

**University Educational Leadership Program Coordinators' Perceptions of
University–School District Partnership Development**

by

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigated the role of the university educational leadership coordinator in partnership development, the facilitating and hindering factors of partnership development, and the positive and negative outcomes of university-K–12 district partnership development. The voices from the 14 universities and 21 participants gave insight to the level of partnership development present at each of their representative universities.

The framework utilized in this study measured the types of partnerships between external resource systems and school districts which was developed by Barnett et al. (2010). This framework provided an explanation of each type of partnership, the characteristics of each of the partnership model and the range by which partnerships develop.

University-K–12 district partnerships are the fundamental link in improving leadership development for administrators and allows the university to remain current in meeting the needs of K–12 leaders. The university is responsible for developing the leaders in our schools, and if they are not current in research and practice, then they are not equipping those leaders to meet the needs of their students.

My analysis uncovered that the university educational leadership program coordinator was responsible for developing university-K–12 partnerships. Factors which facilitated partnership success were mutual recognition of the value of partnerships, educational leadership program coordinators familiarity with K–12 and years of experience in the K–12 setting. Factors which hindered partnership development were the lack of financial support, changes in leadership, time

and distance to develop partnerships, the lack of support from the university and university attitudes about partnership.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

“In order for schools and universities to reap intellectual and professional benefits of a partnership, they need to interact in meaningful and productive ways” (Breault & Breault, 2010, p. 445).

Public education has received intense criticism in regards to the academic achievement of students. The result of this attention has catalyzed universities to review the educational leadership programs which is the preparation tool for school leaders. One of the features of some of these redesigned university educational leadership program includes the development of university/K–12 partnerships (Alabama, 2005). This chapter provides an overview of events which facilitated the extensive redesign of a university educational leadership program in one southern state, which included such a partnership. This study focused specifically on the role and perceptions of the university educational leadership program coordinators involved in this process.

The Call for Reform

The 1983 report of *A Nation at Risk* served as a catalyst for public scrutiny of the United States educational system (Gardner, Larsen & Baker, 1983). This national reform movement stemmed from the lack of student achievement and the perceived standard of mediocrity in public education. *A Nation at Risk* was not the first nor would it be the last reform initiative in the United States. The 1995 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) reported that 23 million American adults were functionally illiterate and the average SAT verbal and mathematics score dropped by an average of 40–50 points from 1995 to 2003 (Smith et al., 1997). The TIMSS report was a comparison of mathematics and science achievement in which

forty-six countries participated at fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade levels. The report described the performance of students over time in the participating countries. U.S. fourth graders outperformed their peers in thirteen of the participating countries. Eighth graders showed a significant decline in their average mathematics achievement. This decline continued through the twelfth grade. The data from this report supported the need for change in the U.S. educational system.

The passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001), which was originally titled and authorized as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, expanded funding for primary and secondary education. NCLB “promoted efforts to close achievement gaps, supported rigorous accountability, and ensured that all students were on track to graduate” (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenburg, 2012). The primary purposes of this legislation was to improve achievement of the disadvantaged (Title 1); to improve and expand basic programs operated by local education agencies (Part A), including, but not limited to parental involvement, qualifications for teachers and paraprofessionals, and migrant education (Part C); and to implement prevention and intervention programs for children and youth who are neglected and delinquent (Part D) (Michelman, 2012).

A result of the implementation of the requirements of NCLB reports, which included attaining adequate yearly progress (AYP), indicated only minimal success in school improvement was achieved (Bush, 2001). Additional results from the impact of NCLB (2001) legislation exposed huge achievement gaps, the lack of consistent professional development, and the need to change the way resources were allocated (Bush, 2001). NCLB included requirements that students make adequate yearly progress. AYP “is a measurement defined by the United States Federal No Child Left Behind Act that allows the U.S. Department of Education to

determine how every public school and school district in the country is performing academically according to results on standardized tests” (Bush, 2001, p. 5). AYP became contentious for many school leaders because it meant developing skills never before required of a school leader which mandated the improvement student achievement. Haycock (1998) stated that:

One key provision of the law required schools to disaggregate their data by student subgroups and find ways to ensure that all subgroups demonstrate proficiency on the state test. School leaders who were prepared for incremental modifications were now faced with the necessity to make large scale reforms to gain student improvement. (p. 51)

In addition to the federal initiatives described, states, educational policy groups and higher education institutions studied the perplexing lack of improvement in overall student performance. Researchers believe that part of the problem is that improving education is riddled with complexity and that strategies and mandates to do so lacked a focus on the interconnected nature of the educational system (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond, & Haycock, 2007). For example, it is sometimes difficult to determine who should be held accountable for what (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

One outcome of the critique of schools was an increased criticism of teacher development and those who lead these schools. In a series of three research reports, Arthur Levine raised questions concerning whether university preparation programs for teachers and school leaders were adequately preparing their students to deal with improving schools (Levine, 2005, 2006, 2007). Levine’s criticisms came from an extensive nationwide study involving higher education and K–12 education stakeholders. Results from Levine’s reports characterized higher education leadership preparation programs as “inadequate to appalling” (Levine, 2005, p. 23), and teacher preparation programs as “largely ill equipped to prepare current and future teachers for the new

realities” (Levine, 2006, p. 12). However, Levine (2006) did note that higher education was being blamed for many faults beyond its control:

Increasingly schools of education are being blamed for intractable social problems they did not create and cannot solve. They have been faulted for the quality of the people who choose to become teacher’s administrators. They have been blamed for the woes of low-performing schools and school systems. They have been criticized for their inability to close the achievement gap between and the most disadvantaged children in America. (p. 6)

Levine (2005, 2006, and 2007) also outlined what was within the control of higher education. Higher education’s circle of influence included providing school leaders with consistent, rigorous and relevant preparation. Additionally, he suggested that higher education needed to be intimately involved in influencing the development of national, regional, and state educational leadership policies and standards. Levine and others believed that the national system for preparing school leaders was broken and had to be changed (Levine, 2005, 2006; Schools, 2008; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

In the area of school leader preparation, national and regional bodies wanted to provide evidence that efforts to improve were being made and would continue to be made. These groups realized the need for reform and the need to document the good work of teachers and school leaders. Policy groups such as the Wallace Foundation, the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Association of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB), and state licensing agencies such as the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) voiced a need for leadership preparation directly linked to clearly identify professional standards.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) worked independently and collaboratively to develop best practices and standards for school leadership (Murphy, 2003). In fact, these groups partnered to write the ISLLC Standards. Additionally, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration was formed to galvanize collective action on the challenges, opportunities, and problems confronting the field of school leadership (Murphy, 2003). Rebuilding leadership preparation would take time and required a consistent and coordinated effort from a multitude of stakeholder groups.

Members of SREB captured the impetus for needed change. “The real problem is that our recruitment, preparation, and professional development programs for school leaders are out of sync with our scaled-up expectations” (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001, p. 7). SREB concluded that the essential question for higher education was “How do we prepare and develop effective school leaders with a focused mission of student achievement?” (p. 12). SREB issued a call to Alabama and other Southern states to address this growing crisis with its 2001 publication, *Preparing a New Breed of Principals: It’s Time for Action* (SREB, 2010). SREB proposed that successful school leaders “recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practice, motivate and increase student achievement and obtain support from the central office and from the community and parent leaders for their school improvement” (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001, p. 25). SREB concluded that to improve the leadership preparation pipeline, the curriculum must be based on best practices and collaborations between K–12 and higher education. This was based on the rationale, that these new alliances could forge strong partnerships that would support improvement in leadership preparation and thus impact school improvement and student achievement.

Partnerships as Best Practices

The new more rigorous standards proposed by ISLLC were a driving force for revisions of leadership preparation programs. Barber and Meyerson (2005) stated:

Professional standards for educational administrators set the bar for what principals need to know and be able to do to improve teaching and learning. Standards built around research-based competencies that are known to improve student learning can produce leaders who know how to support teachers, manage curriculum and instruction to promote student achievement, and transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students. (p. 21)

The standards or principles were developed and interwoven to produce a well-connected template for the preparation of the leader. Each of the ISLLC standards reflected key aspects of the school leader needed for 21st Century Schools; however, particular interest to this study was the inferences relating to partnerships. Within the 2008 ISLLC standards, the inference to partnership occurred in Standard Four: “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” (Barber & Meyerson, 2005, p. 26). Standard Four implied leadership preparation programs should include partnership as part of best practices.

Partnership Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focused on educational partnerships. Educational partnerships range from simple to complex and from cooperation to collaboration. Barnett (2010) described the typology for the framework of partnerships by distinguishing between cooperation, coordination and collaboration. The interdependence of these concepts is

significant to the success of the partnerships. Collaboration is the desired level of agency interdependence; cooperation is the agreed upon goal; and, coordination is the middle ground (Grobe, 1990). There are five models of partnerships in this conceptual framework which are the independent agency model, vendor model, collaboration model, symbiotic model and the spin-off model.

