20.7 and 21.4 respectively, as compared to national averages of 20.3 in the content area of English and 20.6 in mathematics. During this same period, the SAT Verbal and Math scores for Montana's high school students were 538 and 543 respectively as compared to national averages of 506 for the verbal scale and 517 for the mathematics scale.

The above average national performance on these assessments can be attributed to a variety of factors including student characteristics, quality teachers, community expectations, and effective instructional leadership. If this success is to continue, new school leaders must be trained in the skills necessary to become effective instructional leaders. The role of the principal is also vital. No other position has a greater position for sustaining and improving the quality of schools (Sergiovanni, 2006). The decisions that principals make are important for promoting the kinds of change in school practices that are required to create and support effective school environments (NASSP, 1996a). The principal's role as a change agent is repeatedly discussed in well-known publications such as "A Nation at Risk (1983)"; "The Principal, Keystone of a High-Achieving School: Attracting and Keeping the Leaders We Need" (ERS, 2000); "Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution, (NASSP, 1996b) and The Principalship at a Crossroad: A Study of the Conditions and Concerns of Principals (NASSP, 2003).

Content knowledge and theory related to school leadership is a major focus of most educational leadership preparation programs. However, theory and content knowledge alone is not sufficient for training aspiring principals. Prospective educational

leaders must not only understand content knowledge within the context of leadership theories but must also be able to connect their newly acquired knowledge of leadership skills and theory to practice. New principals will be at a disadvantage during their induction years without the support of experienced principals to help them make connections between formal training and authentic aspects of new administrative responsibilities.

Principal preparation programs have developed mentoring programs to help new principal mentees develop skills and learn to survive in school-based contexts that are characterized by ambiguity and competing demands. Well-established, quality mentoring programs can serve to assist aspiring or new principals in their efforts to convert their knowledge of theory, research and content into practice. Mentoring programs can serve as a support system for aspiring educational leaders and as an effective supplement to leadership programs. Mentoring of newly credentialed principals is important because experienced mentors can help the mentee principal in making the transition from learning about becoming a principal to engaging in the diverse range of leadership skills required of practicing principals. Using experienced principals as mentors can provide a valuable source of assistance in the preparation and recruitment of future principals. The differences in policies and procedures across schools within the same state and for schools in different states suggest that even experienced principals can benefit from a mentoring relationship with an experienced peer. Well-grounded mentoring programs, when incorporated into an existing educational leadership program, help to ensure that aspiring school administrators are engaged in quality training experiences.

It is evident that the role, function, and attendant expectations for educational leaders are rife with complicated demands. Leaders are expected to manage the day-to-day operations of schools; network with civic groups, school leaders, and parent groups; know and enact legislation; understand the community in which they work, while at the same time managing intensive paperwork requirements (Wolff, 1996). These dimensions of the principalship are not easily conveyed in preparation programs; thus there is a need for quality mentoring of principals new to the profession as well as principals new to the state.

In 1995, the Association of Washington School Principals funded a statewide study to survey their members' perceptions of the change in responsibilities that characterize the principalship in their state and how the impact of that change has influenced their practice (Wolff, 1996). Results from this research effort found that principals were expected to fully collaborate with school stakeholders, comply with increasingly complex state school improvement efforts, engage in unfamiliar roles such as mediation and counseling, and work longer hours to complete their administrative tasks. These results are aligned with similar studies which suggest that the complex roles that principals are expected to assume within a school are a major source of job stress. Lash way (2003) found that the need to master technical skills; personal feelings of inadequacy; fast paced environments; supervising teachers and the sense of isolation were factors that principals perceived as major job stressors.

New principals will be faced with the same stress provoking issues that veteran principals are required to cope with on a daily basis. The research literature indicates that

mentoring programs are beneficial in helping new principals survive in stressful environments where administrative responsibilities are complex and constantly changing (e.g., Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). In a review of 40 research articles, Hansford & Ehrich (2006) identified both the advantages and disadvantages of principal mentoring programs. They found across all the studies reviewed that the most frequently recurring advantages of mentoring for novice principals were as follows:

- Support/empathy/counseling
- Sharing ideas and problem solving
- Professional development
- Improved confidence
- Opportunity to reflect
- Opportunity to network
- Feedback and positive reinforcement
- Eased loneliness and isolation
- Given career affirmation

The two most frequently identified negative outcomes of mentoring by mentees were: concern with expertise and personality mismatch and lack of mentor time with the mentee.

Research suggests that neither mentoring nor educational leadership preparation programs alone can fully prepare principals for the scope of the role (e.g., Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). Helping principal candidates gain knowledge, develop skills, and fully understand their beliefs and attitudes about teaching is critical. However, just as importantly, educational leaders need help to more fully understand their expected role within modern educational institutions. Research reported in the literature indicates that the responsibilities of the principalship are diverse, complex and constantly evolving. However, on-going mentoring support can help novice principals mesh theoretical

concepts with limited practical experiences in their efforts to be effective leaders in new school environments.

According to D. Rud (2-10-2008, personnel communication), Director of the School Administrators of Montana (SAM), principals in Montana have concerns related to the difficulties they face performing their jobs. Rud suggests that these concerns center on unattractive salaries when compared to some teacher salaries and the overwhelming responsibilities that characterize these mid-level administrative positions. These concerns expressed by Montana principals are similar to those voiced by principals across the U.S. According to Holloway (1999) the principalship is not viewed as an attractive career option for teachers due to a host of factors including the increasing workload and stress associated with the position. These factors are thought to be one reason for the shortage of principals to fill current vacancies (Malone, 2002). However, according to Rud, principal mentoring programs may be one approach for recruiting more Montana educators into positions as principals as well as supporting those educators currently working as principals.

Given the complexities of the principalship, it is understandable why in Montana, state organizations like SAM and Montana State University (MSU) are studying ways to recruit, retain and improve the preparation of Montana's principals. One example of these efforts is the new mentoring program--Principals' Advisory Leadership Project (PALS) being implemented by SAM. PALS is a National Principals Mentoring Certification Program where principal candidates receive training to become certified mentors. When trained, mentors are expected to provide guidance and support for other school leaders.

Some training activities that mentors engage in prior to being paired with a new principal include attending the Leadership Immersion Institute, participating in a monthly on-line discussion with a mentor, completing a 72 hour practicum with a training mentor, keeping a monthly portfolio linked to mentoring learning outcomes and preparing a final presentation of the mentoring experience.

Mentoring has been suggested as an effective tool for supporting principals at different developmental stages of their administrative careers (e.g., Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Chapman, 2005). These stages can be defined as preservice where aspiring principals are engaged in internship experiences during university preparation, induction or first year experiences as a practicing principal and the inservice stage that characterizes experienced principals. Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill (2007) has recommended a comprehensive mentoring program to support the internship activities for preservice principals. Their research suggests that principal preparation programs must provide a formal mentoring program that uses experienced mentors to support the challenging experiences encountered by interns in real-school situations. The overarching goal of programs like those recommended by the Gray et al.,(2007) is to raise student achievement by enhancing leadership preparation through school-based, clinical experiences. The success of these types of support programs for future principals is dependent on the quality of mentors. Quality mentors are those experienced principals who can provide day-to-day feedback and coaching that will help interns transition from the role of classroom teacher (or other roles) to that of school leader.

Mentoring also plays a vital role for principals during the induction phase or first year of practice as a building administrator. As new principals enter the profession, the development of effective mentoring programs provides an invaluable opportunity to socialize novices into the changing landscape of the field (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). According to Mohn & Machell (2005), mentoring for first year principals is especially helpful in the acquisition of practical competencies related to leadership practice. They suggest that the leadership practices that require the most support are those related to school improvement initiatives. The emphasis on school improvement initiatives focused around student achievement is not surprising given the importance of the accountability demands required of the No Child Left Behind Legislation (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law Number 107-110).

Crow and Matthews (1998) found that mentoring was considered to be highly valued by inservice principals who have years of practical experience as a building administrator. More recently, an emphasis has been placed on promoting informal learning networks where experienced principals have opportunities to collaborate and coach one another toward improved leadership skills (Chapman, 2005). The professional communities of practice that are formed by the establishment of informal learning networks promote self-actualization through a lifelong approach to professional development.

According to Hopkins-Thompson (2000), expectations based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) (See Appendix A) and other educational reform mandates related to school improvement initiatives are challenges that

school leaders must be prepared to face in their positions as educational leaders. They advocate for mentoring and coaching of new principals to help them successfully respond to these initiative and the other complex and diverse challenges they face. This study focused on the principal's perceptions of the adequacy of mentoring during their induction year of practice in Montana's Class AA, A and B high schools.

Problem Statement

Research suggests that mentoring integrated into a leadership preparation program is an effective approach for assisting our nation's school principals to better meet the continually changing job of managing America's schools. Research in the area of principal mentoring suggests that the principalship is continually changing (e.g., Education Policy Center-Michigan State University, 2004). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2003) recommends mentoring for our nation's principals, as a way to deal with the continually changing job of the principal. Results from Stout's (2001) research indicate that mentoring is an effective method for preparing and improving the skill development of school leaders.

Research supports the use of mentoring as a supplement or practice for improving principal's job performance (e.g., Gray et al. (2007); Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Although studies have focused on the pre-service internship experiences (e.g., Daresh & Playko, 1992; Kirkham, 1995), research related to the effectiveness of mentoring programs for novice principals during their induction year of practice is lacking (Trenta, Beebe, & Easterbridge, 2001). This finding suggests that principal preparation programs

and school districts do not have sufficient research-based information to make sound decisions when designing and implementing mentoring support programs for new principals.

Purpose of the Study

Mentoring has been and is used by colleges and universities to train principals. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Educational Research Service made a case for mentoring when they collaboratively published “The Principal, Keystone to a High-Achieving School” (ERS, 2000). The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to describe Montana High School principals’ and assistant principals’ perceptions of the adequacy of mentoring and administrative support available during their apprentice years as school administrators. This study was also undertaken to describe in greater detail the support available to principals and assistant principals and the support strategies they relied on during their first years as school leaders.

Research Questions

To date, there is no data to inform principal preparation programs or public schools about the characteristics of effective leadership mentoring that has occurred or is currently in place for principals and assistant principals who lead Montana’s AA, A and B high schools. This study provides an analysis of Montana principals’ perceptions of current mentoring practices, the mentoring identified as most effective and the strategies

novice principals relied on to obtain assistance in the absence of mentoring. The following research questions were posed for this study:

1. What ISLLC leadership domains did principals and assistant principals identify as skill areas where mentoring would have been beneficial during their novice years as school administrators?
2. What support strategies did principals and assistant principals use to assist them with their leadership responsibilities during their novice administrative experiences?
3. What types of support did principals and assistant principals identify as beneficial in the absence of mentoring during their novice years as school leaders?

The answers to these questions were proposed to provide knowledge of mentoring practices of new principals in Montana AA, A and B high schools to assist principal preparation programs and school districts with direction to support aspiring educational administrators. The School Administration and Leadership Skills Inventory (SALSS) (See Appendix B) developed by Stout (2001) operationally defined how principals' perceptions of mentoring during their induction year of practice was assessed. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has recommended a set of six leadership skill area standards to guide leadership policy and practice nationally. Stout's instrument, however, defines the ISLLC leadership skills across 10 rather than 6 leadership domains. A detailed explanation of the alignment between the 6 leadership domains recommended by the ISLLC standards and the SALSS is found in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

The study uses terms that must be defined to ensure consistent meaning and understanding. Some terms are defined below and others are defined in context.

1. Class AA High Schools: High schools in this class have the largest individual student population and range in size from 881 to 1,974 students (MHSA, 2008).
2. Class A High Schools: High Schools in this class range in size from 197 to 834 students (MHSA, 2008).
3. Class B High Schools: High Schools in this class range in size from 107 to 312 students (MHSA, 2008).
4. New Principal or new Assistant Principal: A new principal is defined as a school leader new to the field of administration or an experienced leader in a new position.
5. High School Principal and Assistant Principal: An educator who is certified by OPI to be administrator of grades 7-12 or 5-12, but generally works with grades 9-12.
6. Induction Year: A new principal or assistant principals first year of practice in the public schools (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006).
7. Inservice Principals: Experienced principals who are engaged in professional practice as school administrators (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Chapman, 2005).

8. Mentee: an intern or person being helped to place theory and practice in the context of experience (Malone, 2002)
9. Mentoring: An ongoing process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization (Daresh, 2001).
10. Preservice Principals: Aspiring principals and assistant principals who are in training and engaged in internship activities (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Chapmen, 2005).

Delimitations

Delimitations are the restrictions that the researcher impose in order to narrow the scope of the study. For this study, only lead principals from 12 of the 13 AA school districts in Montana were selected to participate in this study. However, assistant principals representing all AA school districts were surveyed. Additionally, lead principals and assistant principals from the 25 A schools and 46 B schools also were surveyed for this study. Class C leaders were not included in the study because most of the school administrators practicing in this school class are considered superintendents.

Limitations

Limitations are the natural conditions that restrict the scope of the study and may affect its outcomes. Limitations speak to the internal validity of the study and do not fall within the control of the researcher. The limitations of this study are:

1. There are only 13 AA high schools, 25 A schools and 46 B schools in the state of Montana. The data in this study may not be indicative of what principals in C schools believe.
2. The communities where these schools exist are very different from each other. Concerns and problems will differ from school to school. These differences may be due to a crisis, social, economic, political or legal reasons. Such differences may influence how each leader responds to the survey. Because of these differences, there may not be a way to standardize the responses of the participants in the study.

Significance of the Study

Crow and Matthews (1998) assert that principals in all stages of their professional lives need the assistance and companionship that mentors can provide. Mentoring is needed at each stage of a principal's career. They believe that mentoring programs serve to socialize principals and make them more dynamic and effective leaders. They also enrich teaching and learning throughout a school system. Crow and Matthews' research is supported by the experience of one principal new to the ranks of Montana's AA high school principals. This principal who is new to the AA high school ranks had little experience with the school accreditation process. Accreditation visits happen when a team of educators from one AA school visits another for the purpose of evaluation and school improvement. This administrator, while new to Montana, has 28 years of experience as a high school principal in another state but did not understand the process

of accreditation well enough to prepare for a team visit to his school. One could argue that this administrator should have asked for help. However, an argument could also be made that help in this leadership area should have been offered. Mentoring could have offered valuable support to this principal.

This study provides data that can be used to more accurately describe principal mentoring in Montana. Also, results from this study can be discussed, explained and fused with findings from other studies to provide direction in Montana's efforts to establish a formal mentoring for school leaders. The School Administrators of Montana (SAM) organization is currently involved in establishing a leadership-mentoring program for Montana's school leaders. Results from this study can be used to support SAM's efforts to create a formal principal mentoring program in Montana and to expand the dialog needed among stakeholders needed to develop sound programs.

Summary

National organizations such as NASSP and NAESP have advocated for the mentoring of high school principals (NAESP, 2003; NASSP, 1996). Colleges and universities have been using mentoring for many years. These organizations and institutions assert that mentoring, in addition to a strong preparation program, is of benefit to principals. This study examined "mentoring" in 12 of Montana's 13 AA High School Districts, 25 of Montana's A Districts and 46 of Montana's B Districts. The data gathered supply information about current mentoring practices for secondary school principals. The results from this study also provide insight into the thoughts of current

principals on the effectiveness of mentoring. Lastly, this research effort highlights the need for a systematic effort to increase the quality of mentoring experiences for Montana's high school principals in an effort to curtail the difficulties currently faced by practicing administrators in some of Montana's larger school districts.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature supporting this study comprises eleven topics as follows:

(1) Background on Mentoring, (2) Importance of Principal Mentoring Programs, (3) Mentoring for Principals Across Career Phases, (4) The Benefits of Mentoring for New Principals During Induction, (5) Elements of Effective Principal Mentoring Programs, (5) Models for Mentoring Principals During Induction Years, (6) Research Supporting Principal Mentoring Programs, (7) Assessing Effectiveness of Principal Mentoring Programs, (8) Attributes that Define Quality Mentors and Mentees, (9) Criteria for Matching Mentor and Mentee, (10) Training in a Mentor Program, and (11) Potential Problems With Mentoring. The topics discussed in this literature review will provide an overview of mentoring research that specifically focuses on the role of mentoring for principals during their induction year in the public schools.

Background on Mentoring

The term mentoring derives from the Greek word meaning enduring. It is defined as a sustained relationship between two people, one being experienced while the other is considered a beginner (Douglas, 1997). The experienced person offers guidance, support, and assistance as the beginner experiences position responsibilities for the initial time, faces new challenges, and strives to solve problems.

The Office of Education Consumer Guide on Mentoring defines two types as either natural or planned (OERI, 1993). According to the guide, natural mentoring develops over time and primarily occurs through friendship, collegiality, teaching, coaching, and counseling. However, planned mentoring occurs when structured programs use a formal process to select and match mentors with mentees. Both types of mentoring relationships occur in the public schools.