The *Independent Agency Model* is the simplest of all partnerships. A feature of this type of partnership is autonomy. The organization remains autonomous from the other organizations of which it interacts. Educational organizations who participate in this level of partnership protect key functions from the influence of the partners. For example, aspects of teaching and learning would not experience any guidance from the other partners. The *Vendor Model* is a type of partnership which is utilized when an organization requires a specialized resource skill or product and uses a vendor to provide the necessary service. The interaction level of this model is contingent upon the service being rendered. Once rendered, the relationships can be terminated or be maintained depending upon the needs of the organization. The *Collaborative Model* is a type of partnership where there is intensive, sustained mutual exchange and benefits with mutually agreed structures and outcomes. A more complex model, the relationship of the participants in the collaborative model is much more intertwined and therefore subjected to influence by the opinions and attitudes of its members. The *Symbiotic Model* partnership is a more complex model and the partners realize a shared goal with a “shared at the hip” mentality. Continued engagement with a symbiotic partnerships can accumulate sufficient momentum to separate from the partner organizations or develop stronger associations with the members. The *Spin-Off Model* is a symbiotic partnerships and as it progresses it is possible for them to become new independent organizations. The creation of a new organization developed as a result of a

very complex partnership. These new partners re-evaluate the needs of the newly developed organization and provide the support based on their previous experiences (see Figure 1).

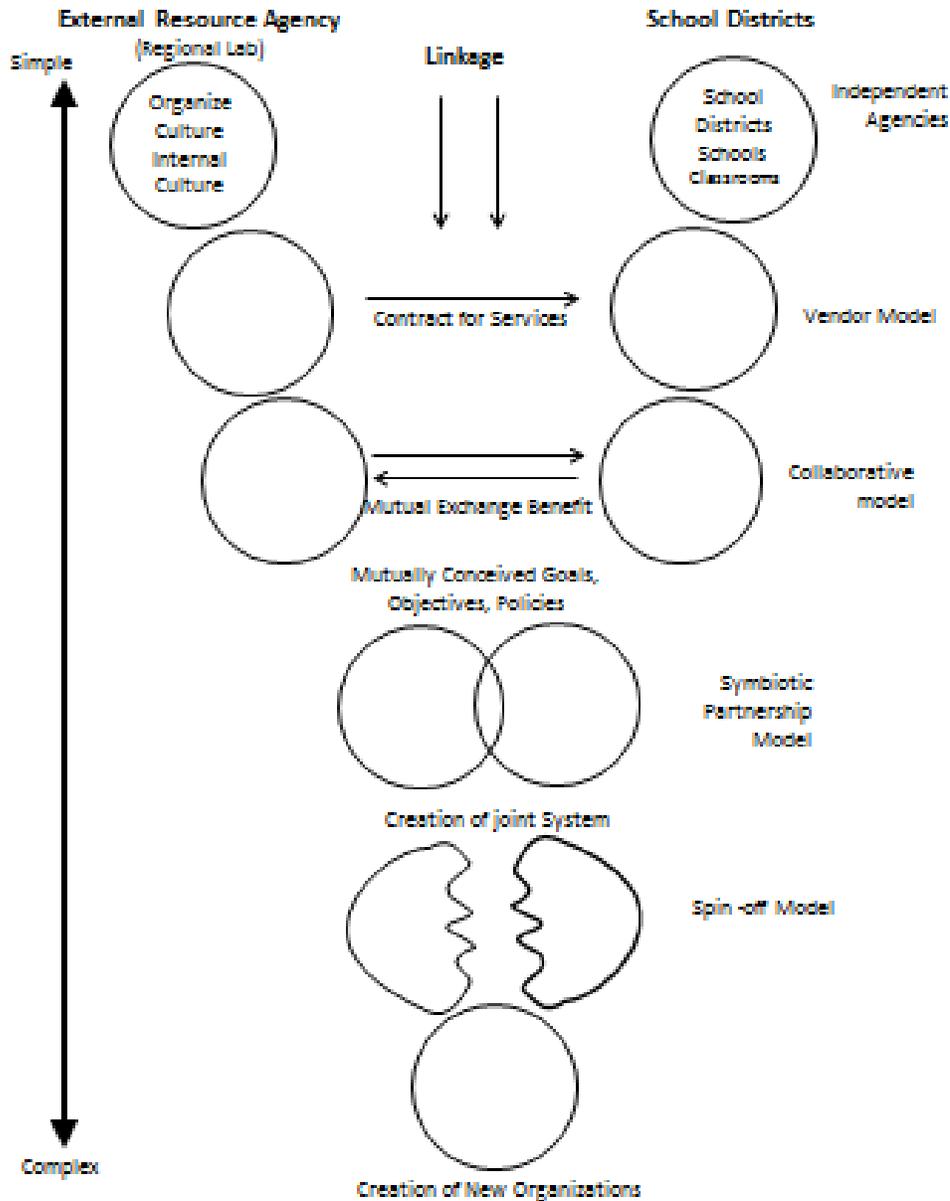


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Types of Partnerships between and External Resource System and School Districts (Barnett et al., 2010).

Alabama's Story

In Alabama, the governor established the Alabama Governor's Congress on School Leadership with the task of examining and making recommendations related to the quality and processes involved in preparing, developing, identifying and keeping educational leaders in the state. For the first time, politicians, state department officials, higher education representatives and local educational agencies (LEAs) all came to the table to improve school leadership in Alabama.

The Congress released a final report in 2005, which linked the findings from many of the noted educational organizations to facilitate the redesign of the educational leadership programs. The report focused on five foundational areas of school leadership: 1) standards for preparing and developing principals as instructional leaders, 2) selection and preparation of leaders, 3) certification of school leaders, 4) professional development to support instructional leaders, and 5) incentives and working conditions to attract and retain a quality principal in every school (Alabama State Department of Education [ALSDE], 2005). The report was a culmination of the research on leadership by the Wallace Foundation Grant, SREB, and the ISLLC. All of these groups had a significant influence on changing the path to leadership structure and delivery of leadership preparation programs. In Alabama, policy makers concluded a redesign of the educational leadership program was a must because "redesigning leadership preparation is a direct pathway to better schools" (ALSDE, 2005, p. 17). State leaders recognized that school improvement and student achievement would not improve without effective school leaders. The Governor's Congress report became a significant document in Alabama's educational leadership program redesign process. The Governor's Congress on School Leadership resulted in an unmistakable statewide paradigm shift in the role of the school leader. The Congress supported

the idea that Alabama's principals must be instructional leaders as opposed to being school administrators and managers (ALSDE, 2005).

Two key players in the Alabama redesign were Dr. Joseph Morton, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) State Superintendent of Education, and Governor Bob Riley. Funding to redesign as well as legislation changing the leadership preparation pathways were set into motion. Legislation was aimed at making universities work with school partners in the design and implementation of school leadership preparation programs. It was suggested that partnering would give a stronger emphasis to improved competencies and practical real world experiences. The goals of the partnerships were to provide more meaningful learning experiences for leadership students. Schools and universities through these partnerships would better align school district needs with principal preparation programs (Lovely, 2009; SREB, 2007).

The Role of the University Educational Program Coordinator

Within the university, the department chairperson is the "link between academic units and the administrative hierarchy" (Goduto, Doolittle, & Leake, 2008, p. 19). The department chair has a multiplicity of tasks, most of which centered around three unique areas of responsibility: academic leadership, resource acquisition, and allocation. Department chairs generally have insufficient time to direct the numerous activities for departments and often assign some of these responsibilities to program coordinators. Coordinators are typically charged with supervising all activities of the sub-unit within educational leadership programs. College and universities with educational leadership programs employ insufficient faculty members for the numerous tasks necessary for functioning programs (Wanat & Hackman, 2003), yet, generally, program coordinator responsibilities must be assumed by one of these faculty

members. Coordinators of educational leadership programs are the link between the universities and the school districts where the administrative candidates are placed. According to Milstein and Krueger (1997), the coordinator is a vital source for providing quality internships for instructional leaders.

“The educational leadership coordinators have an enormous list of responsibilities: leading monthly program areas, course scheduling and delivery, recruitment and admissions, facilitating discussions regarding certifications and serve as the point person on everything” (Goduto et al., 2008, p. 29). As a result of the redesign process throughout the country, the responsibilities of the educational leadership coordinators have changed. However, researchers have not explored how the program coordinators have contributed to the redesign efforts or in what way their role has been expanded and/or implemented (Hackmann & Wanat, 2008; Milstein & Krueger, 1997; Reames, Hackmann, & Phillips, 2010)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine educational leadership coordinators' perspectives of the development and implementation of school/university partnerships in Alabama as they created and implemented their newly designed instructional leadership programs. The researcher chose to use the perspective of the program coordinator because these individuals served in an integral role of the redesign and subsequently encouraged the Alabama mandate to include LEAs as partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the new leadership programs. This study focused upon the manner in which the coordinators perceive their role, the factors which contributed to successful partnerships, and those that hindered partnership development.