An examination of the history of mentoring and a general description of what a mentor does and does not do may provide some insight into the mentoring process. Mentoring takes its name from Homer's *Odyssey*. Ulysses, before departing for Troy, entrusts his son Telemachus to a wise friend, Mentor. Mentor served not only as counselor to the prince, but also as guardian and guide. Most important, Mentor did not replace Ulysses in the parent role; rather, Mentor, with the aid of the goddess Athena, helped the young prince to understand and embrace the challenges that lie before him (ERS, 2000). Mentors serve as enhancements, guides and supports for the mentee. This notion was chronicled by philosopher John Dewey, who stated that education was transmitted from generation to generation, occurring by means of the communication of habits, activities, thoughts, and feelings from the older generation to the younger, (Ozman & Craver, 2007). Older persons who help younger persons learn certain skills can be thought of as being the same as mentor and mentee.

Constructivism is a learning theory advocating the importance of learners actively constructing meaning and knowledge from personal experience. The constructivist model of learning is premised on the notion that learners actively construct meaning and

knowledge from personal experiences (Lambert, 2005). Simply having knowledge is not enough; effective learning results from applying acquired skills within a highly personal context. Constructivists such as Plato and Dewey believe that what we know, when added to our experiences, creates our understanding of life, which is the basic foundation of mentoring.

Parents and significant others such as coaches and youth leaders supply a form of mentoring based on interactions which help children develop important social and life skills as well as the athletic skills needed to win games. An additional form of mentoring occurs when teachers, whether new to the profession or experienced (but in a new work environment), who are assigned a “go to” person. Sociologist Dan Lortie (1975) wrote on the importance of mentoring new teachers. He described the first year of teaching as an “ordeal”, describing it as private and an experience not shared by a cadre of teachers. He advocated for the formation of teacher groups to combat this “ordeal” and create a common technical knowledge among teachers, which would then compensate for their weak socialization. Lashway (2003) observed this “ordeal” in his study of school leaders in the form of personal feelings of inadequacy and the sense of isolation as impacting their job performance.

Browne-Ferrigno & Muth (2006) suggests that the professional development required for novice principals to grow in their practice requires the social construction of professional-practice expectations through mentoring, peer sharing and critique, and systematic induction. The concept of mentoring programs is a relatively recent phenomenon in the field of educational administration (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). An

early definition posited by Gallimore (1992) views mentoring as a form of socialization best viewed and analyzed through “activity settings” that represent authentic contexts where the school, home, and community together comprise the reality of life and learning. Within activity settings, individuals strive to create a deeper understanding of the skills necessary to perform competently in their vocations by sharing experiences with peers that are similar in basic dimensions, processes and content. Gallimore believes that effective mentee support is dependent on what he refers to as “jointness” or collaboration between mentor and mentee within the context of an authentic activity setting. Shared perspectives and a deeper understanding of effective leadership skills are more likely to occur for mentees when “jointness” characterizes a mentor-mentee relationship.

One of the most striking accounts of the importance of mentoring is found in Zukerman’s (1977) study of Nobel laureates. Her research revealed that future laureates search for established mentors with whom they may work during their formative years, and the laureates, in turn, search for talented apprentices. These bonds across generations are significant for mentors as well as for their apprentices. They provide renewal for the more experienced member and for those beginning their careers; they permit the relationship with the mentor to be transformed into the growth of self-knowledge and domain fluency. Mentoring is not just limited to the cognitive, but crosses all domains. More importantly, effective mentoring is interactive, taking place between individuals. It is how we teach, socialize and learn those things necessary for a successful transition in work, school and life.

If mentoring is beneficial to future Nobel laureates and teachers, it surely should be beneficial to school leaders. In the publication, *Making the Case for Principal Mentoring* (NAESP, 2003), the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Education Alliance at Brown University suggests that formal mentoring is a thorough, defined and directed approach to training school leaders. Informal mentoring, in contrast, refers to having no formal protocol in place for a new principal. It is more of a “call me if you need me” scenario. This study is intended to examine the adequacy of mentoring experiences of current school leaders. Further, the study may provide insights about the effectiveness of mentoring for beginning principals, tenured experienced principals or experienced principals new to a specific position.

Importance of Principal Mentoring Programs

In today’s educational society, school leadership and high-stakes accountability have greatly affected the future of school leaders. In the past, principals were required to make primarily managerial decisions about the school building, staff and students. They were responsible for ensuring that each classroom had a teacher, that students had the necessary materials, and that students progressed through the system. However, the role of building principal has evolved from manager to educational leader who not only has managerial responsibilities but also is charged with leading instruction. The current era of public school accountability equates school success with student achievement. The responsibility for ensuring that students learn and schools improve is placed squarely on

the principal's shoulders (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). Bottoms and O'Neil (2001) aptly describe the principal as a school's "Chief Learning Officer".

Hopkins-Thompson (2000) noted that task of leading schools has become increasingly more complex over the last decade and that trend will certainly continue as the millennium progresses. With this in mind, mentoring new principals requires an understanding of past and current practices in the principalship as well as anticipating future trends. Schools continue to evolve and change. Learning theory, for both adults and youth, continues to be researched and refined. Mandates and initiatives such as No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law Number 107-110) continue to force school principals to be more and more accountable. One of the provisions of NCLB requires schools to demonstrate increases in student achievement across the content areas of reading, mathematics and science. The annual school improvement goals are better known as Annual Yearly Progress or AYP. Schools that do not achieve Annual Yearly Progress goals have the option of replacing the principal as their restructuring strategy. This NCLB defined intervention places yet another burden on school leaders. It would be difficult for a new principal of an underachieving school to lead instructional efforts designed achieve AYP goals when he or she has no knowledge of the history, culture and values of a school. Developing a comprehensive curriculum, training teachers to use effective instructional strategies, and changing the attitudes of staff members, students, and the community require much time and experience. Given the complexity of the principalship (e.g., negotiating with unions, complying with state mandates, budgetary issues, teacher quality, parents, and school boards), research-based

practices supplemented with support from experienced practitioners would be beneficial to the preparation of new principals. Organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals and Montana Association of Secondary School Principals have acted on recommendations in the research literature by advocating for mentoring programs designed to recruit and support new principals.

Mentoring for Principals across Career Phases

Research suggests that mentoring is an effective tool for supporting principals at different developmental stages of their administrative careers (e.g., Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Chapman, 2005). These stages can be defined as preservice where aspiring principals are engaged in internship experiences during university preparation, induction or first year experiences as a practicing principal and the inservice stage that characterizes experienced principals. The Southern Regional Education Board (2007) has recommended a comprehensive mentoring program to support the internship activities of preservice principals. Their research suggests that principal preparation programs should provide a formal mentoring program that uses experienced mentors to support the challenging experiences encountered by interns. The overarching goal of programs like those recommended by Gray et al. (2007) is to raise student achievement by enhancing leadership preparation through school-based, clinical experiences. The success of these support programs for future principals is dependent on good mentors. Quality mentors are those experienced principals who can provide day-to-day feedback and coaching that will

help interns transition from the role of classroom teacher (or other roles) to that of school leader.

Mentoring also is critical to the success of new principals during their induction phase or first year of practice as a building administrator. As new principals enter the profession, the development of effective mentoring programs provides an invaluable opportunity to socialize novices into the changing landscape of the field (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). According to Mohn & Machell (2005), mentoring for first year principals is especially helpful in the acquisition of practical competencies related to leadership practice. They suggest that the leadership practices that require the most support are those related to school improvement initiatives. The emphasis on school improvement initiatives focused around student achievement is not surprising given the importance of the accountability demands required of the No Child Left Behind Legislation (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law Number 107-110).

Crow and Matthews (1998) found that mentoring was considered to be highly valued by inservice or veteran principals who have years of practical experience as a building administrator. Experienced principals rely on informal peer learning networks where mentoring support is more collaborative (Chapman, 2005). Informal learning networks provided opportunities for principals to help each other grow professionally through a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas. The professional communities of practice that are formed by the establishment of informal learning networks promote self-actualization through a lifelong approach to professional development.

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The Benefits of Mentoring for New Principals during Induction

It is estimated that in the next six years 40% of the country's principals will be eligible to retire (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). This statistic suggests that schools must begin now to train and prepare future leaders. With the position requiring more and more each day, it is difficult to find effective people to fill these positions. One solution to address this shortage would be for school districts to develop programs that focus on recruiting and training educators to become effective leaders (New Teacher Center's [NTC] New Administrators Program, 2008). However, creating and implementing effective mentoring programs can be a formidable task (Malone, 2002). Matching mentors with mentees, scheduling meetings, and ensuring that the program supplies productive learning experience for both participants are examples of the challenges that schools and principal preparation programs face when designing principal mentoring programs. Despite the difficulties inherent in establishing principal mentoring programs, effective examples of these support networks exist.

For example, Howley, Chadwick, and Howley (2002) examined a regional program created to support new principals in Southeast Ohio. During this mentoring program, principals were asked to complete a portfolio based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) for School Leaders. Examination and assessment of these portfolios revealed that 69.6 % of the participants ranked mentors as the most crucial component of the program. Dukes (2001) interviewed mentors, mentees, and program supervisors in a new principal mentoring program in six New York City community school districts. Program participants indicated that having someone to talk

with and consult for advice was very beneficial to their success. Experienced school leaders indicated that they benefited from the program because it increased their knowledge about teaching and learning.

Research related to effective school leadership practices concludes that mentoring can be a huge benefit to new principals (e.g. Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). Unfortunately, research focused on mentoring programs has also found that fewer than half of district superintendents surveyed by the Educational Research Service indicated they had formal principal mentoring programs (ERS, 1998). However, in recent years more mentoring programs have been established by school districts to attract and support new principals in the current era of school administrator shortages (Malone, 2002). Although new professionals entering the principalship have innate leadership abilities, they often lack the experience necessary to immediately and effectively perform the complex tasks required of building administrators. According to Bloom & Krovetz (2001), in the past a lead building principal may have benefited from five or six years experiences as an assistant principal. However, due to the shortage of school administrators caused by retirements, new lead principals may not be afforded several years of assistant principal experience to help them with their added responsibilities. Operating as a good manager used to be sufficient to lead a school. However, with emerging position responsibilities that go far beyond the anachronistic management model, including comprehensive knowledge of academic content, collecting, analyzing and using data, knowledge of pedagogical techniques, working with different civic and community groups, parents and students, and working with teachers to strengthen skills, it is perhaps easier to see why

experience is important to good leadership. Mentoring may be an effective tool when lack of experience is a factor in school leadership.

Other research conducted by Bloom (1999) also found that principals' perceptions of their first year as a practicing administrator as isolating, physically and mentally draining and filled with overwhelming responsibilities. Feelings of isolation were identified as the most salient source of emotional distress. His findings indicated that principals would have welcomed mentoring support to help them cope with the stress they experienced. However, Bloom found that when these principals were paired with an experienced mentor, they received honest feedback that helped them to better cope with feelings of isolation, self-evaluate through reflection, and devise solutions to problems on a daily basis. The experiences of these principals suggest that some form of mentoring is beneficial to the development and effectiveness of new building administrators. His comments signify that the effectiveness of mentoring is highly dependent on the quality of relationship between mentor and mentee.

Elements of Effective Principal Mentoring Programs

Principal mentoring programs are established to match a successful principal with a person just entering administration or one who is considering the administrative field, or a current principal who needs to increase leadership skills. Potential mentors are recruited within a district or from a nearby district. This assists the relationship through proximity. Nominations for mentors may be sought formally or informally through a recruitment system. Appropriately matching mentors with mentees is the most important

factor in an effective program. Matching may be done formally or informally through the use of a variety of tools such as interviews, personal profiles, or evaluations.

There is no set format for mentoring programs. There may be different needs for each mentoring effort, thus all programs will not be identical. However, there are some key traits shared by exemplar mentoring programs. Daresh (2001) suggests that premier mentoring programs require an investment of time by both the mentee and mentor, mentor interactions that support effective mentee practice and goals that promote professional development for both mentor and mentee. Hopkins-Thompson (2000) also identified the importance of establishing clearly defined program goals and fostering communication skills that allow mentors to provide mentees with supportive feedback. In addition, she recommended that effective mentoring programs secure support from the organization where mentees are employed, devise a selection process that matches mentors and mentees, and train program participants to engage in collaborative exchanges that promote introspection about their leadership skills and behaviors. Research conducted by Fink & Resnick (2001) identified attributes similar to those of Daresh and Hopkins-Thompson when studying successful mentoring programs for school administrators. Gray, Fry, Bottoms, O'Neill (2007) have recommended a research-based framework for designing and implementing principal mentoring programs. Their research found that support programs recruit high performing professionals to serve as mentors, include real-world training experiences, emphasize leadership skills that can direct instruction and curriculum planning necessary for improved student achievement.

Models for Mentoring Principals during Induction Years

Throughout the nation there is growing support to provide mentoring for future principals. A number of states such as Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania are providing some form of coaching and training to support new principals (Archer, 2006). These states are implementing formal mentoring programs that provide solid support by training mentors to effectively interact with mentees by requiring a minimum number of mentor-mentee contact hours and by specifying training goals.

The Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA) applied research based on teacher induction programs to its First-Time Administrators Academy mentoring program (Villani, 2005). The success of the TESPAs program is based on requiring that mentors have at least five years of experience, mentors and mentees receive formal training so they understand program expectations, mentors meet in person with mentees at least once a month, and mentors and mentee cohorts meet three times a year for standards-based professional training. The Association of Washington School Principals has become a leader in helping and assisting school leaders. Formed in 1972, the mission of the Association is to support principals. Principals enrolled in *Assessing and Developing the 21st Century Principal* are provided mentorship, feedback, and support at no cost. The year long program consists of two days of assessment and follow-up mentoring for administrators in their first three years of service.

Ohio, like Texas, has initiated a mentoring program developed by the state's secondary school administrators group to aid in the development and support of new

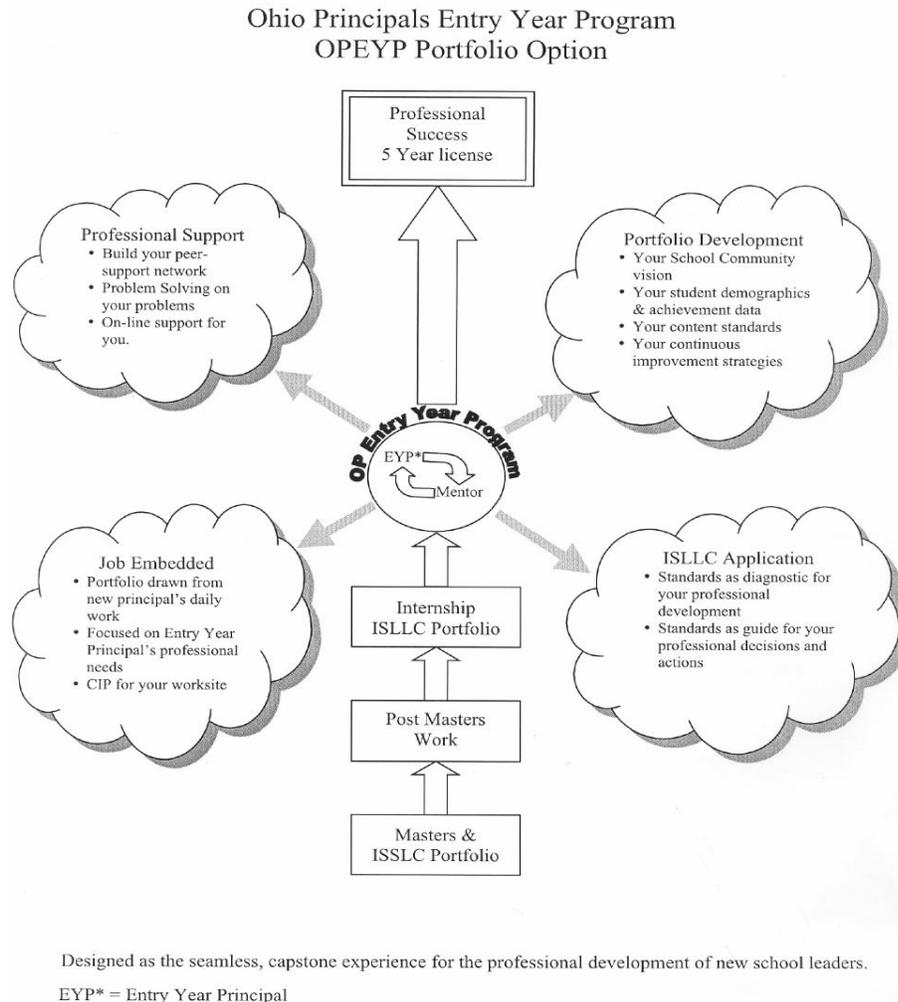
secondary principals and assistant principals. The Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA) in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education developed the Ohio Principals Entry Year Program (OPEYP) mentoring program also referred to as the Entry Year Program (EYP) (Ohio Department of Education, 2008). The EYP principal mentoring program is based on the leadership skill standards written by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The incorporation of the six ISLLC standards ensures aspiring principals gain experience across all important leadership skill areas, while the portfolio component of the program facilitates performance-based activities and assessment. The ISLLC standards present effective traits of the twenty-first century principal. The elements of the Entry Principals' Portfolio are presented in Table 1. To facilitate participation in the program, each new principal or assistant principal is issued a two-year provisional license. If the provisional candidate wants to receive the required five-year license, they must complete the EYP. The goals of EYP are to promote self-assessment, encourage professional reflection and focus on individual needs, improve instructional leadership skills, and develop and enhance individual leadership and management skills.