Significance of the Study

Partnerships have gained in popularity in regards to leadership preparation programs, but little is known about how partnerships develop or how they can be sustained. A thorough review of literature suggests little attention has been focused on partnership development within educational leadership programs. Additionally, this area needs to be studied because we do not understand how to improve these partnerships or specifically what mechanisms are needed for them to develop. We only know we are supposed to be developing partnerships. Along with the need to better understand these university/K–12 educational leadership program partnerships, the role of the educational leadership program coordinator has been completely ignored. The program coordinator in educational leadership performs a number of functions to include possible LEA partnership development with the university. Thus, examining this role will be an important contribution to the literature.

Research Questions

Four research questions grounded the inquiry:

1. What is the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in partnership development and implementation, as perceived by those who have or are serving in this position?
2. What are the factors that facilitate partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership program coordinator?
3. What are the factors that hinder partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?
4. What are the positive and negative outcomes of partnerships development as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinators?

Research Design

The method of inquiry for this project was a case study. Case study research allows the researcher to observe different phenomenon within real world settings. In essence, the researcher is an observer with little control over the events that unfolded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the present study, the researcher wanted to describe the partnerships using the lens of the 14 Alabama universities educational leadership program coordinators. The researcher wanted a thick rich description of the partnerships that occurred between redesigned leadership programs and the LEAs served by the respective higher education institutions. The case study was that of the educational leadership redesign process in Alabama as perceived by program coordinators.

Limitations

Since the redesign of the educational leadership program began, some of the university staff members who were a part of the initial process have retired and were not accessible to interview. Therefore, this is considered a limitation for this study. Additionally, the depth of the interviews with the staff member who was actively employed, partially retired, or fully retired have varying degrees of complexity. The depth of their reflections are due to several factors: the individual level of involvement or dedication of time of the individual staff member in the process; the depth of the program coordinator's anecdotal notes of the process; and how much time has lapsed since their retirement. A limitation of this case study research may also be the subjectivity or the bias of the researcher who is a student in one of the educational leadership program at one of the 14 Alabama universities. Additionally, because the researcher is only using the experiences of program coordinators in one state, it would be impossible to generalize

the findings to all states. Many states have not redesigned their educational leadership programs and therefore, this would be an unfair comparison of the partnerships.

Assumptions

The following major assumptions made about the study:

- All of the information provided by the participants was a truthful and accurate depiction of their perceptions relative to partnership development.
- Participants were not pressured nor coerced in any way to provide any sensitive information relative to partnership development and their university.
- All school personnel interviewed are or were a part of the redesign process of the educational leadership program.

Definition of Terms

K-12 –a short form for the publicly-supported school grades prior to college. These grades are kindergarten (K) and the first through the twelfth grade (1–12).

Principal Preparation Program – refers to an educational plan of study which prepares graduate students for certifications/degrees in educational leadership.

School Leader – refers to the lead school administrator who has completed a graduate program and holds certification in leadership. The person holding this position may also be referred to as the Principal or School Principal.

University/K-12 Partnership – defined for the purpose of this study as partnerships between institutions of higher education and local public K–12 school systems.

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the study of the university educational leadership program coordinators perception of how their role has changed since the redesign

process has begun at 14 Alabama universities. This chapter introduced the problem statement and its design components. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature and related research. This is followed by Chapter 3 which presents the methodology and procedures used in data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents a summary of the results of the data analysis. The last chapter (Chapter 5) contains a summary and discussion of the findings of this study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to the factors which influenced the educational leadership program redesign in one southern state. The perception of public education in recent decades changed due to increased scrutiny of students, school leaders, and achievement outcomes. This waning public trust in the United States educational system was perpetuated by numerous factors which forced change in most university educational leadership programs. The research literature included here encompasses historical influences from a national and regional perspective as well as a discussion of the development of the ISLLC standards, the Levine Reports (2005, 2006), the Holmes Report (1986, 1990), and the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) (Bottoms, 2001). Included as part of the historical basis for the redesign were the *A Nation at Risk Report* (1983), the *Third International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS; 1995) and *No Child Left Behind* (2001) legislation.

A Call for Reform

A Nation at Risk

The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, demanded educational reform and was the impetus for questioning the effectiveness of the American education system (Gardner, Larsen, & Baker, 1983). This report challenged the perception that American schools were as effective in producing an educated public as other industrialized nations. The report stated:

A strong educational system has always been considered as essential to American prosperity, security and civility. Our society and its educational institutions seem to have

lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling and the high expectations and chose a path of mediocrity which threatened our very future as a nation and a people. History is not kind to idlers and America has squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. The lack of academic prowess whittles away at the slim competitive edge we have in the world market therefore, we must dedicate ourselves to reform our educational system for the benefit of all. (Gardner et al., 1983, p. 7)

The statistics released in the *Nation at Risk* Report served as a wakeup call and as a guidepost of where to begin the change. Other challenges to the superiority of the U.S. educational system included the TIMSS study and NCLB.

Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

The 1995 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) was the largest, most comprehensive and rigorous international study of schools and student achievement ever conducted (Smith et al., 1997). The purpose of the study was to provide comparative data so policy makers could make specific decisions as it related to mathematics and science. The group of students who participated in this study numbered 500,000 from 41 nations. Since the initial review of literature, other TIMSS have been completed. This study reviewed the academic abilities of students at the end of twelfth grade in the United States and at the end of their secondary education in other countries. This was the third in a series of studies and was preceded by two other reports. The first report outlined U.S. comparative eighth-grade results and was released in November 1996; the second report, detailing fourth-grade results, was released in June 1997. Together, these three studies paint the most complete picture ever of how achievement in mathematics and science by U.S. students compared to students of other nations.

In the wake of repeated unflattering reports about the educational system of the United States, President Bush stated in 1989, “One of our national goals is to be first in the world” in mathematics and science achievement by the year 2000. Fourth-graders’ science achievement in the United States was outperformed by only South Korea (Gonzales et al., 2004, p. 7). In mathematics, U.S. fourth graders performed above the international average of the 26 TIMSS countries. U.S. students were outperformed by seven countries but the U.S. student cohort outpaced twelve industrialized nations. Additionally, in mathematics content areas, U.S. fourth graders exceeded the international average in five of the six areas assessed. In science, U.S. fourth graders also performed above the international average of the 26 TIMSS countries.

A review of the findings from the 8th grade results indicated, “U.S. eighth graders score below the international average of the forty-one TIMSS countries in mathematics and in science, U.S. eighth graders score above the international average of 41 TIMSS countries” (Peak, 1996, p. 9). When ranking the U. S. 8th grade students in math, the report found the U.S. to be at “about the international average in Algebra and fractions; however, we do less well in Geometry, Measurement, and Proportionality” (Peak, 1996, p. 9). In science, U.S. eighth graders’ stand “above the international average” (Peak, 1996, p. 9). The results of this data indicated that U.S. students fared reasonably well when compared to the students from other countries. However, these concerns about the educational system and the challenges of the foreign market also allowed for other factors to be considered. “In all countries, the relationship between standards, teaching, and learning is complex. This is even more true in the U.S., which is atypical among TIMSS countries in its lack of a nationally defined curriculum” (Gonzales et al., 2004; Peak, 1996, p. 10).

The TIMSS report shed light on influencing factors such as curriculum standards, pedagogy, teacher preparation and post-secondary support. Concerns about the quality of instruction in U.S. classrooms led mathematics professional organizations to issue calls for reform. For example, within the eighth grade report questions arose in regard to teacher training as it relates to student achievement. It was noted that the training provided by post-secondary teacher education programs needed to be strengthened. Peak (1996) reported:

The training that teachers receive before they enter the profession and the regular opportunities that they have for on-the-job learning and improvement of their teaching affect the quality of the teaching force. The collegial support that teachers receive and the characteristics of their daily lives also affect the type of teaching they provide. (p. 10)

Clearly, policy makers understood the need to improve teaching in order to improve K–12 student academic performance.

The findings from the twelfth grade report were really devastating and fostered the look at secondary and post-secondary schools. “U.S. students’ performance was among the lowest of the participating countries in mathematics and science general knowledge, physics, and advanced science ” (Gonzales et al., 2004, p. 16). In 2012, average scores in mathematics literacy ranged from 368 in Peru to 613 in Shanghai-CHN. The U.S. average mathematics score of 481 was lower than the average for all countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which was 494. Twenty-nine education systems and two U.S. states had higher average mathematics scores than the U.S. average score and nine had scores not measurably different from the U.S. score. The 29 education systems with scores higher than the U.S. average score were Shanghai-CHN, Singapore, Hong Kong-CHN, Chinese Taipei-CHN, the Republic of Korea, Macao-CHN, Japan, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Estonia,

Finland, Canada, Poland, Belgium, Germany, Vietnam, Austria, Australia, Ireland, Slovenia, Denmark, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, France, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Latvia, and Luxembourg. Within the United States, Massachusetts (514) and Connecticut (506) had scores higher than the U.S. average. Furthermore, the overall findings indicated that 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate, and as many as 40 percent of minority students are functionally illiterate. The average Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), which is administered to high school students planning to attend college, verbal score dropped 50 points and the average SAT mathematics score dropped nearly 40 points. These secondary findings negated the positive result from the fourth and eighth grade reports and left policy makers with no other choice but to suggest extensive reforms in university teacher education programs. This pattern of decreasing scores from fourth grade to eighth grade was described as a decline and from eighth grade to twelfth grade it was characterized as a significant drop (Gonzales et al., 2004; Smith et al., 1997; Takahira, Gonzales, Frase, & Salganik, 1998).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; Public Law #107-110), which was originally titled and authorized as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), established funding for primary and secondary education to combat the war on poverty. A cornerstone of the legislation was dedicated to improve achievement of disadvantaged students through a focus on the legislation referred to as Title I. Title I is the improvement of the basic programs operated by local education agencies. Part A of the legislation includes, but is not limited to, parental involvement and qualifications for teachers and paraprofessionals. Part C is dedicated to migrant education and Part D is focused on prevention and intervention programs for children and youth who are neglected and delinquent (Bush, 2001). Over the years, the

influence of the federal government in education had created numerous programs to address educational problems. “Solutions to problems began to add up to hundreds of education programs spread across 39 federal agencies at a cost of \$120 billion dollars a year” (Bush, 2001, p. 1). “Yet after years of spending billions of dollars in education, nearly 70 percent of inner city fourth grades are unable to read at a basic level on national reading test; therefore, we have fallen short in meeting our goal for educational excellence” (Bush, 2001, p. 2). NCLB addressed the prevailing concern to improve student achievement outcomes while linking performance goals to federal dollars. This act, promoted efforts to close achievement gaps, put rigorous accountability in place, and ensured all students were on track to graduate (Bush, 2001).

The newly developed role of the federal government under NCLB placed the brunt of the responsibility for academic achievement with those who are responsible for the results. These decisions created a new educational blue-print with four main components:

- **Increased Accountability for Student Performance:** States, districts, and schools that improve achievement will be rewarded and those who fail will be sanctioned. Accountability will be directed to math and reading in grades three through eight.
- **Focus on What Works:** Federal dollars will be spent on effective research based programs and practices. Funds will be targeted to improve schools and enhance teacher quality.
- **Reduce Bureaucracy and Increase Flexibility:** Additional flexibility will be provided and flexible funding will be increased at the local level.

- Empower Parents: Parents will have more information about the quality of their child's school. Students in persistently low-performing schools will be given choice. (Bush, 2001, p. 4)

The refiguring of the federal dollar within NCLB focused on concerns which were connected to the students and student achievement. However, another component of NCLB focused on the preparation of teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators. Title II established high standards for professional development. "In review, there are 28 programs within the Department of Education that spent a significant portion of their funds on teacher training, 87 programs administered by 13 different agencies" (Bush, 2001, p. 12). These dedicated dollars for teacher training and leader training were available yet gaps in student achievement continued to exist.

NCLB required school leaders and district administrators to seek exemplary training and professional development for teachers, aspiring school leaders, and sitting administrators. According to NCLB, these administrators needed to seek advanced knowledge and skills for themselves as well as their teachers. Much of this development was placed in school leader's hands (Bush, 2001). "States and local districts were permitted to use the NCLB funding to meet their particular needs and strengthen the skills and knowledge of their teachers, school leaders and administrators" (Bush, 2001, p. 12). The continued focus on accountability placed increased pressure for results solely on the school leader's shoulders. At the same time, the need for high quality leadership was being met with a declining pool of applicants and the realization that current school leaders were not adequately prepared for the current job demands (Eppley, 2009).

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy,

support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The ARRA lays the foundation for education reform by supporting investments in innovative strategies that are most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness. The ARRA provides \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top Fund, a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform (Race to the Top Executive Summary, United States Department of Education, November, 2009).

Educating School Leaders and the Levine Reports

Levine (2005, 2006) wrote a series of articles investigating America's schools. The series focused on the education of school leaders, school teachers and researchers. Levine's data indicated that 40% of current school leaders were eligible to retire and that some of the possible retirements were attributed to the level of increased accountability for schools and the school leadership. The Levine reports became known as a major catalyst for reform of educational leadership preparation programs.

Levine's four year study evaluated educational leadership preparation programs at universities and colleges across the United States. For example, growing enrollments in educational administration programs meant those employed to instruct were not always academically strong. Many part-time and adjunct instructors were hired to meet the increasing demand for administrative licensure. The term "cash cow" became reflective of what some university leadership programs thought of the educational leadership process (Levine, 2005). Areas reviewed to determine the quality of the university leadership program included a broad scale of leadership preparation components such as admission standards, rigor and appropriateness of coursework, and experiences of instructors. University faculty members were

expert theorists but lacked knowledge of the practical realities of K–12 environments. “Relatively few faculty members in education schools have had experience as school administrators” (Levine, 2005, p. 40) and because the preparation programs are so overloaded with students, university faculties in leadership programs were “distressingly weak” (Levine, 2005, p. 35). Furthermore, leadership preparation lacked field experiences and meaningful internships. This resulted in “outdated curricula from outdated professors” (Levine, 2005, p. 41).

Replacement school leaders entering the field were faced with more demands of their position and of their skill set. As Levine clearly outlined, “new school leaders were not only expected to be managers of the schools physical plant, they were also expected to be instructional leaders of the campus” (Levine, 2005, p. 32). The skill set needed by the school leader was changing and therefore the preparation of the school leaders had to change because they were ill-equipped to handle the new expectations and requirements. “The preparation of school leaders had fallen into a downward spiral dominated by low-prestige institutions and diploma mills and the instruction was outmoded and expectations were low” (Levine, 2006, p. 18). School leaders’ preparation had to change to meet the current demands of schools and the children they served. In the 2003 article, *Better Leaders for America’s Schools: A Manifesto*, much of the blame for the “leadership crisis” was due to useless education courses and misguided state licensure requirements. As Levine stated, “the majority of programs ranged from inadequate to appalling even at some of the country’s leading universities” (Levine, 2005, p. 23). Candidates for leadership preparation programs were dissuaded from entering the profession because of the uselessness of knowledge and skills in the respective programs (Levine, 2005, p. 19; Meyer & Feistritz, 2003). With the anticipated shortage of school leaders looming and the discouragement of qualified candidates for teaching and leadership positions,

NCLB complicated student achievement measures, teacher training, and the role of school leaders.

Levine also noted an “increasingly diverse and more segregated population by income and race” (Levine, 2005, p. 12). School leaders and superintendents were being asked to serve in leadership roles with a growing number of distinct subgroups. These different subgroups within the public school population had different educational needs from student cohorts of the past. Faced with growing numbers of minority students, an ever increasing necessity to meet the needs of diverse learners, and increased accountability measures from NCLB, school leadership preparation could no longer remain the same.

If reforming the education system was to begin, it should begin with the group who influenced student achievement the most, the teacher (Levine, 2006); however, another important influencer was the school leader. As Levine (2005) stated, “America’s schools were failing; this meant school leaders were failing too” (Levine, 2005, p. 18). “The reform movement put a spotlight on school leadership, highlighted the importance of school success, made students achievement the measure of school performance and demanded accountability from leaders for results” (Levine, 2005, p. 17). Changes in the political climate and the law also changed some of the processes by which school leaders were hired. No longer could professors send their protégée directly to superintendents to be hired without following protocol, searches had to be open for all applicants to have the opportunity to apply. More open and effective hiring processes were required to access the best candidate for the job as opposed to the perpetuation of the good ole boys network which has been utilized for years. These affirmative action policies allowed the field of educational leadership to be open to women and people of color.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

The most significant reshaping initiative in education was the development of the standards for school leaders by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The standards were formed by major stakeholders in educational leadership. Well known and respected organizations like the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), the National Commission for Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Council of Professors for Educational Administration (NCPEA), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) were all involved in the creation of the leadership standards.