Table 1: Components of Entry Principals' Portfolio

Element	Activities
Pre-Assessment	The Entry Year Principals' Portfolio will utilize the ISLLC School Leadership Self-Inventory. The Interstate School Leaders Licensing Consortium in partnership developed this inventory with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. With the help of their mentors, participants use the results from their inventory to develop a personal learning plan.
Mentoring Support	A trained mentor is assigned to each participant. Ongoing communication between the principal and mentor is maintained through meetings, school visits and online contacts.
ISLLC Standards Based	The portfolio construct arose from the need to develop a performance-based assessment for school leaders based on the ISLLC leadership standards. The alignment between the standards and the portfolio is clear and concise.
Content	<p>The content of the Entry Year Principals' Portfolio is driven by a series of reflective questions. The questions are closely aligned to ISLLC Standards 1 and 2.</p> <p>Standard 1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.</p> <p>Standard 2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.</p>
Instructional Leadership	The program is focused on instructional leadership. The reflective questions in the portfolio allow principals to confront important issues related to teaching and learning.
Academic Content Standards	The Entry Year Principals' Portfolio program has devoted a significant part of the mentor training to the importance of Ohio's Academic Content Standards. The training includes activities based on the Academic Content Standards that a mentor can use with the Entry Year Principal within the context of standards-based education.
Impact on Student Achievement	<p>The Entry Year Portfolio program reinforces that principals impact student achievement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a professional learning community; • Taking strategic action with teachers and parents on issues of teaching and learning; and • Implementing a continuous improvement plan based on the buildings needs assessment.
Post-Assessment	Trained evaluators will score portfolios. A substandard rating will extend the portfolio coaching until competency is demonstrated. Results from the Entry Year Principal's personal learning plan and continuous improvement plan will also be submitted as documentation.

The key component of the EYP is the mentoring component. This model clearly describes the essential elements of developing a strong leader. An effective mentoring program will not create an effective leader in a single year.

Figure 1: Ohio's OPEYP Portfolio Professional Training Model



Ohio Department of Education (2008)

An effective program takes time so that a leader can experience many situations and have the support of a mentor for guidance. The Ohio model is a five-year plan that

provides future leaders the opportunity to develop the necessary skills and provides the support they need in order to be successful.

The portfolio segment of the program is designed to document professional growth and development. Each portfolio is submitted for performance-based assessment in the second year of the program. Pre and post-assessments are key components of the portfolio requirement in EYP. The pre-assessment allows the mentor and mentee to develop a personal learning plan. The post-assessment is designed to address the issue of competency. If a substandard rating is obtained, the program is extended until competency is achieved. One of the main benefits of the EYP is that it provides an authentic apprentice experiences for educators desiring to transition into a permanent position as a building principal.

New York City Schools have implemented a mentoring program that is similar to those programs designed for first year principals in Ohio and Texas (Dukes, 2001). Their program however, is set apart from other programs because it uses retired rather than practicing principals to mentor new principals. The ratio of retired principal-mentors to new principal mentees is approximately 6 to 1. For the first six months of the experience, the mentor spends a half day each week with his or her mentee, offering advice, encouragement and support. Further mentoring support is provided through telephone and email communications. In addition, the program director meets with mentors six times a year for training. As new principals develop and solidify their leadership skills, communications with mentors decrease even though mentors are still available to discuss issues related to administrative decisions when needed.

Some mentoring programs, such as The Principal Residency Network, Aspiring Principals Academy and Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program seek to recruit, train and mentor experienced teachers who want to become principals (NAESP and the Education Alliance at Brown University (2003). Such programs require application for admission and usually seek "in-house" educators for training. Recruiting "in-house" educators is somewhat of a different approach to mentoring successful job applicants. Pairing new and veteran educators for mentoring is the one mentoring component that these three programs have in common.

Montana, like other states, has undertaken efforts to formalize a leadership-mentoring program for school principals. State efforts are based on the program designed by the Principals' Advisory Leadership Services (PALS) Corps. The goals of the program are to provide on-site service to building administrators and to assist building administrators with professional training on topics of key interest. The service, training and personal contact will provide new or newly appointed principals with the necessary support to develop into effective instructional leaders.

Principal Advisory Leadership Service (PALS) is designed to provide support system for new principals by pairing new principals with experienced principals. Dr. Jo Swain, Montana PALS Mentor and assistant professor at Rocky Mountain College, Billings, MT provided a detailed description of the current state of the PALS mentoring program for the state of Montana. In addition to her role as PALS coordinator for Montana, Dr. Swain has been trained and certified as a school leadership mentor and currently provides training to experienced principals interested in becoming

administrative mentors. Dr. Swain stated that, “her experience with the program, while positive, has been slow going” (J. Swain, personal communication, August, 15, 2007). She attributed slow growth of the PALS program to “turf issues”, reluctance to change, and defining the roles of PALS, the colleges and universities and the School Administrators of Montana (SAM). While the numbers of new principals participating in the PALS mentoring program is small, Dr. Swain believes that the numbers will increase as the result of mentors receiving some payment for their services. Overall, it is her belief that mentoring will become a key component of training school administrators in Montana. Principal Advisory Leadership Service (PALS) is designed to provide a support system for new principals by pairing new principals with experienced principals. According to Darrell Rud, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM), approximately 30 administrators have received mentor training since the inception of the PALS program in 2003. During 2006, 2007 and 2008, there has been a range of 2 to 4 mentor/mentee pairs. Additionally, it appears that the program is undergoing some revision, due to the unavailability of mentor trainers (D. Rud, personal communication, April 6, 2008).

Research Supporting Principal Mentoring Programs

Brown, Anfara, Hartman, Mahar, & Mills (2002) surveyed 98 principals and interviewed 44 of them to investigate the learning processes of new administrators. Their research found that many new principals learn their jobs through on-the-job training. Survey participants indicated that sharing experiences with colleagues was a preferred

activity when asked what would have been of most benefit to their adjustment to the job.

Dukes (2001) interviewed mentors, mentees, and program supervisors in a new principal mentoring program in six New York City community school districts. The participants in the program indicated that having someone to talk with and consult for advice as being very beneficial to their success. Experienced school leaders indicated that they benefited from the program because it increased their knowledge about teaching and learning.

The New Teacher Center's (NTC) New Administrators Program is premier mentoring program established by the New York City school system in collaboration with the University of California-Santa Cruz to recruit and support new principals (New Teacher Center's New Administrators Program, 2008). The New Teacher Center at the University of California-Santa Cruz is a national resource focused on teacher and administrator induction. The NTC's administrators mentoring program is based on the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP), which was established in 1988, as a formal, mentor-based teacher induction model. In working with new teachers and now new principals, the NTC induction programs help novices not only to survive their early years, but to emerge as confident, skilled professionals. The NTC's induction model is unique because it helps novice educators to focus on learning effective educational leadership practices that are based on national standards with the guidance of highly trained and supported mentors. The NTC's School Leadership Development Division focuses upon the development of effective instructional leadership for schools across America not just in California. The NTC's Leadership Division provides coaching support to new and

veteran administrators, trains and supports leadership coaches, and trains and supports site and central office administrators in instructional leadership skills. An important focus of the NTC's training and mentoring programs for new administrators includes the application of professional standards to leadership practice, and to the school leader's role in supporting effective teaching.

The NTC New Administrators induction program uses the following strategies as the foundation for its program:

1. Mentors in the program must have substantial successful site administrative experience, plus excellent mentoring skills. Because they must be available to new administrators, mentors can't be employed full time, in any capacity.
2. Mentors and mentees are required to meet early and frequently. Early meetings are for goal setting and defining areas of focus. Follow up meetings occur every two weeks for the purpose of individualized mentoring sessions. Interim periods are covered by phone conversations and email. The program is very thorough. It encompasses pre and post teacher observations, facilitating staff meetings, working with parents, managing budgets, mentoring through authentic situations and any other areas related to school administration (NTC, 2008).

NTC became interested in the employment complexities for new administrators through its work with mentoring new teachers. While working with helping new teachers, NTC learned that this is only part of the equation. If an effective principal is not leading the school, the long-term teacher support does not occur. After all, a struggling principal has personal work problems to worry about and is not in a position to help struggling teachers. Accordingly, the New Administrator Program was started. From its efforts working with new administrators, NTC learned some important lessons.

Research conducted by the NTC program found that first and foremost, participants in this administrators program confirmed the need for mentoring and the benefits of the program model. The administrators interviewed indicated that mentoring support was especially beneficial when coping with feelings of isolation that are often associated with the principalship. NTC also discovered that new principals are not fully prepared to assume their duties without significant support. It appears that new principals in the program struggled with basic issues such as time management, budget management and staff supervision, working with the community, personnel decisions, facility planning and operations, staff development, hiring and firing and curriculum development. While these do not represent the sum total of principal responsibilities, they are indicative of the many roles that fall within the purview of school leaders. Not having a grasp of these issues would make affecting change a difficult process. NTC researchers also observed that many new administrators needed support with technology. None of the participants knew how to use spreadsheets for budget management. Most used email on a limited basis and most made limited use of technology when analyzing student achievement data.

Finally, the researchers observed that becoming an effective principal was a developing process and that effective mentoring relationships are highly individual. New principals go through phases of development much like new teachers: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection (Moir, 2005). NTC researchers also noted that the amount of support required by new administrators varied. Overall, researchers concluded that new administrators and their schools benefited from the kind of intensive support offered by NTC's mentoring and training program. The cost of such

a program is insignificant when compared to the real cost of failed leadership to school districts, staff members, and students.

Research by Bottoms & O'Neill (2001) indicates that induction mentoring programs must include experiences that help aspiring principals to become successful leaders. They suggest that mentoring and other forms of principal induction programs focus on the following traits associated with successful educational leaders:

1. Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible
2. Set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
3. Recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement
4. Create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
5. Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
6. Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
7. Make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
8. Understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
9. Understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.
10. Use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
11. Acquire and use resources wisely.
12. Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.
13. Continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001, pp. 8-17).

The leadership attributes associated with effective educational leaders identified by Bottoms & O'Neill do not emerge naturally. New principals must learn the multiple

facets of each of these skills during their induction in order to experience continued success. They need to be enrolled in an effective skills acquisition program and then have the opportunity to practice. While practicing these skills, it is necessary to have a person they can turn to for advice and guidance. A mentoring program provides the principal with the necessary support.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Principal Mentoring Programs

Portfolios have been suggested as one method for using the ISLLC standards as a framework for assessing the leadership skills of school administrators (e.g., Stader & Neeley, 2001). For example, the Missouri Professors of Education Administration (2008) have developed a comprehensive assessment system based on the ISLLC standards that the state of Missouri uses to certify principals at the time of initial and renewal licensure. Their assessment system uses portfolios for principals seeking certification and those already practicing to house evidence that they have demonstrated competencies in administrative skill areas represented by the ISLLC standards. The scoring rubrics are developmental in nature in the sense that the performance criteria are defined differently for new and experienced principals. The criteria reflect that experienced principals should have greater knowledge and demonstrate higher skill levels than inexperienced principals.

Stout (2001) developed the School Administration and Leadership Skills Inventory (SALSS) to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceived preparation of administrative interns and in the mentoring activities of mentor

(supervising) administrators. The SALSS was derived from the skills and standards for the preparation of administrators in the book, *Skills for Successful 21st Century Leaders* by Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998). The skills assessed by the SALSS are aligned with the standards and skills set by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Education (NCATE). Stout's SALSS used 34 items representing ten leadership skill domains to assess the six ISLCC standard competencies. The results found that interns mentored in both university and Office of Public Instruction training programs perceived themselves as competent or very competent across the leadership domains represented by the ISLLC standards at the end of their internship experience.

The most recent initiative to evaluate school leadership competencies based on the ISLLC standards has been undertaken by Vanderbilt University with support from the Wallace Foundation (Olsen, 2008). The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) consists of 72 multiple choice items that comprise six core component subscales and six process subscales aligned with the six ISLLC standards. The six component subscales assess standards for student learning, curriculum content, pedagogy, culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to the external community, and performance accountability. The process subscales assess planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring. Each individual rates the principal's performance on 72 behaviors, from 1 for "ineffective," to 5 for

"outstandingly effective," after first being asked to consider the sources of evidence on which the rating is based, such as personal observations or school documents. A typical item might ask, for example, "How effective is the principal at ensuring that the school evaluates the rigor of the curriculum?" The VAL-ED assessment is designed to offer a 360° assessment where the principal, the principal's supervisor and all teachers in the school complete the assessment so that feedback can be supplied across the skill areas assessed. The Val-ED assessment is currently being field-tested nationally in over 300 schools.

Attributes that Define Quality Mentors and Mentees

Mentoring is an intense relationship in which a senior person oversees the career development and psychosocial development of a less-experienced person (Douglas, 1997). Mentors impart wisdom about the norms, values, and mores specific to the organization (Craig, 1996). They provide support, advocacy, feedback, and information the mentee would otherwise not have. Mentors should have experience as practicing school administrators and be generally regarded by their peers and others as effective (Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003). The following list outlines desirable traits that should be considered when choosing mentors to participate in a support role for new principals: Mentors should have experience as practicing school administrators, and their peers and others generally regard them as being effective. Some of the positive leadership qualities that mentors must demonstrate to be effective include: intelligence, good oral and written communication skills, understanding that there are multiple alternative

solutions to complex problems, understanding and using organizational history as a guide, and clarity of vision and the ability to share that vision with others in the organization and using organizational history as a guide for leadership practice (Bloom, 2003). According to the handbook of principal mentoring authored by Daresh (2001), mentors must be able to ask the right questions, accept alternative methods for leadership practice, be comfortable with mentee growth that exceeds their own skills, model continuous learning and reflection, and must be able to advise and support leadership practice within the social and political realities of a school.

These lists of mentor qualities are not comprehensive but do highlight the characteristics that are most important for school districts and principal preparation programs to consider when seeking mentors for new educational leaders. Although, these mentor characteristics are critical for providing quality support, Daresh (2001) warns that a mentor-mentee relationship will not successfully help all new principals succeed. Mentee qualities are important because mentoring relationships involve having two people work together in a mutually beneficial relationship. That means that the mentee, like the mentor, must be someone who is willing, honest and has a desire to improve as a school leader, in order for the mentoring process to be successful. Hopkins-Thompson (2000) suggests that the mentee should be motivated to the task and possess a commitment to personal and professional growth and development. Additional qualities might include openness to self-analysis and reflection, competence, courage and a belief that excellent schools have excellent leaders.

Knowing the qualities that make for good mentors and mentees is important to program effectiveness; however, eventually both mentor and mentee must be paired for the process to move forward. This pairing is commonly referred to as “matching.” Matching is important, because it takes into account the needs of the mentee and the strengths of the mentor. If needs and expertise do not match well, there is a good chance that the mentoring experience will be less than expected. For example, the mentee must be willing to receive assistance, while the mentor must be willing and open to helping the mentee develop into an effective leader. Matching helps to foster a relationship based on trust and openness, rather than power, superiority or inferiority. It creates an environment that enables risk, failure and success to take place, without either party feeling like failures.

Criteria for Matching Mentors with Mentees

The criteria for matching mentor and mentee are diverse. Daresh (2001) indicates that matching might include learning styles, leadership styles and common educational and leadership philosophies. Similar learning styles can facilitate effective sharing between partners in mentoring teams. Concrete and sequential learners might make better partners than concrete and abstract learners. Common personality assessments or checklists could be used to efficiently match mentors and mentees with similar personality and leadership styles. Daresh does not believe that similarity in leadership styles is a must for a successful mentor-mentee relationship. He has even suggested that different leadership styles may compliment one another and serves to strengthen the

mentor-mentee relationship. Lastly, mentors' and mentees' understanding of each others' personal values and beliefs about life and educational issues are foundational to forming effective mentoring relationships. This understanding is critical to the mentoring processes such as providing formative feedback and engaging in reflective dialog. When matches are formed, some formal training must occur. Training, like many aspects of instruction and learning, is usually dictated by the needs of the mentee and the requirements of the school district.

Training in a Mentor Program

Training for mentors and mentees should be based on program needs and skills. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has developed an excellent model for this purpose. Mentors are trained in observation, evaluation instruments, listening and feedback skills, communication, as well as the norms, values and expectations of the program. Training for mentees is centered on needs-analysis, self-development and reflection. A handbook for planning, training and evaluation of formal mentoring programs has been published by Daresh (2001) and is well-suited for guiding organizations interested in creating effective mentoring programs specifically designed for training educational leaders.

Potential Problems with Mentoring

No matter how beneficial an idea or process is, the possibility of problems developing must be discussed. Mentoring has its potential set of problems. Daresh's

(2001) handbook discusses eight potential problems and solutions commonly encountered in mentoring programs. These concerns and solutions should not dissuade a district from establishing a formal mentoring program, if interested. They serve as guide during the discussion and planning phase of establishing a mentoring program. They also give insight to the qualities needed by mentor and mentees. However, Daresh (2001) and others (e.g., Harris & Crocker, 2003) report that participants in mentoring programs can face problems despite the benefits that these training experiences offer for both experienced and novice administrators. One potential problem identified by Daresh is that the relationships that form between mentors and mentees may be detrimental rather than supportive. For example, mentors may become overprotective and controlling in their relationships with mentees. Mentors may place mentees at a disadvantage by encouraging them to engage in administrative experiences that are safe and controlled leaving them unprepared for “real-world” practice. This difficulty suggests that prior to participating in the mentoring experience that both the mentor and the mentee determine the precise level of support that is needed during the term of the relationship. In addition, mentors must understand novice administrators’ leadership skill-level so that appropriate and accurate feedback can be given regarding strategies for future practice can be shared. Another issue that may arise during mentoring is that the mentors may become too demanding of their mentees. Mentors may have performance expectations are unrealistically high. Open communication about mentor-mentee expectations prior to the beginning of the mentoring experience along with the development of a formal plan to guide the relationship, is essential to avoid future misunderstandings.

Good educational leaders are not always effective mentors. This situation may occur when experienced principals perceive that participation in formal mentoring programs is a reward for effective practice. The incentive for administrators may be that the mentee(s) assigned to their building are viewed as helpers who can alleviate their workloads rather than apprentices who require ongoing support and guidance. Mentoring is hard work and implies a commitment to a special type of teaching that goes beyond simply reacting to others' questions. Another dilemma mentoring programs face is that mentees might develop a limited perspective on problem-solving and other leadership practices by relying too much on a single mentor. One approach for avoiding this complication is to encourage mentees to find multiple mentors. The narrowing of a mentee's experiences can also be prevented by establishing teams of mentors that mentees can be matched with based on the different skill sets of administrators that comprise the total mentor team. Lastly, mentors and mentees often form very close relationships that will end eventually with both parties feeling a sense of pain. These feelings of abandonment that can occur when a mentoring relationship is terminated can be averted by foster conversations between mentors and mentees that discuss the formation of long-term friendships where their professional relationship becomes more equal and collegial. Mentors and mentees become equals quickly, and with that development, partnerships that are based on parity might last for entire careers. The mentoring handbook published by Daresh offers detailed recommendations for solving these problems and others that can occur among participants enrolled in formal principal mentoring programs.

Summary

This literature review has described the current research and information pertaining to effective mentoring programs for leaders in the educational field. The literature makes a strong case for the benefits of mentoring. From the days of Ulysses to today, mentoring is used to impart knowledge and support to aid in skill development in all walks of life. Due to the complexity and sophistication of schools today, mentoring is very important. No longer can school leaders be thought of as managers. Today's leaders must be instructional leaders, which, at times, involves being change agents, knowing how to analyze and use data for decision making, knowing the culture of the district, being good at community relations and being able to work with teachers and unions.

Performing the duties of a principal may seem on the surface like a relatively straightforward task. However the complexities associated with the principalship suggest otherwise. Traditional college and university leadership programs provide a good foundation from which school leaders can work, but they can't account for all cultures, local traditions or every effective change process. An experienced and successful mentor could provide the guidance and support needed to strengthen successful coursework. Mentoring provides an avenue for continual professional development and reflection that is regular and specific to the needs of the mentee.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to describe perceptions current principals and assistant principals in Montana's AA, A and B high schools hold in regard to their mentoring experiences. A secondary purpose was to identify strategies that principals and assistant principals employed to obtain support in the absence of mentoring.

This study was designed to offer specific research-based information that can be used to guide Montana school districts in their efforts to provide effective mentoring experiences for newly hired secondary principals. This chapter describes the purpose, participants, design, and instruments used to obtain the data, as well as the qualitative methods, statistical methods and verification techniques employed in the study. The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. What leadership domains did principals and assistant principals identify as skill areas where mentoring would have been beneficial during their novice years as school administrators?
2. What support strategies did principals and assistant principals use to assist them with their leadership responsibilities during their novice administrative experiences?

3. What types of support did principals and assistant principals identify as beneficial in the absence of mentoring during their novice years as school leaders?

Rationale for Mixed Methods Approach

Identifying the types of mentoring experiences that Montana's secondary principals experienced during their novice years as school leaders and to describe these experiences in rich detail provided evidence of the types of mentoring support principals actually experienced and how well these experiences were aligned with leadership skills established in the ISLLC standards. Thicker and richer information describing principals' mentoring experiences and support strategies was obtained by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A mixed methods study approach was used to study the above-stated questions. "The purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone" (Gay et al., 2006, p. 490). The blending of these methods provided two separate, but intersecting, perspectives of the information. "Quantitative researchers are concerned with objective reality that is 'out there' to be discovered; qualitative researchers focus on interpreting their participants' perspectives" (Gay et al., 2006, p. 489). Qualitative research provided the researcher with a deeper, richer understanding of the topic or participants being studied than does quantitative research

alone (Creswell, 2004). As this study has two distinct phases, each part is described separately.

Population

The population surveyed for this study consisted of 12 AA principals, 25 A principals, 46 B principals, 48 AA assistant principals and 50 A assistant principals. Class C schools in Montana are lead by Superintendents who perform the role of both principal and superintendent. For this reason, no class C principals were included in this study. There were no assistant principals in Class C schools since there is only one administrator in the district. A total of 181 principals and assistant principals across class AA, A, and B schools represent the population for this study. All 181 principals were sent the web-based version of the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey (SALSS) to complete. Table 2 shows the actual number of principals and assistant principals at the AA, A, and B level currently employed in Montana.

Table 2: Population of Principals and Assistant Principals by School Size

	School Size		
	AA	A	B
Principals	12	25	46
Assistant Principals	48	50	0
Totals	60	75	46

Quantitative Phase

Participants

One hundred and twenty-one principals returned completed surveys indicating a 67% return rate based on a total population of 181 Montana secondary school administrators in Class AA, A, and B schools. Based on this return rate, the 95% confidence interval is \pm -5.1 percent indicating that if the survey were to be conducted 100 more times, 95 out of the 100 administrations would yield results within \pm 5.1 percent of the current results reported for this sample of principals.

Design

This descriptive study used a questionnaire design to collect Montana Secondary school principals' perceptions of their mentoring support as it related to specific leadership skill areas recommended by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Questionnaires are useful in providing data from larger groups and take less time than other methods of data collection, such as interviews (Gay et al., 2006). Additionally, questionnaires can provide valuable and necessary information to institutions so that changes can be made based on evidence-based data.

Instrument

The School Administration and Leadership Skills Inventory (SALSS) (Stout, 2001) was used to collect principals' perceptions of their mentoring experiences. This instrument was derived from the skills and standards for the preparation of administrators

in the book, *Skills for Successful 21st Century Leaders* by Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998). The standards and skills used by the authors are the same standards and skills previously set by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Education (NCATE). These standards and skills are leadership, communication and community relations, staff development, instructional management, curriculum planning and development, educational research, evaluation and planning, policy and governance, values and ethics of leadership and organizational management. Stout used the skills survey (second instrument) to research the perceptions of mentors and mentees participating in the Office of Public Instruction intern program for the State of Montana.

Evidence for face and content validity were established by involving eight professors in Educational Administration from Montana State University (MSU) and the University of Montana (UM) (both have educational administration programs) to assist in the development of the administrative skills survey to be used in this research. These were faculty members who had many years of experience in educating and working with school administrators and who were able to help in the selection of the most important and the most representative skills in which practicing administrators must be competent. All Educational Leadership faculty involved in this validation process were asked to examine the listed skills identified by Hoyle, English & Steffy (1998) and select the three most important skills in each of the administrative skills categories that they felt needed

to be part of an internship in school administration. Their instructions were to select the three most important skills from those listed in each category.

Six professors completed this task. Anonymity of the respondents was assured by having no means of identifying the respondents other than the postmark. The specific skills that each professor chose were tabulated in each category. The 3 to 5 skills chosen most often in each administrative skills category were used to construct the final version of the SALSS. The number of skills selected for each leadership domain varied from 3 to 5 across the 6 ISLLC standard leadership competency areas. A copy of the SALSS can be found in Appendix B. The validity of the SALSS is further supported by Stout's expertise, the previously mentioned national organizations, and education administration professors at MSU and UM who chose 3 to 5 competencies in each of the 10 administrative categories. Results from Stout's development efforts of the SALSS found a high level of agreement among administrative interns and active administrators related to the skill competencies acquired during their internship experiences. The alignment between the leadership skill domains and each of the ISLLC standards is presented in Appendix C.

Since Stout's research is relevant to this study, it was decided to use the SALSS to obtain AA, A, and B principals, as well as AA, A, and B assistant principals' perceptions of their mentoring experiences in Montana. The same identical questions were used by the SALSS to assess the leadership skills specified by the ISLLC standards. However, item scale for the SALSS was modified to more precisely gather perceptions

required for answering this study's research questions. Principal responses were elicited using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from:

“1= No experience, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial”,

“2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”,

“3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”,

“4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”,

“5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

According to Suskie (1996) the advantage of using a rating scale to such as the one developed for the SALSS is that this format is generally familiar to most people and permits comparisons among respondents. “A rating scale is more useful when a behavior, attitude, or other phenomenon of interest is to be evaluated on a continuum of, say, ‘inadequate’ to ‘excellent,’ ‘never’ to ‘always’, or ‘strongly disapprove’ to ‘strongly approve’” (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 185).

In addition to principals rating the frequency of their mentoring experiences, they also were asked to supply information regarding their gender, years of experience as a principal, years of experience as a teacher, current administrative position and position prior to obtaining an administrative position. Results from the reliability analysis for the 34 item scale yielded a Coefficient Alpha of .95 indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability according to the criteria proposed by Anastasi & Urbina (1997).

Procedures

Data Collection and Analysis

Principal responses to the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey (SALSS) were collected using the web-based Survey Monkey software program. Survey Monkey is an internet-delivered survey that allows researchers to design electronic versions of the paper and pencil surveys such as the SALSS and deliver them to respondents via email. A list of email addresses for all of Montana secondary school principals who were included in the study was compiled from the School Administrators of Montana (SAM) database. Once the emails of all potential respondents were compiled, each school administrator included in the study was sent an introductory email message inviting them to participate in this study. Included in that email was a hyperlink that when clicked on took the participant directly to the SALSS instrument where he or she could provide responses to all 34 administrative skill items.

The integrity of the data and the confidentiality of respondents was protected. Ethical considerations were included in the design and implementation of the study. These considerations include a concern for the respondent's privacy, feelings, personal beliefs and employment. Participants were required to read a statement outlining the purpose of this research and a statement of implied consent to participant prior to completing the SALSS questionnaire. Procedures to ensure ethical procedures and confidentiality are explained clearly in the Institutional Review Board document and approval for this research is located in Appendix C. Descriptive statistics in the form of percentages were used to report principals' perceptions of their mentoring experience for

each of the 34 SALSS items. In addition, principals' perceptions of mentoring experiences for all 34 items are also reported by each of the 10 leadership skill areas represented in the ISLLC standards.

Qualitative Phase

Participants

Upon participant completion and return of the questionnaires, a qualitative approach was utilized to obtain richer, thicker information concerning the mentoring experiences of current principals and assistant principals. A purposeful sample of five secondary principals and assistant principals from Class AA, A, and B schools were interviewed for the qualitative portion. The purposive sample of principals interviewed consisted of one class AA principal, one class AA assistant principal, one class A principal, one class A assistant principal and one class B principal. This sample only represents male principals who practice in Montana. The perceptions of principals were not reported by gender, race, ethnicity, or age therefore the only factor considered when selecting principals for interviews was school size. There is some evidence which suggests that it is important to pair like genders when matching mentors with mentees (Harris & Crocker, 2007); however, there is no empirical evidence to support the claim that male and female principals perceive their mentoring experiences differently when considering the leadership skill areas that are represented in the ISLLC standards. Therefore, the primary consideration in selecting principals for interviews was school size and convenience.

The goal of these interviews was to determine how principals transitioned into administrative roles, the strategies they used in the absence of mentoring, difficulties they encountered during their novice principal experiences and recommendations they would make for mentoring new principals. The use of purposeful sampling for this research effort allowed for a more thorough investigation of principals mentoring experiences for various levels of administrative responsibilities (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Interviews were conducted by phone and recorded for transcription.

Design

The second phase of the study, the qualitative approach, involved a process of inquiry that occurred in context and involved making sense of information brought forth by others (Creswell, 1998). Small samples are appropriate for qualitative research, as purposive samples permit a more in-depth study than do those attained in quantitative research, which aims for numbers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This study was designed to inform school superintendents, school boards and faculty responsible for principal preparation programs about the mentoring experiences and support strategies that principals perceive are key for supporting the leadership responsibilities of novice high school principals. By understanding this experience, this researcher gained insight into factors that help principals become successful in their leadership roles. Purposive sampling procedures involved selecting a sample of six principals and assistant principals who were appropriate for the purpose of this study (Gliner & Morgan, 2006), which was to discover and understand mentoring experiences that support school administrators in their leadership roles.

The author obtained informed consent prior to conducting the interviews and reminded the participants that their responses were confidential and voluntary. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher conducted six telephone interviews and transcribed all the interviews for further analysis.

Interview Procedures

According to Gay et al. (2006), semi-structured, follow-up questions were used to obtain deeper and richer data that helped explain the quantitative results from questionnaires supplied by the secondary school principals and assistant principals regarding their mentoring experiences. Standardization of questions was necessary to ensure that participants were asked the same questions to facilitate the comparison in order to develop themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, follow-up questions in response to principals' responses were posed to clarify their perceptions and obtain more detailed descriptions of their mentoring experiences. The replication of responses gathered from the interview protocol depends on dependability of the researcher. The researcher is the data collection instrument and must avoid potential bias by endeavoring to use the same order in which the questions are asked, the same language and projected demeanor with all participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interview protocol for the secondary principals interviewed is found in Appendix E.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative analysis assists the researcher in developing thick and rich descriptions of the findings. In addition, qualitative data serve to verify and add meaning to the quantitative results. The researcher organized data obtained during the interviews and categorized groups of closely related data into initial codes. Notes containing thoughts and ideas that the researcher had while reading, examining, and reexamining the interview transcripts were used in developing codes. Interpretations and meaning of the data were explored and determined as the information was analyzed. The data were color-coded into categories on the transcript notes and then were integrated into topics that relate to each other. Ultimately, themes emerged (Creswell, 2003). Findings were conveyed in a detailed, thick, and rich narrative with illustrations and descriptions of the participant perspectives. In some cases, quotes were modified slightly to ensure confidentiality as recommended by Gliner & Morgan (2001).

Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Analysis

Triangulation of procedures in the collection and analysis of the data ensured the trustworthiness of data. Procedures that established trustworthiness included maintaining participant confidentiality, taking field notes during the interviews, recording the interviews on audio tape and transcribing these tapes into a written document, and member-checking. In addition, the researcher remained aware of the potential of his own bias throughout the process and used a journal to record thoughts and feelings during the collection and analysis of the data. As noted by Gliner and Morgan (2001), the integrity of qualitative findings can be compromised because data is value laden and often

subjective when obtained during interviews. Participants were informed that confidentiality would be maintained and signed consent forms were obtained. The interviews were captured on audio tape to preserve the accuracy of content and tone of interview responses. Interview field notes were made immediately after the interviews to capture the thoughts and emotions of the interviewer. During the analysis of data, journal notes were kept describing the thoughts and emotions of the researcher and used to determine if any subjective thoughts interfered with or created a source of bias in the interpretation of the interview results. Member-checking was accomplished with the participants four weeks after the interviews were transcribed. They each reviewed the transcripts and identified the themes that they saw in their own words. Allowing interviewed principals to review, independently code, then react to these qualitative findings contributes to the validity of the results by independently substantiating the accuracy of the initial codes provided by the researcher's analysis and identified themes. All principals interviewed responded to the member checking verifying the accuracy of what they each stated in the recorded interviews and identifying the common themes they saw emerging from their responses to the interview questions.

Triangulation also occurred by an independent coding of themes by another researcher. The themes identified by this researcher and the outside researcher resulted in remarkable agreement on the themes that emerged from interviews. In some cases there was disagreement on how the themes were named. However, both researchers engaged in discussions until consensus was reached regarding the best descriptors to represent each of the themes identified.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify the occurrence and deficiencies in mentoring experiences of secondary school principals in Montana. A secondary purpose was to describe in greater detail how principals transitioned into the administrative roles, the strategies they used in the absence of mentoring, difficulties they encountered during their novice principal experiences and recommendations they would make for mentoring new principals. The web-based version of the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey was sent to the entire population of 181 practicing principals and assistant principals located in Montana's AA, A and B schools. Results from principal responses to the SALSS were used to gather principal perceptions of their mentoring experiences during their induction year of administrative practice. A purposeful sample of principals consisting of one class AA principal, one class AA assistant principal, one class A principal, one class A assistant principal and one class B principal were selected for interviews to obtain a description of the strategies used for mentoring and in the absence of mentoring during their induction year. Chapter 4 presents the quantitative and qualitative findings from questionnaires and interviews.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to describe the perceptions of current principals and assistant principals in Montana's AA, A and B high schools regarding their mentoring experiences. Secondly, this study was undertaken to describe in greater detail how principals transitioned into the administrative roles, the strategies they used in the absence of mentoring, difficulties they encountered during their novice principal experiences and recommendations they would make for mentoring new principals. The results of this study will be used to make recommendations for school districts and university principal preparation programs. Examples of recommendations might include local school districts implementing their own induction programs to promote potential in-house leaders and colleges and universities formalizing an induction program with state certification agencies.