These representative bodies facilitated the collaboration between school districts, colleges and universities, and state departments of education. The collaboration of these reputable organizations focused on linking the standards to policy for the purpose of licensures and accreditation. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) acted as an overarching umbrella for the work being done and to have some oversight responsibility of the process (Murphy, 2003). The ISLLC standards clearly aligned the role of the school leader with concentration on student achievement. The ISLLC standards were criticized by some as lacking a research base; however, despite this criticism they provided the framework states have used to redesign existing leadership preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Partnerships as a Best Practice in Leadership Development

The call for educational reform encouraged the educational sector to review the appropriateness of partnerships in leadership development. As universities came under scrutiny

in general and more specifically for educational leadership, development of the need for change and support of the K–12 schools unfolded. Partnerships were seen as an underdeveloped area of best practices (Barnett & Jacobson, 2012; Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Camarena, 2010). As the focus of educational reform became more clearly defined, the necessity of collaboration between university and K–12 school districts became a significant focus. To better meet the needs of the communities served by teachers and school leaders, universities and K–12 districts began to understand there was a need for partnerships. Universities were responsible for training teachers and school leaders. The ability of K–12 districts to influence what was being taught at the university level was important because teachers and school leaders would be developed along the literature on best practices and the needs of the school districts they served. As Burton and Greher (2007) stated, “University-school partnerships are a fundamental link to strengthening teacher education reform” (p. 14). Partnerships are believed to bring about reform between agencies, institutions, organizations, individuals, and groups. “Partnerships are viewed so positively that they appear as mandates in federal statutes such as the Higher Education Act of 1998 and the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 11).

For many years, partnerships were established in other disciplines such as medicine, business, and technology. Partnerships in educational settings were not a new phenomenon. Dewey recognized the problem over one hundred years ago. In his 1904 essay, *The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education*, Dewey argued for a laboratory approach to the professional development of teachers (Spendlove, Howes, & Wake, 2010, p. 66). In the early 1970s, school and business partnerships were formed as financial incentives (Barnett et al., 2010). Community-school partnerships were established to facilitate the purchasing of rewards for

students and teachers i.e., t-shirts, gift certificates, etc. As those partnerships became more frequent, educational initiatives such as “Adopt-a-School” began to surface. These “Adopt-a-School” partnerships provided additional resources to the school. Later, public confidence for public schools diminished as employers wanted a better trained workforce. To influence the student product emerging from the schools, businesses sought ways to encourage and assist in developing the worker (Barnett et al., 2010). Bridging university theory with K–12 practices once again emerged as a way to encourage the development of a labor force ready for work.

Trends in the 1990s in developing partnerships, indicated that universities provided direct assistance to students through a collaboration resulting in a network of universities. University staff provided an opportunity to foster collaboration with colleges, universities and public schools. According to Mebane and Galassi (2003), when schools and universities work together to identify goals and work towards achieving those goals, “then their joint efforts can produce transformative outcomes” (Breault & Breault, 2010, p. 445). Another trend in partnerships notes that professional development schools have surfaced as a way for schools and universities to better prepare future teachers while providing professional development for practicing teachers (Barnett et al., 2010). University-school district partnerships provided opportunities to change education at two critical levels: one, the organization who receives the leader after training, and two, continued long-term support well after the training. University leadership programs are charged with involving school districts partnerships in every factor of the program (Reames, Jimerson, Kochan, & Allen, 2011). As a result, these district relationships are important to the fidelity of education leadership programs (Reames et al., 2011, p. 3).

Improvements in educational leadership preparation required interconnected work between universities, practicing school leaders, professional organizations, and state-level policy

makers. The need for partnership was unmistakable. Young (2002), Restine (1997), Orr (2006), and Darling-Hammond (2007) collectively developed a voice to implement and sustain professional development partnerships between universities and K–12 districts in order to have a long-term effect on teacher and leadership development. Goodlad (1990) and the Holmes Group (1990) were the catalyst for many university-K–12 district partnerships (Breault & Breault, 2010). “While a professional development school (PDS) may not change a program or institution to a large degree, studies demonstrated that such partnerships have the potential to change the views, attitudes, and dispositions of the participants themselves” (Breault & Breault, 2010, p. 448).

Partnerships between university and K–12 districts challenged stakeholders to blend the theory of university teaching with the practice of K–12 schools. Darling-Hammond (2007) noted that “partnerships (University and K–12) can take significant steps toward establishing and supporting positive learning organizations” (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 29). The dedication to improving student achievement by the use of partnerships allows for better utilization of resources: human, intellectual, financial and physical. If established correctly, these alliances set the stage for continual professional growth.

The university-school partnerships, when dedicated to the appropriate content, become:

- A. dynamic sites for developing and sustaining best educational practices
- B. contributors in the preparation of pre-service teachers’ and in the induction of individuals into the teaching profession.
- C. providers of opportunities for continued development of practicing professionals, and
- D. conductors of research and inquiry (Lefever-Davis, Johnson, & Pearman, 2007, p. 207).

The goals supported by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2001) are interdependent, and when achieved, K–16 educational settings are “simultaneously renewed” and the partnership becomes integral to the renewal (Lefever-Davis et al., 2007).

A key component to the quality of the partnership is the relationship between the university and the public school. School boards and educators are experimenting and are reaching out to a new community (Druckman, Peterson, & Thrasher, 2002). These newly developed partnerships are more inclusive and involve not only academic components, but administrative components as well. Development of partnerships between university and K–12 districts have begun as a result of strong emphasis from the Wallace Foundation, the University Council of Education Administrator (UCEA), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standard (ISLLC), the Educational Leadership Constituent (ELC), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and other best practices for university leadership development programs forging community alliances (Reames et al., 2011). These partnerships focus on leadership development involving school district partners and present opportunities to engage leaders in the redesign process.

Educational leadership programs have been the subject of significant scrutiny which has prompted change to rethink how leaders of or nations schools are being prepared. One way to meet the challenge is the need for universities to develop partnerships with the districts they currently serve (Breault & Breault, 2010). A key factor in developing university-school partnerships is the required commitment of developing relationships among the stakeholders of the partnerships (Breault & Breault, 2010). If not developed properly, this lack of commitment will become a barrier to the process. This relationship development includes meaningful interactions with stakeholder at all levels: school, district and community. Development requires

a commitment of time which “cannot be based upon intermittent efforts.” “An annual meeting to touch base and see how the work is going will not sustain a committed effort among all stakeholders” (Breault & Breault, 2010, p. 448).

A benefit of the partnership is that it strengthens university program preparation and further development of educational leaders (Reames & Kochan, 2013). These partnerships address a crucial area of educational reform. Partnership support groups link individuals across institutional or professional status domains and connects them; furthermore, this connection provides support for professional development (Mullen & Kochan, 2000). Two publications assisted in the partnership implementation at the post-secondary level: *Tomorrow’s Teachers and Educational Renewal* (1986), and *Better Teachers, Better Schools* (1994). These reports encouraged university-K–12 district partnerships with teacher education programs through professional development (Reames & Kochan, 20, p. 6). Although the emphasis for these partnerships aimed to support teachers, similar and more profound needs were prevalent for school leaders. As a result, analogous partnerships were created in the preparation of school leaders (Reames & Kochan, 2013).

In an article by Reames, Jimerson and Kochan (in press), findings were presented in reference to two university settings and their development of the partnerships with area school districts. One university had formal partnerships with eleven school districts while the other university had a developing partnership with one district but no formal agreement (Reames et al., 2011, p. 3). Both universities had partnerships after the educational leadership programs were redesigned, but the university with a formal understanding had clear expectations and boundaries for the university and K–12 district collaboration.

On the other side, the lack of partnerships between university and K–12 school districts influenced the quality of the applicant pool in educational leadership programs. “Absent of partnerships with school districts, there are no easily accessible mechanisms for identifying the best candidates” (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 6). Individuals who have a promising future may not be identified nor be encouraged to enroll in an educational leadership program. This process does not enable districts to develop their staff to fill vacancies with the best suited person for the position nor does it allow the university to meet the specific educational needs of the school district teachers and leaders. A problem inherent to university and K–12 partnerships is the tendency for the university to assume a dominate role as a way to secure teacher and administrative internship development. This technique does not foster a true exchange of ideas. Another factor which constrains collaboration is the traditional concept of protester versus practitioner which results in communicative distance with participants (Lefever-Davis et al., 2007).

The lack of strong working relations between university and K–12 school districts also made it impossible to develop learning laboratories in which “student-school leaders can make protected mistakes” (Darling-Hammond, 2007, p. 6). Mistakes modeled in a protected learning environment decrease those mistakes occurring when the candidate becomes the school leader. The atmosphere of guidance and growth prepares the school leader candidate by providing real-life situations for learning. “The leadership ability” and “leadership values” of the school leader determine, in large measure, what transpires in a school; what transpires in a school either promotes, nourishes, or impedes and diminishes academic success” (Reyes & Wagstaff, 2003, p. 10).