This section of Chapter 4 presents the findings concerning principals' perceptions of the occurrence of mentoring support experienced by ISLLC skill area and the importance of those experiences during their novice years as school administrators. The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

1. What leadership domains did principals and assistant principals identify as skill areas where mentoring would have been beneficial during their novice years as school administrators?

2. What support strategies did principals and assistant principals use to assist them with their leadership responsibilities during their novice administrative experiences?
3. What types of support did principals and assistant principals identify as beneficial in the absence of mentoring during their novice years as school leaders?

This chapter presents quantitative and qualitative findings obtained from questionnaires and interviews. The responses to the questions concerning demographic characteristics are presented first followed by the answers to questions concerning program factors and personal factors.

Participants

One hundred and twenty-one principals returned completed surveys indicating a 67% return rate based on a total population of 181 Montana secondary school principals. Based on this return rate, the confidential interval for the 95 percent level of confidence is +/- 5.1%. This confidence interval indicates that at the 95% confidence interval if the same survey were to be conducted 100 more times, 95 out of the 100 administrations should yield results within +/- 5.1% of the current number. Two principals (1.1%) failed to complete the last 17 questions of the SALSS that were designed to assess leadership skills in the domains of Instructional Management, Evaluation and Personnel, Staff Development, Educational Research, Evaluation and Planning and Values and Ethics of

Leadership. Their responses for these questions were reported in the No Response (NR) category for the questions assessing these five leadership skill domains.

Demographic Factors

This chapter begins by presenting demographic factors concerning the 122 participants of this study. These demographic characteristics are presented in Table 3. The participants in this study were school principals and assistant principals from Montana's class AA, A and B schools. While serving as a building principal or assistant principal may be the main responsibility of the respondents, some carry other titles as well. Some serve as activity directors, deans and, act as superintendent in the absence of the superintendent. Of the 121 respondents, 50 were from class AA schools, 37 were from class A schools and 35 were from class B schools. In their current positions, 63 are principals, 48 are associate/assistant principals, 9 serve as athletic/activity/transportation directors, and 1 is a superintendent. The average time in their current position ranged from a minimum of 0 years to a maximum of 25 years, with a mean of 5.41 ($SD = 4.24$) years. Their total administrative experience in the public schools ranged from zero years to a maximum of 29 years, with a mean of 8.50 ($SD = 6.50$) years. Principals' prior teaching experience ranged from 1 year to 31 years, with a mean of 12.10 ($SD = 6.37$) years.

Prior to becoming a school leader, 104 respondents were teachers, 7 were counselors, 2 were teacher/counselors, 2 were assistant principals, 2 were band/choir directors and 4 indicated other. Since there was no defining category for other, it could

refer to prior positions in or out of the field of education. Of the 121 respondents surveyed, 99 were male and 23 were female. Their age range was 30 to 65 years with a mean age of 45.84 ($SD = 8.33$). The ethnic composition of the principals surveyed consisted of 117 Caucasian/White, one Native American, one Hispanic, two of Mixed Race and one African American. Most of the school leaders in Montana's AA, A and B schools are white males, with an average age of 45 years, have been at their current position for 5 years and have 8 years of experience as a school leader. Perhaps the most striking demographic result is that only 2 of the respondents had administrative experience, prior to becoming school leaders.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Secondary Principals and Assistant Principals by District Class

Demographics	AA <i>n</i> = 50	A <i>n</i> = 37	B <i>n</i> = 35
Gender			
Male	34	34	31
Female	16	3	4
Current Position			
Principal	14	19	30
Assistant/Associate Principal	34	11	3
Athletic/Transportation/Activity Director	1	6	2
Superintendent	0	1	0
Position Prior to School Leader			
Assistant Principal	1	0	1
Teacher	42	30	32
Counselor	4	2	1
Teacher/Counselor	0	2	0
Band/Choir Director	1	0	1
Other	1	2	1

The average number of years of administrative experience and teaching experience across classes of Principals is reported in Table 4. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analyses found that class A, AA and B principals did not differ significantly when compared on average years of experience as teacher ($F_{(2,119)} = 2.56, p = .081$), average total years as an administrator, ($F_{(2,119)} = .608, p = .546$) or average years as an administrator in their current positions ($F_{(2,119)} = 1.94, p = .148$). However, principals from class AA, A and B schools did differ significantly on average age ($F_{(2,119)} = 3.24, p = .043$). Results from post hoc tests found that class B principals were significantly younger than class AA principals but did not differ significantly in age from class A principals.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations for Current Administrative Experience, Total Administrative Experience, Teaching Experience and Age

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>School Class</i>					
	<i>AA</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>B</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Average Years Administrative Experience (Current Position)	4.86	3.45	5.03	3.69	6.59	5.51
Average Years Total Administrative Experience	9.20	6.66	8.35	6.33	7.62	6.54
Average Years Teaching Experience	13.50	6.17	11.84	5.72	10.34	7.01
Average Age of Respondents	48.06	8.17	44.76	7.62	43.83	8.75

Quantitative Results: Research Question 1

This section of Chapter 4 presents the findings from results of the School

Leadership Administration and Leadership Skills Survey which assessed the principals' perceptions of their mentoring support across 10 leadership skill domains that are aligned with the ISLLC standards. Principals' perceptions of their mentoring experiences related to skills assessed by the Leadership domain are reported in Table 5. Results suggest that the majority of principals across school classes indicated that they did not receive mentoring in the 10 professional areas of competency defined by the ISLLC standards.

Table 5: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Leadership

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skills in Leadership					
Create and effectively communicate a district or school district vision statement.	3.3	16.4	36.9	36.1	7.4
Establish priorities in the content of community culture and student and staff needs.	2.5	15.6	36.9	41	4.1
Assess student achievement data.	7.4	23.8	30.3	30.3	8.2
Empower others to reach high levels of performance.	.8	9.0	44.3	35.2	10.7
Align financial, human and material resources with the vision, mission, and goals of a district or a school.	7.4	23.8	31.1	34.4	3.3

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: "1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial", "2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial", "3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial", "4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration", "5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed".

Similar results were found for all principals rating their experience and need for Skills in Policy and Governance. Table 6 again shows that most principals with the exception of these considered extremely experienced felt that mentoring would have been

beneficial in Skills related to Policy and Governance skills related to procedures for effective superintendent/board and principal/site-based team relationships (95.8%); significantly younger than class AA principals but did not differ significantly in age from class A principals.

Table 6: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Policy and Governance

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skills in Policy and Governance					
Describe the procedures for effective superintendent/board and principal/site-based team relationships	7.4	27	32.0	29.5	4.1
Demonstrate conflict-resolution and interpersonal sensitivity skills in working with groups whose values and opinions may conflict	3.3	12.3	19.7	49.2	15.6
Establish collaborative, school-linked services with community and other education resources	4.1	18	47.5	27	3.3

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

Results from questions assessing Community and Community Relations reported in Table 7 continue to show that most principals with the exception of those considered extremely experienced felt that mentoring would have been helpful.

Table 7: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Communication and Community Relations

<i>ISLLC Leadership Skill Area</i>	<i>Ratings</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Skills in Communication and Community Relations					
Articulate district or school vision, mission, priorities to the community and mass media	4.1	18.9	35.2	36.9	4.9
Demonstrate group leadership skills	2.5	4.9	27.9	49.2	15.6
Engage in effective community relations and school-business partnerships	4.1	20.5	33.6	36.1	5.7

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

Most principals indicated mentoring needs in skills necessary for articulating district or school vision, mission, priorities to the community and mass media (95%); demonstrating group leadership skills (84.2%) and engaging in effective community relations and school-business partnerships (94.2%). The percent of extremely experienced school leaders who indicated that mentoring was not needed in Communication and Community skills ranged from 5% to 15.8%.

Results from the items written to assess Skills in Organizational Management indicated that approximately 92% of the principals surveyed felt that mentoring would have been helpful in obtaining skills for gathering, analyzing, and using data for informed decision-making. Similarly, a majority of school leaders (94.2) indicated that mentoring would have been beneficial in helping them to learn how to apply appropriate

components of quality management and for implementing a systems approach to monitor all components of the school system where they were employed (96.7%). The percent of school leaders who felt that they were experienced in these areas and did not need mentoring ranged from 3.3% to 8.3%. Principal ratings of their mentoring experiences related to organizational management skills are reported in Table 8.

Table 8: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Organizational Management

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skills in Organizational Management					
Gather, analyze and use data for informed decision making.	4.1	14.8	34.4	38.5	8.2
Apply appropriate components of quality management	3.3	16.4	37.7	36.9	5.7
Implement a systems approach to monitor all components of the school system (subsystems) for efficiency.	6.6	23.8	41.8	24.6	3.3

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

Most school leaders surveyed indicated that mentoring in Curriculum Planning and Development skills would have been useful during their first administrative experience. Table 9 reports that approximately 94% of school leaders surveyed felt that mentoring would have been helpful in understanding how to align their curriculum to ensure improved student performance and higher order thinking.

Table 9: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Curriculum Planning and Development

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skills in Curriculum Planning and Development					
Demonstrate an understanding of curricular alignment to ensure improved student performance and higher order thinking	5.7	25.4	32	31.1	5.7
Create a curricula based on research, applied theory, informed practice, recommendations of learned societies, and state and federal policies and mandates.	6.6	23.0	38.5	27.9	4.1
Use technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum development and delivery.	5.7	14.8	37.7	30.3	11.5

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

Nearly 96% of school leaders indicated that mentoring would have helped them to lead efforts to create curricula based on research, applied theory, informed practice and that met state and federal policy guidelines. In addition, most school leaders (88.3%) indicated that mentoring was needed when using technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum development and delivery. The minority of school leaders who felt that they were experienced in these areas and did not need mentoring ranged from 4.2% to 11.7%.

Perceptions of mentoring experiences of principals related to Instructional Management are reported in Table 10. These results show that almost all school leaders (95.8%) indicated the need for mentoring in developing, implementing and monitoring strategies for encouraging total student development. The percent of school leaders who felt that they were experienced in these areas and did not need mentoring ranged from 4.2% to 10%.

Table 10: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Instructional Management

<i>ISLLC Leadership Skill Area</i>	<i>Ratings</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>NR^a</i>
Skills in Instructional Management						
Develop, implement, and monitor change processes to improve student learning, adult development, and learning climates.	.8	10.7	49.2	33.6	4.6	1.1
Encourage total student development.	0	9.5	37.7	41.8	9.8	1.1
Apply instructional strategies that reflect sensitivity to multicultural issues and varied styles.	1.6	20.5	44.9	27.9	4.1	1.1
Establish a student achievement monitoring and reporting system based on disaggregated data.	3.3	21.3	46.7	23.0	4.6	1.1

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: "1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial", "2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial", "3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial", "4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration", "5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed".

Table 11: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR ^a
Skills in Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management						
Applies effective staff evaluation models and process for teacher and administrator evaluation.	0	11.5	41.0	36.6	9.8	1.1
Develop a personnel recruitment, selection, development, and promotion procedure.	4.1	12.3	39.3	33.6	9.5	1.1
Understand legal issues related to personnel administration.	.8	10.7	36.1	44.8	6.6	1.1

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

Results reported in Table 11 indicate that principals perceived that they lacked adequate mentoring experiences in the leadership skill area of Staff Evaluation and Management. Most school leaders indicated the need for mentoring in applying staff evaluation models and process for teacher evaluation (90%); developing a personnel recruitment, selection, development and promotion procedure (81.8%) and for understanding legal issues related to personnel administration. The percent of school leaders who felt that they were experienced in these areas and did not need mentoring was small and ranged from 6.7% to 10%.

Table 12: Percentage of Principals' Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings					NR ^a
	1	2	3	4	5	
Skills in Staff Development						
Develop a plan to identify areas for concentrated staff development.	.8	15.8	45.8	33.3	4.7	1.1
Evaluate the effectiveness of comprehensive staff development programming	3.3	24.2	45.8	23.9	3.3	1.1
Implement future-focused personnel management strategies.	.8	26.7	43.0	25.9	2.5	1.1
Improve organizational health and morale	.8	10.0	40.0	38.8	10.8	1.6

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

When asked to rate their mentoring experiences related to Staff Development, very few school leaders indicated any type of mentoring. Results reported in Table 12 found that only 2.5% of school leaders indicated that mentoring was not needed for implementing future-focused personnel management strategies. Likewise, only 3.3% of school leaders surveyed indicated that they had adequate experience in evaluating the effectiveness of comprehensive staff development programming. Most school leaders expressed that they received inadequate mentoring in developing plans to identify areas of concentrated staff development (95.8%) and improving organization health and morale (89.2%).

Overall results reported in Table 13 indicate that the percent of school leaders rating their mentoring experience as adequate in Educational Research, Evaluation and Planning skills was very small. Only 9.2% of school leaders indicated that they had experience in engaging strategic planning for the district’s future and mentoring was not needed.

Table 13: Percentage of Administrators Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Educational Research, Evaluation and Planning

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR ^a
Skills in Educational Research, Evaluation and Planning						
Select the proper data-gathering analysis and interpretation methods	3.3	27.9	45.6	15.6	6.6	1.1
Use research-based models and standards for evaluating educational programs.	2.5	26.2	42.6	23.0	4.6	1.1
Engage in strategic planning for district's future.	4.1	15.6	36.9	32.8	9.5	1.1

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

^aNo Response

An even smaller percent indicated that mentoring was not needed when selecting proper data-gathering analysis and interpretation methods (6.7%) and using research-based models and standards for evaluating educational programs (4.2%).

Surprisingly, results reported in Table 14 indicate that many more school leaders felt that they had adequate experience engaging in professional practice related to Values

and Ethics of Leadership. Over 57% of school leaders indicated that they did not need mentoring in demonstrating ethical and personal integrity, while over 51% indicated adequate experience in their ability to model accepted moral and ethical standards. Only 31.7% indicated adequate experience and felt that mentoring would have been beneficial in their ability to exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity.

Table 14: Percentage of Administrators Responses by Perception Rating Categories for Skills in Values and Ethics of Leadership

ISLLC Leadership Skill Area	Ratings					
	1	2	3	4	5	NR ^a
Skills in the Values and Ethics of Leadership						
Demonstrate ethical and personal integrity	.8	1.6	6.6	33.3	56.6	1.1
Model accepted moral and ethical standards in all interactions	.8	.8	6.6	39.5	50.8	1.1
Exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity	.8	7.4	13.9	45.6	31.1	1.1

Note. Questions were rated according to the following scale: “1= No experience, mentoring would be or would Have been extremely beneficial”, “2= Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial”, “3= Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial”, “4= Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration”, “5= Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed”.

^aNo Response

Comparison of Class AA, A and B Principals

Generally, principals across school classes rated their perceptions about their mentoring experiences similarly. However, for 3 of the 36 questions there were significant differences in how class AA, A and B principals rated their perceptions of their mentoring experiences. Significant differences were found when comparing

principals across school class by the percent selecting rating categories that best described their mentoring experiences.

Table 15: Principals' ratings of "Creating and Effectively Communicating a District or School District Vision Statement"

Ratings	School Class		
	AA <i>n</i> = 50	A <i>n</i> = 37	B <i>n</i> = 35
(1) No experience, mentoring would have been extremely beneficial	2.0%	2.7%	5.7%
(2) Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	16.0%	5.4%	28.6%
(3) Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	28.0%	43.2%	42.9%
(4) Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration	48.0%	37.8%	17.1%
(5) Very experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed.	6.0%	10.8%	5.7%

Principals were found to differ significantly on ratings for leadership skill area, "Create and effectively communicate a district or school district vision statement"

($\chi^2_{(8)} = 15.940, p = .043$).

Not surprisingly, results reported in Table 15 show that approximately 17% of class B principals rated that rated themselves as "very experienced" with leadership skills related to creating and effectively communicate a district or school vision statement as compared to much greater ratings for their class A (37.8%) and class AA (48%)

counterparts. The greatest percent of ratings for all principals fell in the “Experienced” and “Very Experienced” categories.

Table 16: Principals’ ratings of “Empowering Others to Reach High Levels of Performance.”

Ratings	School Class		
	AA <i>n</i> = 50	A <i>n</i> = 37	B <i>n</i> = 35
(1) No experience, mentoring would have been extremely beneficial	2.0%	0%	0%
(2) Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	2.0%	8.1%	20.0%
(3) Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	46.0%	35.1%	51.4%
(4) Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration	36.0%	48.6%	20.0%
(5) Very experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed.	14.0%	8.1%	8.6%

Significant differences across principals by class were also found for the leadership skill area of “Empowering Others to Reach High Levels of Performance”

($\chi^2_{(8)} = 15.765, p = .046$). Results presented in Table 16 indicate that 20% of class B principals felt that they had “little experience” empowering others as compared to ratings of 8% for class A principals and 2% for class AA principals. Again, the greatest percent of ratings for all principals fall in the “Experienced” and “Very Experienced” categories.

Lastly, significant differences between principals' ratings were found for the leadership skill area "Develop, implement, and monitor change processes to improve student learning, adult development, and learning climates." $\chi^2_{(8)} = 17.074, p = .040$)

Table 17: Principals' ratings of "Develop, Implement, and Monitor Change Processes to Improve Student Learning, Adult Development, and Learning Climates."