“University-school partnerships are a fundamental link to strengthening teacher education reform” (Burton & Greher, 2007). These partnerships have impacted the development of teachers which is most often seen during the teacher internship process. The rationale for educational partnership came as a result of the demands of educational reform with strong suggestions from the following reports: *A Nation at Risk* (1993) and the 1986 report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*; and three reports from the Holmes Group: *Teacher Preparation* (1986), *Design of Professional Development* (1990), and *Design of the Schools of Education* (1995).

The literature reviewed relative to partnerships reveals that these relationships have been popular as a part of the framework for improving the educational process. The purpose of the partnerships varied as a result of the type of partnerships formed. Generally, partnerships have had a positive impact when developed with specific features. The partnerships:

- Involved top-level leadership in decisions
- Developed programs that are grounded in the needs of the community
- Created an effective public relations campaign
- Established clear roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Employed strategic planning and develop long-term goals
- Utilized effective management and staffing structures
- Ensured that shared decision making and local ownership occurred
- Provided shared recognition and credit for all personnel involved
- Committed resources that are appropriate and well timed
- Provided intensive technical assistance
- Created formal written agreements, and

- Are patient with the change process and gradually expand the involvement of others (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 17).

Certain elements can detract from partnership effectiveness. Those elements are considered to be barriers or road blocks. As with any association, the lack of funding is a constant barrier. Other concerns are the absence of a common vocabulary, practitioners missing from the discussion, and working groups which are too large. More complex road blocks include cultural barriers which exist whenever “working norms between the partners institutions are in conflict; different visions, philosophes and assumptions” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 18). Regulatory road blocks which are identified as existing rules: ways of doing business; conflicting policies and personal concerns which can inhibit participant participation (Barnett et al., 2010).

The Influence of PDS in Partnership Development

The Holmes Group (1990) recognized the need to improve classroom practices, and wanted to assist by improving the training experiences of practicing teachers as well as those in the teaching pipeline. The Holmes Group and the Professional Development Schools (PDS) they created supported the idea that teacher development and preparation needed additional supports to strengthen their connection between theory taught at the university and practice learned at the school. It suggested PDS would “develop new visions of teaching and prepare practitioners who can implement the vision” (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990, p. 6). PDS envisioned partnerships as a fundamental concept in improving schools. University and school districts must collaborate and nurture their mutual partnerships (Group, 1990). These connections supported and enhanced the purpose and function of PDS which is to blend university and K–12 resources and expertise for school improvement. The goal was to study and develop instructional practices which would improve K–12 outcomes (McBee & Moss, 2002). The practice of PDS was similar to Levine’s

suggestions that universities needed to strengthen preparation of teachers and school leaders. Others would argue similarly, “partnerships between educational leadership programs and school districts can provide seamless leadership development to support and sustain high quality leadership” (Breault & Breault, 2010, p. 440).

Development of PDS collaborations between district personnel who hire teachers and university officials who train them must take place. Previously, “school-based cooperating teachers and campus based supervisors rarely came together to discuss a shared vision for student teaching” (Goodlad, 1993, p. 28). Goodlad’s (1993) research indicated that “university-school partnerships as key to both school renewal and the preparation of those involved in schooling” (p. 41). These partnerships are beneficial to all if they are formed correctly; university and K–12 partnerships should be formed based on mutual need. This would require partnership development to be a way of life and not a project or task with a limited scope.

PDS schools initially focused their attention on teaching. The ongoing presence and involvement from university faculty, who shared the school mission, created ongoing relationships between the university and school district personnel (McBee & Moss, 2002). University and K–12 district leaders became more collaborative with stakeholders. In PDS where college faculty crisscrossed with K–12 faculty on a regular interval, opportunities were created for multidimensional interaction of theory and practice (McBee & Moss, 2002, p. 62) and the beginning of partnerships.

Conceptual Framework

For this study, Barnett et al.’s (2010) partnership framework was used. “Some universities have initiated partnerships with school districts to strengthen programs and provide greater relevance to the work in schools” (Burton & Greher, 2007, p. 16). “The belief in

partnerships has become so strong that they are used increasingly as the lever to bring about reform within and between agencies, institutions, organizations, groups and individuals ” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 10). “Collaborative partnerships tend to be educational partnerships represented by organizations that rely on each other for their strengths and resources, and have formal arrangements for how the work will be accomplished” (Reames et al., 2011, p. 10).

Partnerships are considered to be such a powerful tool that federal mandates have included verbiage about the concept directly or indirectly. A review of the Higher Education Act of 1998 and the Elementary and Secondary Act, reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (2001) both included this concept. The framework for educational partnerships as established by Barnett et al. (2010) summarizes the types of partnerships that can be developed between schools systems and other agencies. Additionally, in identifying the types of partnership, Barnett also discussed the complexity levels included within the partnership types. According to Barnett et al., the types of partnerships include: independent agencies, vendor model, collaborative model, symbiotic partnership model, and the spin-off model.

The types of partnerships outlined in this framework range from simple to the complex and the simplest form of partnerships is the Independent Agency Model. This type of interaction is not a partnership. Instead, it appears as an independent agency which allows the participant organizations to function with complete autonomy. School districts maintain independence relative to core functions like teaching but may partner with other tasks such as school maintenance (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 23). When organizations require a specialized resource, the most efficient means to provide the service to the organization is through a contracted labor process. This describes the Vendor Model (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 24). The vendor provides a service and once rendered, the relationship is terminated.

The Collaborative Model is a mutually beneficial relationship for all parties involved. “There is intensive and sustained exchanges with complex intertwined relationships” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 24). This type of partnership focuses on ongoing and long term communication. The fourth type of partnership is the Symbiotic Model. It is a more complex relationship which moves beyond the benefits of the collaborative model. “The uniqueness of the symbiotic partnerships is there is a larger shared goal and it is heavily dependent on people. Joint systems create well established symbols reinforcing its identity such as a project name or logo” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 27). A characteristic of this type of partnership is exhibited when one member reacts and it affects all of the other members in the partnership. Another characteristic of the Symbiotic Model is that members of the partnership are allowed to leave their parent organization in order to fulfill the needs of the other partnership members.

The most interconnected type model with “accumulated sufficient momentum and activity to make it a viable entity separate from the partner organizations is the spin-off model” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 27). As a result of this model, a spin-off may occur and create a new organization. Typically, creating a new organization is challenging; however, with the Spin-off Model some dimension of the organizational structure are attached. This model can be risky especially if the spin-off organization becomes a competitor of the partnership organization.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of partnership development.