<i>Ratings</i>	<i>School Class</i>		
	AA <i>n</i> = 50	A <i>n</i> = 37	B <i>n</i> = 35
(1) No experience, mentoring would have been extremely beneficial	0%	2.8%	.0%
(2) Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	4.0%	8.3%	23.5%
(3) Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial	46.0%	52.8%	52.9%
(4) Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration	42.0%	36.1%	20.6%
(5) Very experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed.	8.0%	0%	2.9%

Table 17 indicates that the largest differences among principals on the leadership skill related to improvement of student learning, adult development, and learning climates is found when comparing class B principals' ratings to those of class A and class AA principals. Results show that a much greater percent of class AA (42%) and class A (36.1%) principals feel they are "very experienced" in developing, implementing and monitoring change to improve student learning than class B principals (20.6%). As

with the previous two leadership skill areas, the greatest percent of ratings across principal classes fall at the “Experienced” and “Very Experienced” categories.

Qualitative Results: Research Questions 2 and 3

Research Question 2 focused on describing the sources of support that principals and assistant principals used most often during their first years as school administrators. Research question 3 was posed to identify and describe the support strategies principals used to assist them with leadership skills in the absence of mentoring during their novice years as school leaders. The interview protocol found in Appendix E was used to gather the qualitative interview data to answer these questions.

Five secondary principals and assistant principals from class AA, A, and B schools were interviewed for the qualitative portion. The purposive sample of principals interviewed consisted of one class AA principal, one class A principal, one class AA assistant principal, one class AA assistant principal and one class B principal. Each of the administrators interviewed had prior teaching experience. Their years of teaching experience ranged from eight to eighteen. The subjects they taught varied as well. There were two math teachers, two English teachers and one social studies teacher. All of their teaching experience was at the secondary level. Each administrator interviewed said that they enjoyed teaching and chose to pursue administration because they either wanted a different challenge or the encouragement of colleagues.

The extent of administrative experience for the five high school principals and assistant principals interviewed ranged from 9 months to 19 years. Two administrators

(AA assistant principal and A principal) held no formal or informal leadership positions before entering their current positions. They were thrust into the principalship with no experience and were required to learn leadership skills as they engaged in the administrative practices affiliated with their positions. One principal (class AA) had 12 years of experience as an assistant principal before assuming his current head principal position, while one principal from a class B school had two years of administrative experience from another state prior to his current job. Lastly, the class A assistant principal interviewed for this study had only informal leadership experience prior to his current position.

Principal Biographies

The background of each of the five principals interviewed for this study is described in this section. These in-depth descriptions are designed to provide a verbal picture of each of the principals who were interviewed for this study. Pseudonyms are used to maintain the confidentiality of the principals who participated in these interviews.

Alvin DoubleA

Alvin DoubleA., the AA principal, interviewed for the qualitative segment of this study has been an educator for 27 years. His credentials include a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Secondary Education (Business and Mathematics), Masters of Science (M.S.) (Education Leadership), and Educational Doctorate (Ed.D) in Educational Leadership. Over an eight year period Alvin taught business and mathematics in three different high

schools in Montana and North Dakota. In addition to teaching, he coached both football and track for eight years.

While most of Alvin's teaching experience has been in public schools, two years were spent as a teacher at a private Catholic high school. His administrative experience includes 12 years as an assistant principal, which he says were invaluable to his longevity as a school leader and seven years as a principal. About four years of his administrative experience (as an assistant) took place at a Catholic high school. The remainder of Alvin's administrative experiences has been in the class AA ranks. In addition to his administrative role, he serves on education, staff development and teacher quality committees. He is a professional member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Association of Curriculum and Development and is very active in his church and community. Alvin is married and has one daughter. He loves spending time with his family, reading, writing, riding motorcycles and fishing. His fundamental belief is that, "All dreams come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

Abe SingleA

Abe SingleA, the A principals interviewee, has a Bachelors Degree in English Education from the University of Montana and a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership from Montana State University. He has been in education for 11 years. For ten of those years, he taught English at a class B school in Western Montana. He has taught American Literature, sophomore English and Advance Placement English. In addition to his teaching, he coached boys' basketball, boys' track and served as senior class advisor and graduation coordinator. Abe was also actively involved in National

Youth Sports Program as a counselor and basketball supervisor. Other professional employment includes his experiences as an account executive for a large insurance firm in western Montana and in foster care at a youth home.

He and his wife moved to university town located in southwestern Montana where his wife obtained a position teaching at the state university. Abe had no intention of becoming a school administrator. However, as a result of not being able to find a teaching position he took the advice and encouragement of others and began coursework in state university's educational leadership program. Soon after completing his course work, he became employed as principal in a nearby town. Abe had no administrative experience prior to his current position as a class A principal. However, he believes that his involvement as a coach, sports program administrator, senior class advisor and member of the school Crisis Intervention Stress Management committee fostered his development as a leader early in his professional life. His current duties and responsibilities include teacher evaluations, hiring, dismissals, activity supervision, student discipline and overall building management. His belief is that you become a principal because you want to do what is best for kids, not because it pays more than teaching.

Alex AssistantAA.

Alex AssistantAA, AA assistant principal, holds a B.S. in Agra-Business, a B.S. in Education (Social Studies Broadfield), and a M.S. in Educational Leadership. He has been in education for 18 years. Nine of those years were in a small class C school in southwestern Montana where he taught World History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, 7th and 8th grade history and served as a K-12 Counselor. In addition, Alex

was the assistant coach of both the girls' and boys' basketball teams. For the past nine years, this administrator has worked at a class AA high school in southwestern Montana. For eight and a half of those nine years, he was a classroom teacher and girls' basketball coach. For the past year, Alex has served as the interim assistant principal, managed attendance, and was responsible for sophomore and junior discipline. He also observes and evaluates teachers, serves on the professional development and technology committees in addition to leading the school's best practices team.

Prior to serving as an assistant principal, Alex's only leadership experience came from an internship experience that he completed as a requirement for his principal preparation program. He was placed in his current position unexpectedly after an illness and subsequent transfer of another assistant principal in the building. Much of his ability to adapt to this position was acquired through trial by fire experiences. In addition, Alex was able to access and seek guidance from the former assistant principal that he replaced during his induction experience. This administrator is married and has one child. Like the other school leaders in the study, he, too, loves to spend time with his family.

Adam AssistantA

Adam AssistantA is a class A assistant principal who has been in education for 12 years. He was a mathematics teacher for eight years at the same school where he now serves as assistant principal, a position he has held for 4 years. Adam's duties include conducting teacher evaluations, supervising student activities and discipline. He has a B.S. degree in mathematics from the University of Montana, and a Masters of Education in Educational Leadership from Montana State University. Adam had no prior experience

in administration, before his current position as assistant principal. He was born and raised in Montana, is married, has one daughter and enjoys the outdoors and spending time with his family.

Barry B.

Barry B., the class B principal, has worked in education for 23 years. He received his B.A. degree in Education and his M.S. degree in Secondary School Administration also from the University of Montana. He has teaching experience in both large and small schools in the states of Texas, Idaho and Montana. Barry's teaching experience was in the subject areas of middle school and high school math, social studies and computer science. He has 13 total years of classroom teaching experience. Barry's only administrative experience prior to becoming a principal was as an assistant athletic director for two years at a class A high school in Montana. He is currently in his ninth year as a principal. His duties include teacher supervision and evaluation, student discipline and managing school operations. He is married with two children and enjoys spending time with his family. He also enjoys spending his free time in the outdoors.

Sources of Administrative Support

Theme 1. Supportive Peer Administrator

Supportive peer administrators emerged as a theme that Alvin DoubleA, Alex AssistantAA, Barry B. and Adam AssistantA identified as an important strategy when mentoring was unavailable. All of the principals expressed that they were able to call upon another school administrator for assistance when engaged in administrative duties

where they lacked solid experience. Principals also related that at least one peer administrator encouraged their leadership efforts by providing them with advice based on their own experiences. Statements made by principals during their interview show solid support for this theme. For example, Adam AssistantA explained that,

“Someone [administrator peer] was always there when I needed advice.”

Another comment representing this theme was by Barry B., who commented,

I had many good mentors. I learned the job through [a close friend] who is a school administrator in Montana] and my administrator friend in Texas. This administrator felt that having these experienced mentors at his side was crucial to his success. Because of their experiences, they were able to keep this administrator from making many of the same mistakes that they made in their early years as administrators.

Even though his building was located a great distance from his mentors, technology made it possible for him to interact with these mentors whenever he needed assistance, whether it be daily or weekly. In fact, Barry B. further explained that he did not heed the warnings of these same mentors when accepting his first principalship when he said,

I wish that I had listened to my friends before taking that first position. My first job was in a small Southern Idaho community that was totally Mormon. I did not realize the importance of religion and community. I thought that since every one looked like me, things would be all right. I was wrong- very wrong. They were nice people, but everything I did seemed to conflict with the core values and beliefs of the community and church. I learned that fit was very important to success on the job. The job has to be a good fit for you and you have to be a good fit for the community.

This administrator learned the importance of fit and culture the hard way.

Although he values the challenges of his first principalship, he was happy to get out of that particular community. He understands the power of beliefs, religion, culture and expectations with regard to schools. Based on these statements he would rather not have a

principalship than practice as a school administrator in a district where there was not a good fit between belief systems and that of the community. Additionally, he learned that having a job does not equal happiness and success.

Evidence from principal interviews revealed that access to a supportive peer is an invaluable source of support during induction years. Feedback from experienced mentors enhanced the professional development of new principals by providing opportunities for reflective exchanges that guide decision-making. Results from principal interviews identify the importance of a supportive peer administrative for helping principals make professional and personal decisions that have a direct impact on their effectiveness as a school administrator.

Theme 2. Disposition

All of the principals expressed some type of personal growth based on their interactions with teachers, staff and other administrators that provided an underlying source of administrative support. An example of the importance of disposition to principals' success was expressed by Adam AssistantA, who stated,

Principals have to get used to conflict and not see it as conflict and put their personal feelings aside, you must constantly focus on your state of mind, to keep from being personally drawn into the concerns of others. Once that happens, you compromise your ability to deal objectively with concerns. As a leader, people around you expect you to keep your cool and find that silver lining in every situation, especially negative ones. If you lose your focus, the problem becomes more complicated.

This administrator also stated that he relied heavily on his family to help him stay grounded and focused during times of disagreement among faculty, students or staff. He

stated that “going home to his family put everything about job in perspective.” Family interactions outside of the school setting helped him to better reflect on disagreements he experienced in his role as a principal and to view these situations from a different and more solution-focused perspective. The respondent had a more holistic view of the principalship. Above all else, personal mental well-being is primary to one’s ability to be effective on the job. This administrator takes the necessary time to keep himself aware of what is most important in life--his mental health and family. He is a person with traditional values and expectations. Alvin DoubleA expressed that, “Relationship building is far more important than using power to affect change. Power is temporary but relationships create ownership.” His comment suggested that that people are more important than things. Alvin further explained his perspective of the importance of relationships with people by stating that,

What we do can never be more important than the people we serve. If you involve people in the process of decision-making, they are more likely to believe in the mission and work harder to help you succeed. If not, it creates frustration and distrust. All that you accomplish dies on vine or goes away when you leave.

It is apparent that Alvin DoubleA felt very strongly about the need to involve constituents in the decision-making process. He understands the importance of shared-decision making as an important ingredient in establishing an effective learning environment. This principal’s comments indicate that promoting shared governance by creating productive relationships is critical to sustained school improvement efforts. It is clear that Alvin felt productive school environments are characterized by collaborative relationships between teachers, staff, parents, community members and other

stakeholders. Creating a school culture where the views of all stakeholders are considered when making decisions about school improvement goals is critical in sustaining a school that is effective in meeting the needs of all its stakeholders. It is clear from these interview results that dispositions are important for supporting principals' efforts to control their emotions during conflict and build relationships during their induction years.

Theme 3. Self – Development

Most principals thought that they acquired additional training and improved their administrative skills while on the job. Principals identified involvement in professional organizations, like National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals and Montana Association of Secondary School Principals as an important source of support. However, all of those interviewed expressed that their university principal preparation program was most vital to their growth as school administrators during their induction year. For example, Art SingleA expressed,

My schooling at Bobcat U was very beneficial, second only to experience. My schooling taught me what do, but not how to do it. The experience gave me the “how to” that I needed. All of the information that I received was first rate and current. Even my professors were there when I needed something. I can't say enough about my experience with MSU. The great thing about having professors and professional organizations to visit with and make inquiries of is that you never feel alone. Having other leaders to visit with is very comforting when you are new to a position, experienced or not.

The “Self-Development” theme was supported through a different perspective by Alvin DoubleA who commented:

You must learn to be transparent. Don't hide things, and people will trust you. Without trust, people are more likely to question your decisions. Once that happens, it will be difficult for you to get things done. If you can't get things done, you become ineffective as a leader. One of the best ways to create transparency is to involve as many constituents in the decisions and operations of your building.

This administrator believed that part of self-development is learning how to use and involve the expertise and input of your stakeholders. If you involve these people, you are more than likely to get buy-in from them on important issues. Buy-in increases your ability to get things done, which increases your effectiveness as a leader. This theme identified that the quality of self-development that occurs from involvement with professional organizations is an important source of administrative support. However, the support offered by the faculty from principal preparation programs was cited as the most important form of support that promoted their growth as a principal during their internship and first year as a principal. Principals also identified that developing trust requires transparency in the decision-making process. Transparency was described as being open about your ideas to all school stakeholders. Results from these interviews with the context of experience during induction years for Montana principals indicates that their university preparation program is a vital source of administrative support as well as the trust that is developed by gathering input from as many stakeholders as possible when engaged in decision-making.

Theme 4. Experience

All five principals interviewed had previous teaching experience while one principal had prior experience as an assistant principal. Part-time administrative duties,

assistant principal positions, and participating as teachers on shared decision-making committees were cited as important sources of leadership experience prior to their full-time administrative duties. This theme is supported by comments from Alvin DoubleA who said:

Without prior experience as an assistant principal, I would have quit the principalship. I had 12 years of experience as an assistant principal, before becoming a principal. Part of that experience was very helpful in learning how to do the day-to-day parts of the job. However, during that experience, my principal committed suicide. That was something that I did not know how to deal with. There were so many questions left unanswered. I thought that I had all the answers, but when I took over after the suicide, I did not have a clue. I had to reach out to other leaders, who had experience in order to survive. This was an experience that I had to learn in while on the job. Another thing that I had to learn was how to lead during a teacher strike. I cried in the shower one morning, because I could not believe how evil teachers could be to those who disagreed with them. These are people who are supposed to believe in the welfare of all, especially kids. I also had a difficult time figuring out how to relate to the teachers once the strike was over. There had been so many hurtful things said and done, it was difficult to bring my building together again.

This administrator was very pleased to have the experience of an assistant principal, prior to becoming a principal. Although there are some textbook approaches to dealing with these types of concerns, the hardships that this principal speaks of are not incidents that you can readily train people to deal with. Each strike and suicide takes on a life of its own. Somewhere during his practice as an assistant principal, he learned how to make the tough calls and deal with difficult situations. That is what he is saying has carried him through to this point in his career.

Further evidence to support this theme emerged from comments made by Alex AssistantAA, who expressed,

My internship taught me what to do, but not how to do things. On the job experience was critical to my success. I came into my position mid-year, right out of the classroom. One day I was teaching and because of an administrator's illness, I was an assistant principal the next day. I knew the language of administration, as well as the content. I did not, however, know the "how-to" of administration. I made many mistakes, because of a lack of communication and not knowing how things really worked at my school. I was lucky, however, to have as a mentor the person that I replaced. Without him, the job would have been much more difficult. Based on my early experience, I could not imagine what it must be like to be a principal in a small high school. I have worked in small schools before, but it never occurred to me how difficult it must have been for my principal to not have a support network in the building. Now that I can reflect, I realize how lucky I was to have access to a mentor on a daily basis.

This principal felt that his course work and preparation at the university level was very helpful during his induction year as an assistant principal. However, he also realized that his coursework only contributed to part of his preparation to become an administrator. Replacing an assistant principal mid-year was found to be a challenging task and he would not have continued in this position had he not had access to a competent mentor.

The stories from which the "experience" theme emerges suggest that w that mentoring is important to the success of new principals with little or no experience. The first principal interviewed had experience as an assistant and was thrown into a lead principal's position. All this principal had to rely on was his experience as an assistant principal to survive and effectively practice in this crisis situation he was thrust into. The other principal interviewed had no administrative experience prior to his position as an assistant principal. The only related experiences were those he engaged as a teacher where he helped the principal make decisions about school policies and procedures. It is

clear that his lack of experience put him at disadvantage as compared to the lead principal interviewed who had prior experience as an assistant principal. The difference between the success and failure of the teacher who was recruited to be assistant principal was that he had a mentor he could rely on for guidance. Both the lead and assistant principals' comments show solid support for mentoring regardless of the depth of administrative experience.

Support Strategies Used By Novice Principals in the Absence of Mentoring

Theme 1. Creating Supportive Relationships

Factors that principals indicated that assisted with administrative support in the absence of mentoring involved building relationships that promoted clear lines of communication between themselves, teachers and other school staff members. For example, Barry B. expressed,

Help and support from teachers were beneficial to me. Many of your smaller school may not be in close proximity to another school of this size, so teachers and other staff members may be a principal's only source of daily advice and input. It would be nice to have a couple of principal colleagues to meet with frequently, but that is not always possible. You have to be able to communicate your dilemma in a manner that teachers can understand and offer advice and support. That means that your staff has to be like a family, with close ties. If you have to leave your building, a teacher usually pinch-hits for you. So unlike your colleagues in larger schools, you have to spend time talking to some of your teachers about budgets, school laws and policy.

This administrator has a good understanding of the how small schools involve teachers and staff in the decision-making as compared to large schools. He takes pride in creating more of a family atmosphere within his school where teachers and students feel comfortable offering suggestions for improving how the school functions.

All of the principals interviewed felt that communicating with teachers and other staff members was essential for building relationships that supported their efficacy as school leaders. In addition, relationships with other principals either from within or outside of the school district was also identified as an important source of administrative support in the absence of formal mentoring. Evidence for this claim is supported by comments from Adam AssistantA, who stated,

Communicating with staff and students so they know where you stand is important. Use two-way communication all the time. If you communicate well, it creates a sense of consistency in staff and students, which leads to fewer problems and concerns. People like knowing where you stand. It gives them comfort. They know that you will listen to them and see their issues as important. If I did not have good, open communication with my teachers and students, I would not have legitimacy.

These results suggest that principals must use their communication skills to support their effectiveness as school administrators. It is apparent from these interviews that on-going communication with teachers, students, parents, community members and peer administrators is essential for establishing productive relationships that support the effectiveness of principals during their induction year of practice.

Theme 2. Reflection

A common term that principals used to describe a strategy that supported their administrative positions was their ability to reflect. Most of the principals interviewed felt that reflecting upon their practice was an important strategy in the absence of mentoring. More specifically, thinking about more suitable solutions for solving problems that they are likely to encounter again. For example, Abe SingleA expressed,

Reflection is perhaps the best way share and learn when mentoring is available. It was always reassuring to have fellow administrators around

you to decompress at the end of each day. You are not quite so afraid to take risks and make mistakes, because you know that you will have the support of your building colleagues at the end of each day. You don't feel like you are going to be judged, which makes it much easier to talk about your failures and problems. Reflection also lets you learn from your mistakes and plan for the next day so that you don't make the same mistakes again.

It is obvious that this administrator valued the growth opportunities that occurred through the conversations he had with other administrators in his building. His skills as a school leader improved as a result of his ability to make changes in his professional practice based on reflections prompted by feedback received from other administrators. Adam AssistantA's comments helped to further identify the theme of "Reflection" when he expressed:

Take a step back and slow down at times, so you can frame things in a positive manner. Because of all the problems that we face in education, it can be easy to look at things negatively. You have to avoid the "cop mentality" where people are guilty until proven innocent. If you can keep a cool head, it is easy to figure out that there is nothing new and whatever it is, there is probably a solution out there. Be patient and ask around for advice and input. In time, you will find an answer. My worst mistakes have been made when I did not take the time to reflect or step back to look at things in a different light. The big mistakes that I made just exacerbated problems, instead of solving them. Thankfully, I have been able to learn from my mistakes without too much difficulty. Without the ability to reflect with colleagues, I would have experienced limited success.

These interviews indicate that reflection by itself is an important practice to engage in for a beginning principal. These results find that being able to engage in self-evaluation of leadership practice is essential when no formal mentors are available. Reflection is even more useful when it occurs as a result of exchanges with other school administrators. In this context, reflection not only offers a method for self-evaluation but

also provides feedback in the form of peer evaluation that can be used formatively to improve leadership skills and practices.

Theme 3. Supportive Peer Administrators

Coaching from peer administrators emerged as a theme that several principals identified as an important strategy when mentoring was unavailable. All of the principals at some point during the interviews indicated that they were able to call upon another school administrator for assistance when required to perform administrative duties where they lacked solid experience. Adam AssistantA commented that,

On the job training must be part of the experience, but I used many colleagues for input and support. Having colleagues to talk with is alright, but you still must have the courage to take risks and make mistakes. Sometimes you don't have the luxury of talking with colleagues, before making decisions. If you freeze, because you are afraid of making a mistake, you run the risk of being an ineffective leader. So learning to make good decisions is risky and can result in wrath from teachers, the board and parents. When you learn through real-life experience, you are less likely to forget what you learned or make the same mistake twice. On the other hand, if you get burned too many times, you will probably get out of the profession. So there is a happy medium that must you strive to achieve.

Comments from Alex AssistantA's interview represented a similar idea and provided further evidence of the "Supportive Peer Administrator" theme. He stated, "I found great support and comfort in the fact that I was able to talk to other administrators in the building and reflect at the end of each day." The comments from the two principals represented in this theme indicate that access to a supportive peer was very important to their effectiveness as principals during their induction year. They expressed that the guidance they received from peer administrators was critical to their decision-making

when faced with situations where they lacked solid experience during their first year of the principalship. Although, decision-making can be risky, support from peer administrators during their induction year helped to reduce the chances of making poor decisions.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify the type and adequacy of mentoring experienced by Montana's secondary school principals during their first experiences as school administrators. In addition this study was undertaken to identify and describe sources of administrative support and how principals used those resources during their experiences as beginning principals. Chapter 4 presented the results from the School Leadership Administration and Leadership Skills Surveys (SALSS) which was completed by 121 principals. Overall, results indicated that the majority of principals would have benefited from some form of mentoring in 9 of the 10 leadership domains assessed by the SALSS. The "Values and Ethics of Leadership" domain was the only leadership skill area that principals felt they had experience and did not need mentoring support.

Five principals who responded to the School Leadership Administration and Leadership Skills Survey were also interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the administrative support strategies that were available and used when needing assistance with their administrative duties. The follow six themes were identified by principals: Dispositions, supportive peer administrator, self-development, experience, establishing

relationships, and reflection. Chapter 5 will present an overview of this mixed methods study and the answers to the research questions. A summary of the findings, recommendations for principal training programs and recommendations for further research will also be discussed.

Research Question 2 focused on describing the sources of support that principals and assistant principals used most often during their first years as school administrators. Five principals and assistant principals were interviewed to gain insights on the sources of support they relied on during their first year in the principalship. Analysis of the recorded and transcribed interviews identified four major themes. The four themes described to represent principals' sources of support during their first year of practice included: Supportive Peer Administrator, Disposition, Self-Development and Experience.

Interviews were conducted with the same principals to answer research question 3 which was posed to describe the support strategies that principals and assistant principals identified as beneficial in the absence of mentoring during their novice years as school leaders. The three themes that emerged from analysis of interviews were: Creating Supportive Relationships, Reflection, and Supportive Peer Administrator. Interestingly the Supportive Peer Administrator theme emerged across interview questions posed to answer both research questions two and three. Overall, the qualitative phase of the analysis supports mentoring.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed method study was to describe the mentoring experiences of high school principals and assistant principals in Montana's AA, A and B high schools. Additionally, this study was undertaken to describe in greater detail how principals transitioned into administrative roles, the strategies they used in the absence of mentoring, difficulties encountered during novice principal experiences and recommendations for mentoring new principals.

Overview of Results

Many colleges, universities and state education agencies have adopted the ISLLC standards as the guide for what school leaders need to know and be able to do in the performance of their duties. However, there is no research that focuses on new principals' mentoring experiences and how those experiences are aligned with the leadership skills specified by the ISLLC standards. Results from this study investigated principals' perceptions of mentoring experiences and how those experiences aligned with the ISLLC standards during their induction year of practice in Montana's AA, A and B high schools. Colleges, universities and state licensing agencies can use the results as a guide to enhancing the mentoring experiences of school leaders in training, preparation and induction. Principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of

mentoring across leadership skill areas specified by the ISLLC standards were investigated. This study also described principals' main sources of administrative support and the support they relied on in the absence of mentoring during their induction year of practice.

Methods and Data Collection

This study used a mixed method approach to provide a deeper description and understanding of the school leaders' perceptions of their mentoring experiences. Results for the quantitative portion of the study were obtained by asking principals and assistant principals to complete a mentor survey. The qualitative phase of this research involved conducting interviews with a purposeful sample of five administrators who completed the quantitative survey. The School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey (SALSS) was used to collect the quantitative data for this study while semi-structured interview procedures were used to collect in-depth descriptions of the five principals mentoring experiences. Both the SALSS and the semi-structured interview protocol asked participants to provide answers to questions about their mentoring experiences and to specify or describe how these mentoring experiences were aligned with the leadership skills recommended by the ISLLC standards.

The population consisted of 181 school leaders from Montana's AA, A and B schools. Surveys were returned from 121 respondents--50 from AA principals, 37 from A principals and 35 from B principals. For the qualitative portion of the study, 5 principals were interviewed. Those leaders included one AA principal and Assistant Principal, one A Principal and Assistant Principal and one B Principal. There are no assistant principals

for class B high schools due to their smaller size and therefore results for these assistant principals could not be reported. During the interviews, participants were asked to provide information about how they transitioned into the principalship, strategies that benefited them, any wrong turns they made and what or who was most helpful to them. Additionally, each principal interviewed was asked to provide input on how they would mentor a new principal, what they would focus on and why, how they would establish trust and what criteria they would use to assess growth. All interviews were conducted by telephone, audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The quantitative phase of analysis involved entering responses from the SALSS into SPSS 15.0 and generating descriptive results in the form of percentages to describe principals' perceptions of their experience and the need for mentoring the leadership skill areas identified in the ISLLC standards. Data collected from principals' responses to the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey (SALSS) and interview results from the principal interviews were presented in chapter 4. Information from the taped interviews and phone calls were transcribed, coded and categorized into related themes that were also presented in Chapter 4.

Research Question # 1

What leadership skill did principals and assistant principals perceive that they would have benefited from mentoring during their novice years as school administrators? Results from this study show that only a small percentage of school leaders perceived that

they had adequate mentoring across all leadership skill areas assessed with the exception of values ethics of leadership. For 9 of the 10 leadership skills domains assessed by the SALSS, over 90% of principals felt that regardless of their experience level, mentoring would have been beneficial. The “Values and Ethics of leadership” domain was the only skill set where less than 90% of principals indicated they did not need mentoring. Fifty-seven percent of principals indicated that they had adequate experience as new administrators and mentoring would not have been beneficial in the skill area of “demonstrating ethical and personal integrity”. However, even fewer principals and assistant principals indicated that mentoring would not have been beneficial in the skill areas of “Model accepted moral and ethical standards in all interactions” (51%) and “Exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity” (31%). These results indicate that principals and assistant principals would have benefited from at least some mentoring even in leadership domains were they felt the most experienced during their induction year as a school administrator.

These quantitative results clearly show that the vast majority of high school principals and assistant principals would have benefited from mentoring across all leadership skills related to those found in the ISLLC standards. Brown, Anfara, Hartman, Mahar & Mills (2002) found comparable results when investigating the learning process of new administrators. They found that new administrators would have preferred to share experiences with a knowledgeable colleague than solely gaining experience during their practice as principals. Similar findings reported in research conducted at the New Teacher Center’s (NTC) New Administrators Program suggests that new principals in the

program struggled with the very basic issues and needed mentoring support with leadership skills related to time management, budgeting , staff supervision, working with the community, facility planning, staff development, personnel decisions and curriculum development. NTC also discovered that although new principals enrolled in their program knew how to email on a limited basis and some were familiar with software used to analyze student achievement data, none knew how to use spreadsheets for budget management. This outcome suggests that technology is a key leadership skill that also should be considered when designing mentoring programs to support new administrators.

Research Question #2

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify and describe the sources of administrative support that principals and assistant principals used to assist them with their leadership responsibilities during their novice years as school administrators. Access to supportive peer administrators, disposition, self-development and experience were the common themes which principals and assistant principals described as administrative support strategies that they relied on in the absence of mentoring. Both high school principals and assistant principals expressed that they often relied on a peer administrator that they could obtain guidance from when faced with a new administrative challenge. The opportunity to discuss and observe experienced administrators was cited as critical for preventing administrative mistakes that would take significant amounts of time to resolve. The principals interviewed for this study also related that at least one peer administrator encouraged leadership efforts by providing them with advice based on their own experiences.

These interview results are aligned with Dukes' (2001) research which found that new principals indicated that having someone to talk with and consult for advice was very beneficial to their success. Conyers (2004) suggests that beginning principals should make efforts to align themselves with seasoned principals and trust what they tell them. She recommends that new principals rely on veteran principals as counselors that they can confide in and for advice when needed. Alsbury & Hackmann (2006) found that novice principals expressed that the assistance they received from informal networks with experienced principals was more beneficial than skill attainment in leadership areas such as budgeting or evaluating staff.

Another source of support identified by principals was awareness of dispositions and how they influenced their administrative duties. Controlling emotions, maintaining a positive state of mind and patience were identified by principals as important to success as school administrators. Principals suggested that maintaining a positive state of mind was critical for productive problem-solving. Being able to identify an array of positive solutions by being objective and not personalizing a problem situation was identified as key for solving problems that are acceptable to all the stakeholders involved. Patience was also cited as an important administrator quality. To promote positive change in a way that prevents discouragement, principals must be patient with faculty, students, staff and above all with themselves. The dispositions that principals identified related to their success as principals during their induction year are not unlike those identified by Bloom's (2004) research. His research suggests that controlling emotional responses to problems, avoiding perfectionism, and maintaining an impersonal perspective when

problem-solving are personal issues that principals must be acutely aware of during their beginning years as school administrators.

Prior experience was also identified as a source of support theme by principals. This study found that some principals assumed part-time administrative duties, and served on shared-decision making committees as teachers prior to assuming their current full time principal or assistant principal positions. This finding is similar to other literature which reported that teachers often gained administrative experience when they were asked by their building principals to serve as members of their school leadership teams or as the lead teacher when the principals were not on school campuses (e.g., Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). There is no question that those prior interactions with the complex and diverse administrative duties required of school administrators were critical to the success of principals in their first years as school administrators. The relationships that principals established through involvement in professional organizations and with faculty and peers in their university principal preparation programs were also identified as an important sources of support. The importance of these relationships implies that engaging in self-development or professional development activities was critical for identifying experienced peers that novice principals could rely on for assistance when faced with unfamiliar circumstances.

The sources of administrative support that emerged as themes from this study are supported by research conducted by Brown, Anfara, Hartman, Mahar & Mills (2002). Their study found that most new principals learn their jobs through “on-the-job training” or “trial by fire”. An important outcome of their research was that the principals surveyed

overwhelming indicated that sharing experiences with colleagues would have been very beneficial in helping them to adjust to the demands of the principalship. Bottoms and O'Neil (2001) further assert that successful leadership skills do not develop naturally and that principals need to learn the multiple facets of each of these skills in order to become successful. They indicated that the most effective method for training principals is for them to be enrolled in mentoring program there are opportunities to practice administrative skills while at the same time having a seasoned administrator available for advice and guidance.

Research Question #3

Three themes emerged from interviews with principals and assistant principals that asked them to describe the support strategies they relied on most frequently to assist them with their leadership responsibilities in the absence of mentoring during their novice administrative experiences. Creating supportive relationships was a major theme that emerged from discussions with principals about the support that they established to help with their administrative duties. School leaders responded that relationship building was important for many reasons, but most importantly, collaboration gives school leaders the opportunity to interact and work with all staff members, thereby increasing ownership, sharing leadership and building trust. Cassellus (2006) found similar results from interviews she conducted to describe the attributes that characterize good middle schools. Her commentary on the attributes necessary for establishing successful middle school learning environments is reliant on efforts by school administrators to strategically and

intentionally build positive relationships. The creation of collaborative relationships with the central office, parents, and the community is critical to the success of a school's improvement plan (Gray et al. (2007). The importance of building supportive relationships is verified by Halawah's (2005) research which proposes that a principal's ability to create a collaborative environment and open communication as the single most important factor for successful school improvement. The importance of relationship-building is further supported by findings from a meta-analysis of research conducted by Marzano, McNulty & Waters (2004) which found that a principal's ability to demonstrate an awareness of personal aspects of teachers and staff was one of the 25 most important characteristics associated with effective principals.

Investing time to reflect upon administrative practices was considered an important support strategy that new principals relied on to guide their professional practice. Experienced principals indicate that the ability of new principals to actively reflect upon their use of leadership concepts in practice, behaviors and beliefs is critical. This type of self-evaluation leads to more effective and successful administrative practices. Brown-Ferrigno & Muth's (2004) research indicates that reflection is essential to a principals' success during their novice years. They suggest that reflecting with mentors about their leadership activities and administrative tasks develops a new professional's self-concept grounded in confidence about leading schools. The use of reflection as a support strategy is further supported by findings from Alsbury & Hackmann's (2006) investigation of the effectiveness of mentoring programs in Iowa. Their study found that participants indicated that mentoring experiences should include

more mentee/mentor reflection time, group-wide networking and unstructured discussion, rather than traditional training and information dissemination. Lastly support for the “Reflection” theme is found in Hansford & Ehrich’s (2006) research which found that having the opportunity to reflect during mentoring with an experienced principal was one of the top five positive benefits of mentoring programs identified by participating mentees.