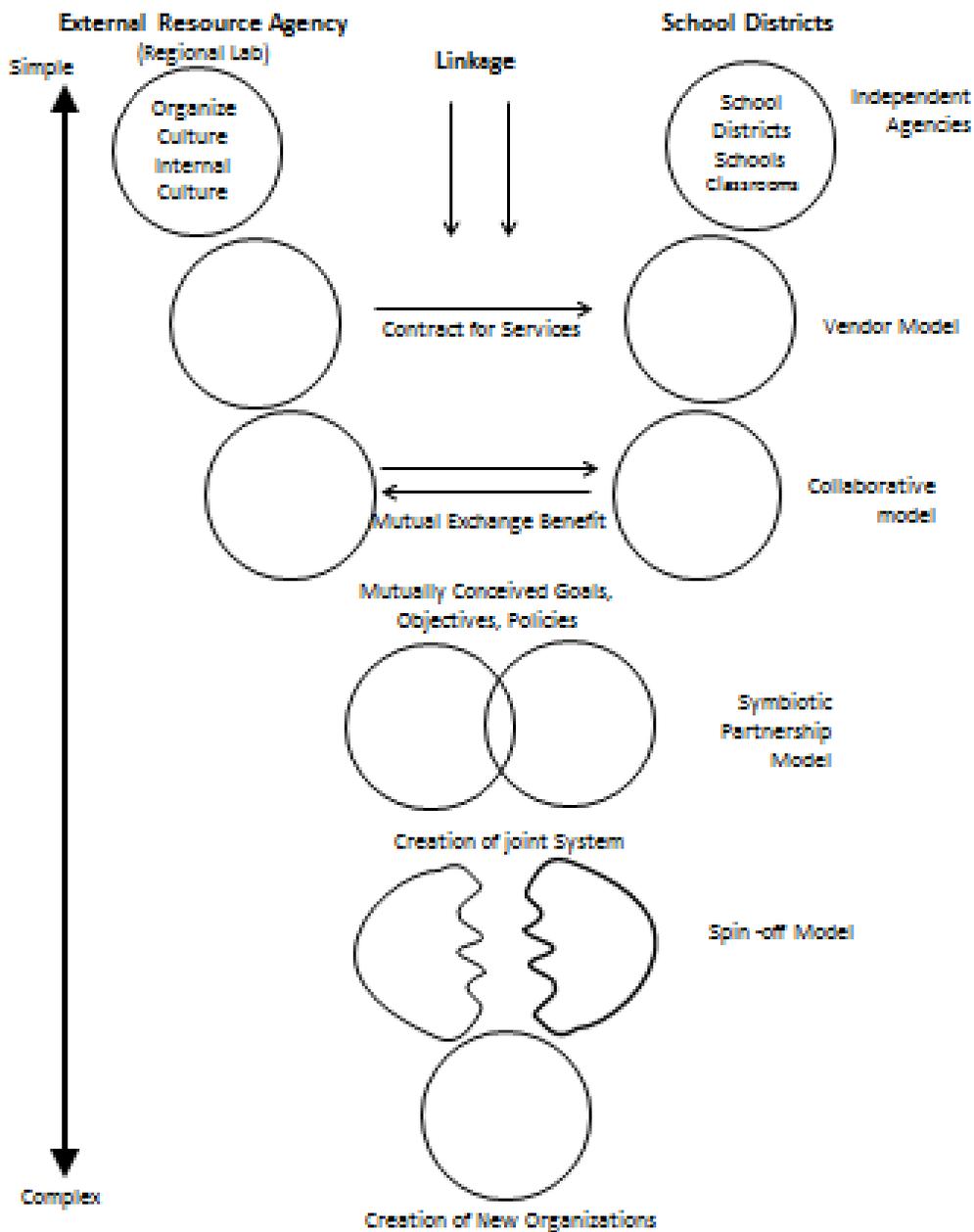


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Types of Partnerships between an External Resource System and School Districts (Barnett et al., 2010).

Interdependence is the level of support and involvement of the participants of the partnerships that allow goals to be achieved. According to Barnett et al. (2010), the concepts of cooperation, coordination and collaboration provide a gauge to the desired level of agency interdependence. “Cooperation occurs when agencies remain in autonomous agreeing to work together only accomplish a short term focused goal such as sponsoring a joint conference” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 2; Intriligator, 1992). Coordination of “these agencies continue to accomplish the majority of their work independently...but agree to relinquish some agency autonomy in the interest of accomplishing the integrity objective” (Intriligator, 1992, p. 3). Collaboration represents “the highest form of inter-organizational interdependence by uniting organizations and people for the purpose of achieving common goals that could not be accomplished by any single organizations or individual acting alone” (Barnett et al., 2010; Swan & Morgan, 1993, p. 21).

In applying the partnership model to the educational setting, the collaborative or symbiotic partnerships were preferred. “School leaders should be collaborative decision makers who deter from their traditional role to a more collaborative leadership which requires a new skill set” (Goduto et al., 2008, p. 347). Partnerships are cooperative inter-organizational relationships which emerge and strengthen when partners have congruent purposes, values, and expectation” (Goldring & Sims, 2005, p. 227).

School Leadership Development in the Age of Reform

According to a 2004 report by the Wallace Foundation, the educational leadership paradigm shift facilitated dramatic changes in what public education needs from school districts, schools, and school leaders. School leaders can no longer function simply as business managers tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations, and avoiding mistakes. “School

leaders have to be (or become) leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instructor” (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 30). Linda Darling-Hammond (2007) indicated the most influential factor in improving student achievement is the teacher. However, the second most influential factor is the school leader. The school leader fosters the climate in which the teacher and students mature. “School leaders and district leaders have the most influence on decisions in all schools” (Wahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 30).

Previously, research related to school improvement and student achievement focused on all of its emphasis on the influence of the teacher giving little or no significance to the voice of the school leader (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001). More current research not only identifies the school leader’s role in student achievement but also places it at a hierarchical importance just below that of the influence of the teacher. Some research even toggles with the idea that leadership is the most influential factor improving student achievement (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008).

The influence and the role of the school leader or school leader leadership has been scrutinized and viewed more heavily as a result of the increased accountability standards and expectations for student achievement are voiced. At the turn of the century, the American infatuation with performance standards has become a global love affair (Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Shipman, 2003; Shannon, 2007; Vanneman, Hamilton, & Anderson, 2009).

In this era of accountability, the school leader is in a precarious situation. “Given the passage of formal government standards, school leaders who ignore their role in monitoring and improving school performance do so at their own risk” (Hallinger, 2005, p. 222). If the school leader chooses to wager this risk of ignoring his/her monitoring role, it is palatable for a small period of time as comparative data of education institution will propel a change. The scrutiny of

the achievement and how schools performed has been reflected in reviews of school leader/instructional leadership roles and preparation. Although in early research, the definition of instructional leadership was poorly defined as school leaders are expected to “deliver or at least promote better instruction” (Barker, 2001, p. 67) . The range of leadership behaviors vary, which makes replication of actions challenging especially since the definition of leadership can be vague and unclear. To add to the complexity of this situation, the reform movement toward standards based education continues its momentum. The accountability movement of 20 years has made some huge leaps and small incremental changes; no matter the level of change, standards based reform is the current direction of education which is very likely to remain based on the demand of accountability.

Of the many facets in educational reform receiving scrutiny, leadership effectiveness is a topic of repeated review. It is widely believed that a good school leader is key to a successful school (DeVita et al., 2007; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Hoyle & Torres, 2008; Levine, 2006). As increasing levels of accountability surface, school districts are “placing the burden of school success and individual student achievement squarely on the school leader’s shoulders” (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001). School leaders, once seen as managers of the school physical plant, are now considered the instructional leader of the organization. In a detailed 2010 survey, the link between school leadership and improved student achievement is forged. This link propels school leadership and development to the front of the line as it relates to issues of major concern in education.

The demand for strong school leadership continues to be necessary as a result of moving toward these standard-based reforms. “New school leaders who took over a school this year faced a dramatically different environment than school leaders just five years ago” (Lashway,

2003). As the role of the school leader receives heightened attention, more rigorous requirements and intensified scrutiny continues to increase. Those that wish to serve as school leaders are required to receive new forms of teaching specifically related to standards of teaching and learning. University leadership programs are expected to supply the training and teach school leaders and aspiring leaders what they need to know to be an instructional leader. School leaders are requiring new forms of training in the school leader preparation programs that go beyond the management of the school (DeVita et al., 2007).

Based on a report from the Wallace Foundation entitled *Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform* (2007), we have learned some specific requirements needed for leadership development:

- “1) Leadership identification must be deliberate,
- 2) Leadership can make a measurable difference,
- 3) Exemplary school leader training has been documented,
- 4) Improved leadership training is essential with a mentoring component, and
- 5) Ongoing professional development with a focus on instruction and skill development is a must.” (DeVita et al., 2007, pp. 5–6)

The aforementioned steps are the results from the lessons learned due to successes and failures in leadership development and implementation.

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Church, 2002, p. 5) . The school leader is key to large-scale reform of instruction. In schools that have more challenging issues, leadership and its effects may even have a greater influence. “The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning accounts for about a quarter of total school effects. The suggestion here is

that not only is leadership significant, but 25% of the total effects of the school can be contributed to the leader influence” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). Targeting the effective school’s process is the shift in professional practices that will foster all cognitive developments in leadership. In leadership development with research on adult learning, shifts by adults are likely to be promoted by programs that “1) have a well-defined and well-integrated theory of leadership for school improvement; 2) use preparation strategies that maximize learning, learning transfer, and leadership identifying formation; and 3) have strong content and field experience” (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Leadership skills assist in framing the need for leadership development. Policy and financing also influence leadership-school leader development. Different states have different policies to influence leadership development. These policies, programs, or procedures may be related to professional development and funding. These measures may be long term or short term supports which vary from state to state and district to district (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

The significance of professional development for any educator, especially the leader, supports the constantly changing knowledge field. States and districts with varying resources provide varying levels of support through professional development. The same situations hold true for the available financial support, encouragement, and availability of compensation with district resources. Coupling financial incentives with new and rigorous leadership credentials affects the leader’s ability to be developed.

Targeting the effective school’s process is the shift in professional practices which will foster all cognitive developments in leadership. In leadership development with research on adult learning, shifts by adults are likely to be promoted by programs that “1) have a well-defined and well-integrated theory of leadership for school improvement; 2) use preparation

strategies that maximize learning, learning transfer, and leadership identifying formation; 3) have strong content and field experience” (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

The reform movement indicates the need to review the school leader leadership program along with other parts of the educational process. “A public agency survey found that 69% of school leaders and 80% of superintendents believed that typical leadership programs “are out of touch with realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts”(Kottkamp, 2010, p. 2). Over 85% of both groups believed that overhauling preparation programs would help improve leadership”(Lashway, 2003, p. 2). As these practitioners are faced with the new requirements, these leaders have identified the lack of appropriate skill base of school leader and the need for change. Surprisingly, 69% of school leaders indicate that school leaders’ preparations programs are out of touch with the real life skills necessary for their own success (Lashway, 2003).