Access to a peer administrator to confer with was identified most often by principals as a support strategy that they relied upon heavily during their novice years as school administrators. They expressed that taking advantage of this support strategy made their administrative practice seem more manageable and less stressful. Likewise, this theme was also identified as a support strategy that was available to principals during their beginning years. One of the greatest virtues of a supportive peer mentor is their availability to listen, provide different perspectives, ask reflective questions and provide general support throughout the year (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). According to Conyers (2004) when novice principals have access to a supportive peer administrator, they are more likely to engage in reflective thinking and visioning strategies that promote professional growth. He suggests that pairing novice administrators with a seasoned peer promotes opportunities for discussions that help the novice administrators reflect on their personal growth, their goals and objectives and obstacles inhibiting their progress. Research indicates that the most effective method for providing principals in-training with support is for them to have opportunities to practice administrative skills while at the

same time having access to an experienced administrator available for advice and guidance (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2000).

Recommendations for Principal Training Programs

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. New principals or principals that are new to a school district should be paired with an experienced mentor. Results from this study indicate that principals and assistant principals received almost no formal mentoring during their induction years. The role of school leader is very complex and has changed dramatically over time. In the past, functioning as good manager was a successful approach for leading school systems. However, responsibilities focused on instructional leadership, community relations, school safety, professional development, data-based decision making, shared leadership, communicating school mission and vision and a diverse number of other expected duties have overshadowed the once prominent managerial role that principals assumed as school leaders.

Pairing a principal who is new to a school district, regardless of the level of experience, with a seasoned, "in-house" administrator is essential in helping new principals understand the school and community culture. Regardless of the quality of administrative skills that new principals bring to a school, understanding how to make decisions within the context of the school and community culture is critical to their success as educational leaders. This recommendation is aligned with the leadership skill recommended by the ISLLC standards that recommend that principals should have

experience in and be able to “Establish priorities in the content of community culture and student and staff needs”. Results from this study found that 95% of principals and assistance principals expressed that they would have benefited from mentoring assistance in understanding priorities related to the community and school culture during their apprentice years.

2. Ensure that prospective school leaders have experience and course work in the areas of mediation, team building and facilitating meetings. This recommendation originates from principals responses to their experience and need for mentoring in the ISLLC standard area of Skills in Policy and Governance. Approximately 15.6% of the principals and assistant principals surveyed felt that mentoring would have been beneficial in being able to “Demonstrate conflict-resolution and interpersonal sensitivity skills in working with groups whose values and opinions may conflict.” Less than 5% of the principals surveyed felt that they had the experience as novice principals to “fully understand procedures for effective superintendent/board relations or to “establish school-linked services with community education resources”. Collaborating with superintendents, boards and community groups is a routine expectation in administrative environments that characterizes today’s school systems. These findings clearly suggest that aspiring school administrators would benefit from more experiences that would solidify their competencies in the “Skills in Policy and Governance” ISLLC standard domain.

3. Quality principal preparation programs address the skills through coursework and field-based experiences that are articulated in the ISLLC standards. However,

opportunities for ongoing training need to be made available to school leaders in the areas of technology use, public relations, data-based decision-making, curriculum development and instructional management. The vast majority of principals and assistant principals indicated mentoring would have helpful in these administrative skill areas.

As more requirements are placed on schools to demonstrate improved performance, the more important it becomes for school leaders to be able to use technology to disaggregate data and make decisions based on visual evidence that stakeholders can understand. Presenting results using data analysis software and graphing programs adds credibility to the decisions that school leaders make and reduces perceptions that administrative actions are based solely on perceptions. These skill areas are constantly evolving and changing, and the findings of this study indicate a need for ongoing training in these areas.

4. After hiring a new school leader, it is recommended that school districts provide professional resources to assist novice school administrators with staff evaluation and personnel management issues. Ninety-five percent of the principals and assistant principals completing the SALSS expressed that mentoring would have been helpful due to their lack of experience in these important school management areas. Mentors would be especially beneficial for new principals and experienced principals to assist them in understanding and engaging in their duties according to teacher contract language, school polices, and evaluation procedures. Regardless of experience level, it is impossible for principals who are new to a district to have a working knowledge of the contract language, polices and evaluation procedures that are unique to specific school districts.

5. The importance of understanding their dispositions was a support strategy theme that principals described during interviews. Although not addressed in the ISLLC standards, awareness and understanding of dispositions is an important skill area for principals to develop and use in their practice. The opportunity to work closely with an experienced mentor allows time to reflect upon your dispositions and how these traits influence leadership style and the decision-making. Identifying positive solutions when negative situations arise, avoiding tendencies to personalize situations where objectivity is required, maintaining integrity at the expense of added stress, and being open to criticism in efforts to find acceptable solutions are dispositions that can be developed. However, mentors can heighten the awareness of the importance of developing these leadership attributes through their interactions with novice principals.

Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research about the importance of mentoring to school leaders in Montana include the following:

1. Conduct research to learn more about the perceptions of leaders in class C schools. It is not unusual for leaders in these schools to hold positions as both high schools principals and superintendents. Superintendents are typically responsible for overseeing an entire school district while principals are primarily responsible for supervising one building. Investigating perceptions of administrators in class C schools might provide additional insights about the need for mentoring for school administrators in these small school

districts. Results from a study involving class C school administrators could be compared to the data from this study to determine if outcomes are similar or different to the results presented in this study.

2. Expand this research to include administrators who serve as principals in K-8 school districts to provide further insights into the types of administrative support available to school leaders during their induction year as building administrators.
3. A better understanding of the types of support that school administrators receive during their beginning years would be this research could be expanded to also include administrators who serve as K-8 principals.
4. It may be beneficial to investigate teachers' perceptions of principals who receive mentoring and those principals who receive no formal mentoring support. Teachers' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of school leaders might provide insight to university training programs and school districts related to the future training and preparation of school leaders.
5. Conduct research to determine the extent to which college and university principal preparation programs in Montana incorporate the ISLLC standards in their curriculum and gather the perceptions of program effectiveness from newly certified principals and assistant principals.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to describe the mentoring experiences and administrative support Montana's high school principals and assistant principals receive during their induction year as school administrators. This research effort was also undertaken to describe in greater detail the administrative support novice principals and assistant principals relied on during their first year as school leaders. One hundred and twenty-one principals and assistant principals were surveyed using the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey (SALSS) with a modified scale to assess their experience level and the frequency of mentoring across 10 leadership skill domains. In addition, five principals and assistant principals were interviewed to obtain an in-depth description of the support strategies that were available to them and the support strategies that they relied on in the absence of mentoring during their induction year of administrative practice.

The findings from this study indicate that in all but one category, principals and assistant principals indicated a lack of mentoring support. The only leadership skills area where fewer than 15% of principals indicated that they did not need mentoring support was found for "Skills in the Values and Ethics of Leadership". This outcome suggests that the principals who were surveyed felt that they already had attained some competencies in this leadership skill area from prior experience as a teacher or administrator.

Results from interviews found that the support mechanisms that principals and assistant principals devised during their novice years included reliance on supportive peer

administrators, awareness of dispositions, engaging in activities that promoted their own professional self-development and prior experience. In the absence of mentoring, principals described that creating supportive relationships, investing time to reflect and access to a peer administrator that they confer with were most helpful. Interestingly, access to supportive peer administrators was a theme that principals identified as a strategy they used regardless of the availability of mentoring support.

The findings from this study shed light on the state of mentoring support that practicing Montana principals and assistant principals experienced during their induction years as school administrators. It is recommended that university preparation programs and school districts consider these recommendations when creating support systems for newly hired school principals. It is the researcher's sincere hope that the results from this study will be of value to those responsible for the preparation and licensure of future school leaders.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ISLLC STANDARDS

Appendix A

ISLLC Standards

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- learning goals in a pluralistic society
- the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- systems theory
- information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
- effective communication
- effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the educability of all
- a school vision of high standards of learning
- continuous school improvement
- the inclusion of all members of the school community
- ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
- a willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities
- the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
- progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders
- the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
- an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated
- assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
- relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals
- barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
- needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals
- existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals
- the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised.

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- student growth and development

- applied learning theories
- applied motivational theories
- curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- principles of effective instruction
- measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- diversity and its meaning for educational programs
- adult learning and professional development models
- the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
- the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
- school cultures

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
- the proposition that all students can learn
- the variety of ways in which students can learn
- life long learning for self and others
- professional development as an integral part of school improvement
- the benefits that diversity brings to the school community
- a safe and supportive learning environment
- preparing students to be contributing members of society

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect

- professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
- students and staff feel valued and important
- the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged
- barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
- diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
- life long learning is encouraged and modeled
- there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
- technologies are used in teaching and learning
- student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
- multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
- the school is organized and aligned for success
- curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined
- curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
- the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis
- a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions
- student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
- multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
- a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
- pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
- operational procedures at the school and district level
- principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- human resources management and development
- principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management
- principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space
- legal issues impacting school operations
- current technologies that support management functions

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- taking risks to improve schools
- trusting people and their judgments
- accepting responsibility
- high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
- involving stakeholders in management processes
- a safe environment

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions

- operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning
- emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate
- operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
- collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed
- the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
- time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals
- potential problems and opportunities are identified
- problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
- financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools
- the school acts entrepreneurially to support continuous improvement
- organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed
- stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools
- responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability
- effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used
- effective conflict resolution skills are used
- effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used
- effective communication skills are used
- there is effective use of technology to manage school operations
- fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively
- a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained
- human resource functions support the attainment of school goals

- confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
- community resources
- community relations and marketing strategies and processes
- successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- schools operating as an integral part of the larger community
- collaboration and communication with families
- involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
- the proposition that diversity enriches the school
- families as partners in the education of their children
- the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
- resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
- an informed public

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
- relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured
- information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly
- there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations
- credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
- the school and community serve one another as resources
- available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals
- partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals
- community youth family services are integrated with school programs
- community stakeholders are treated equitably
- diversity is recognized and valued
- effective media relations are developed and maintained
- a comprehensive program of community relations is established
- public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely
- community collaboration is modeled for staff
- opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society

- various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- the values of the diverse school community
- professional codes of ethics
- the philosophy and history of education

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the ideal of the common good
- the principles in the Bill of Rights
- the right of every student to a free, quality education
- bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
- subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community
- accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions
- using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families
- development of a caring school community

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- examines personal and professional values
- demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
- demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
- serves as a role model
- accepts responsibility for school operations
- considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others
- uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect

- protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
- demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community
- recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
- examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community
- expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior
- opens the school to public scrutiny
- fulfills legal and contractual obligations
- applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools
- the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation
- the law as related to education and schooling
- the political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools
- models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling
- global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
- the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
- the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
- recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
- importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
- actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
- using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
- communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
- there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
- the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local state, and federal authorities
- public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
- lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS SURVEY

Appendix B

School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The survey participants are administrators in Montana's class AA, A, and B high schools. Your completion of the survey indicates your voluntary participation in this study, with the understanding that the information will remain confidential.

Demographic Information

1. What is your current position?
2. How many years have you been in your current position?
3. How many years of administrative experience (not counting this year) do you have?
4. Prior to becoming a school leader, what position did you hold?
5. How many years of teaching experience did you have prior to becoming an administrator?
6. How many internship hours (clock hours, not credit hours) have you completed?
7. What is your gender? male / female
8. What is your age?
9. What is your racial/ethnic classification?
10. Is your school class AA, A, or B?
11. What is your school's enrollment?
12. What is the primary economic base of your community (agriculture, timber, tourism, manufacturing, etc.)?
13. What percent of your student population receives free or reduced lunch?

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS SURVEY
(SALSS)

Following is a list of skills needed by school administrators. For each skill, indicate your experience/competency with regard to job expectations and the possible benefits of mentoring. Use the following scale for sections one through five:

1 = No experience, mentoring would be or would have been extremely beneficial

2 = Little experience, mentoring would be or would have been very beneficial

3 = Experienced, mentoring would be or would have been somewhat beneficial

4 = Very experienced now, but mentoring would have been beneficial in my early years of administration

5 = Extremely experienced, mentoring not needed and was never needed

1. SKILLS IN LEADERSHIP	(Circle One)				
1. Create and effectively communicate a district or school vision statement	1	2	3	4	5
2. Establish priorities in the context of community culture and student and staff needs	1	2	3	4	5
3. Assess student achievement data	1	2	3	4	5
4. Empower others to reach high levels of performance	1	2	3	4	5
5. Align financial, human and material resources with the vision, mission and goals of a district or a school	1	2	3	4	5

2. SKILLS IN POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	(Circle One)				
1. Describe the procedures for effective superintendent/board and principal/site-based team relationships	1	2	3	4	5
2. Demonstrate conflict-resolution and interpersonal sensitivity skills in working with groups whose values and opinions may conflict	1	2	3	4	5
3. Establish collaborative, school-linked services with community and other education resources	1	2	3	4	5

3. SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS	(Circle One)				
1. Articulate district or school vision, mission and priorities to the community and mass media	1	2	3	4	5

2. Demonstrate group leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
3. Engage in effective community relations and school-business partnerships	1	2	3	4	5

4. SKILLS IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT	(Circle One)				
1. Gather, analyze and use data for informed decision making	1	2	3	4	5
2. Apply appropriate components of quality management	1	2	3	4	5
3. Implement a systems approach to monitor all components of the school system (subsystems) for efficiency	1	2	3	4	5

5. SKILLS IN CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	(Circle One)				
1. Demonstrate an understanding of curricular alignment to ensure improved student performance and higher-order thinking	1	2	3	4	5
2. Create curricula based on research, applied theory, informed practice, recommendations of learned societies, and state and federal policies and mandates	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum development and delivery	1	2	3	4	5

6. SKILLS IN INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT	(Circle One)				
1. Develop, implement and monitor change processes to improve student learning, adult development, and learning climates	1	2	3	4	5
2. Encourage total student development	1	2	3	4	5
3. Apply instructional strategies that reflect sensitivity to multicultural issues and varied styles	1	2	3	4	5
4. Establish a student achievement monitoring and reporting system based on disaggregated data	1	2	3	4	5

7. SKILLS IN STAFF EVALUATION AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	(Circle One)				
1. Apply effective staff evaluation models and process for teacher and administrator evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
2. Develop a personnel recruitment, selection, development and promotion procedure	1	2	3	4	5
3. Understand legal issues related to personnel administration	1	2	3	4	5

8. SKILLS IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT	(Circle One)				
1. Develop a plan to identify areas for concentrated staff development	1	2	3	4	5
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of comprehensive staff development programming	1	2	3	4	5
3. Implement future-focused personnel management strategies	1	2	3	4	5
4. Improve organizational health and morale	1	2	3	4	5

9. SKILLS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND PLANNING	(Circle One)				
1. Select the proper data-gathering analysis and interpretation methods	1	2	3	4	5
2. Use research-based models and standards for evaluating educational programs	1	2	3	4	5
3. Engage in strategic planning for district's future	1	2	3	4	5

10. SKILLS IN THE VALUES AND ETHICS OF LEADERSHIP	(Circle One)				
1. Demonstrate ethical and personal integrity	1	2	3	4	5
2. Model accepted moral and ethical standards in all interactions	1	2	3	4	5
3. Exhibit multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity	1	2	3	4	5

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by February 18, 2008

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER

Appendix C



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
For the Protection of Human Subjects

960 Technology Blvd. Room 127
c/o Veterinary Molecular Biology
Montana State University
Bozeman, MT 59718
Telephone: 406-994-6783
FAX: 406-994-4303
E-mail: cherylj@montana.edu

Chair: Mark Quinn
406-994-5721
mquinn@montana.edu
Administrator:
Cheryl Johnson
406-994-6783
cherylj@montana.edu

MEMORANDUM
.....

TO: Godfrey Saunders, Boyd Dressler

FROM: Mark Quinn, Ph.D. Chair *Mark Quinn*
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

DATE: January 23, 2007

SUBJECT: *The Mentoring of Principals and Assistant Principals in Montana's Class AA, A and B Schools*

The above research, described in your submission of January 23, 2007, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

- (b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
- (b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- (b)(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
- (b)(5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- (b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.

APPENDIX D

ALIGNMENT OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS
SURVEY TO THE ISLLC STANDARDS

Appendix D

Alignment of the School Administration and Leadership Skills Survey to the ISLLC Standards

<i>SALSS Leadership Skill Domains</i>	<i>ISLCC Standards</i>					
	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5	Standard 6
Leadership	X	X	X	X		
Policy and Governance	X		X			X
Communication and Community Relations	X			X		X
Organizational Management	X	X	X	X		
Curriculum Planning and Development	X	X	X			
Instructional Management	X	X	X			
Staff Evaluation and Personnel Management	X	X	X	X		X
Staff Development	X	X	X			X
Educational Research, Evaluation and Planning	X	X	X			
Values and Ethics of Leadership	X				X	X

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Appendix E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about how you transitioned into the principalship (or into school administration).

Follow up—What were the strategies that benefited you the most?

- What wrong turns did you take?
- What or who was most helpful to you in your transition into the leadership role?

2. In as much detail as you can, explain how you would go about mentoring a new Principal.

Follow up Questions:

- What elements of the role would you focus on?
- How would you establish trust in the relationship?
- What criteria would you use to assess growth of the mentee?

3. Did I record your responses correctly?
4. What do you think about the results of the different interviews?
5. Do you have any recommendations for future research on this topic?
6. Are you satisfied with the protocol for this interview process?