Recognition of the need for change by practitioners also requires a level of acceptance by leadership preparation programs that they too need to change. College professors and leadership program administrators have conceded that they have become engaged in changing their process in development of leaders (Norton, 2002). “No matter how effectively professors’ package and present knowledge, they (or their students) ultimately face the problem of creating a bridge between theory and practice. Too often the research agrees, it turns out to be a bridge to nowhere” (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001). Curriculum of the school leadership program has been the focus of the colleges and university which provide the leadership programs. As a part of the reform efforts, evaluation of the school leadership programs delivery and curriculum is an area under scrutiny. University staff have now become participants, some willing some not as much in changing the delivery of instruction. State education agency and

districts have considerable influence with colleges and universities to sway licensure and accreditation requirements (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

In the United States, the majority of leadership programs has been dedicated to coursework which emphasized school law and administrative requirement with very little emphasis being placed on curriculum development, effective teaching, and student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This path of preparation has resulted in candidates who are ill prepared for the demanding role in which they find themselves (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Baker (2001), a researcher from the United Kingdom, states the literature nevertheless confirms the popular belief that the “head teacher is a decisive influence on the success of a school” (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011, p. 54). It is interesting to note in this culture, the school leader is referred to as the “head teacher” continuously making the connection that the head teacher—the school leader—is still in fact “a teacher.” “Almost every single study of school effectiveness has shown both primary and secondary leadership to be a key factor, and the importance of the school leader’s leadership is one of the clearest of messages from school effectiveness research” (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011, p. 55).

Through a series of articles which scrutinized the policy, procedures and accomplishments of the U.S. educational system, a reflective tone evolved relative to the educational leadership in schools. In 2001, then President of the United States Bill Clinton asked Congress to set aside millions of dollars in the budget for professional development of current and prospective school leaders in what was called the School Leadership Initiative (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002, p. 3). The importance of the educational leadership for U.S schools increased with the designation of federal funding. Various educational organizations began to take notice of the rhetoric dedicated to the reform of the preparation for educational leaders and

remarkably “most practitioners agree that there are too many ineffective programs currently operating and have repeatedly called for drastic restructuring of educational leadership preparation” (Achilles, 1990; Bridges, 1992; Capper, 1993; Culbertson & Hencley, 1962; Lomotey, 1989; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Miklos & Ratsoy, 1992; Milstein, 1993; Murphy, 1992; Osterman, 1990; Parker & Shapiro, 1992; Wendel, 1992; Young et al., 2002).

The mounting attention to the issue of educational leadership was ignited by widely read articles in the *New York Times* and *USA Today* which did not address concerns with the board leadership issues but focused specifically on the leadership preparation and professional development. These articles were highly critical of traditional university preparation of school and school system leaders and are hopeful about the possibilities of alternative preparation programs (Young et al., 2002). The evidence indicated the leadership preparation programs are inadequate and ongoing professional development is haphazard. These consistent messages established a call for reform of the educational leadership program and process.

Reform in Leadership Development: University/K–12 Partnerships

In 1999, this reform was actualized by a blue-ribbon study established to create a blueprint for change in the educational leadership program. The National Commission of Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEAA) forwarded eight recommendations that when summarized indicated that the educational leadership programs must be redefined: to model preparation programs from other professions; a national policy should be established to relate to educational leadership; a reduction in the number of preparation programs are needed; a consistent effort in preparation and placement of ethnic minorities and women; an establishment of partnerships with universities and school who prepare school administrators; an increased professional development for practicing administrators and reform of the licensure process

(Young et al., 2002). These recommendations influenced the change process in the school of educational leadership and received wide-spread support. Additionally, these changes provide a tremendous opportunity for university preparation programs to make positive and substantive modifications.

In *Educating School Leaders* (2005), Arthur Levine launched a high-profile critique of the quality of educational leadership programs. He asserts that programs lack purpose, curricular coherence, adequate clinical instruction, appropriate faculty, and high admission standards. In a parallel critique, the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) report, *Schools Can't Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of the University School Leader Preparation Programs* (2006), argues:

There is a lack of urgency for refocusing the design, content, process and outcomes of school leader preparation programs based on the needs of schools and student achievement and little will happen until there are committed leaders of change at every level – state, university, and local school district. (Black & Murtadha, 2007, p. 5)

The commitment to reforming the educational leadership program had numerous stakeholders who were impacted by these reforms. Changes at every level included minimizing the coursework which focused on the management of facilities and infuse the coursework which stimulated change in the academic environment. Collaboration is thus a necessary ingredient for the improvement of preparation programs (Young et al., 2002). Many agencies and organizations, university professors and practitioners expressed longstanding commitments to improvement efforts. As collaboration was required, the development of partnerships between the K–12 educational system which utilizes the educational leaders, and the university system which prepares the leaders is a foundational element in the change process.

Twenty colleges who were all members of the University Council for Education Administration (UCEA) found a special interest group to discuss the question, does the educational leadership preparation programs add value to education? Terry Orr, a member of the interest group, noted from the conversation of group members the changes within some state licensing procedures and an alternative preparation procedures (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005). Orr also noted that the increasing expectations added criticism of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) relative to program design, delivery and access. According to Browne-Ferrigno and Fusarelli (2005),

When the steam engine of outright attack on university preparation arrived in 2005 in the guise of reports by Hess and Kelly (2005) and Levine (2005), the task force was not daunted, but we increased our energy and determination to continue the work we understand to be increasing important. (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005, p. 7)

Work is needed to have a database on the effectiveness of educational leadership programs and allow that data to plot the next steps in program development. “With the expanding numbers of leadership programs, and growing leadership accountability there are questions such as, What is a good leader? What is good leadership? What do we expect good leaders to be able to do? What is the value added? What are our common purposes? For what do we hold ourselves accountable?” (Browne-Ferrigno & Fusarelli, 2005, p. 6). The necessity for research of educational leadership programs to answer these questions to quell the fears or catalyze the next steps is critical to the reform efforts.

The reforms which have prompted the change in leadership are well-known national initiatives like the report *A Nation at Risk and Educating School Leaders*. These reforms

reviewed leadership preparation programs and made clear these programs are in dire need of change. “School leaders across the nation agree that administrator training programs deserve an ‘F’” (Hale & Moorman, 2003) and this grade is based on 69% of responding school leaders. A score of “F” assigned by school leaders who responded to the survey by Public Agenda indicated the identification of the lack of requisite skills for the position (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003). Factors which influenced the lack of skill requirement can be related to the quality of applicant in the leadership program. “Those who seek entrance into leadership programs gravitated toward programs based on convenience and ease of completion; quality of program is hardly a leading criterion” (Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby, 2002). Candidates who applied that rubric are hardly considered to be the top quality candidate. Admission standards of college that lack stringent criteria have no shortage of applicants of these programs so the need to recruit high quality applicants to fill these seats of these classrooms is minimized. The candidates who participated in these programs self-selected as opposed to being referred by schools or district leaders.

New interest was generated in leadership programs as a result of a variety of influences, the first being the introduction of standards in administrative practices by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), which forced universities and colleges to revise their preparation programs to meet these new standards. Secondly, new accountability standards for schools receiving Title I schools funds which required the reduction in the achievement gap of student groups. Already under scrutiny, with the projected shortages of school leaders the quality of school leaders was more intensely evaluated. Individually, one of the influences would not have facilitated any change but collectively, the areas’ influence caused a perfect storm for reform of the educational leadership preparation programs. After years of commentary

about the lack of rigor is the public school system which displayed lagging student performance, “it should come as no surprise that the topic of leadership preparation has emerged as a critical topic” (Hoyle & Torres, 2008, p. 213).

Alabama’s Story – Governor’s Congress on School Leadership

Increased accountability within the educational ranks has fostered a focus in improvement of school leadership. In an article focusing on paradigms shift, the State of Alabama, directed by the Governor, reviewed and recommended changes to school leader preparation programs. On November 30, 2001, a collaborative effort with Governor Bob Riley and State Superintendent Joe Morton emerged with the purpose of addressing the development of strong school leaders in the State of Alabama. The Governor’s Congress on School Leadership began examining school leadership and making recommendations for improvement. The task force, comprised of about 200 educators and business leaders, focused their efforts on five issues:

Standards for preparing and developing school leaders as instructional leaders; selection and preparation of school leader’s certification of school leaders; professional development to support instructional leaders; and incentives and working conditions to attract and retain a quality school leader in every school. (ALSDE, 2005)

The impetus for these areas began with the increased accountability but is also grounded in research.

Teaching of the teacher is the most influential factor in student achievement; however, school leadership is second most influential factor. District and school leadership are the linchpin to reform efforts to improve student academic achievement. “Effective leadership has the greatest impact in those circumstances in which it is not needed, i.e., schools continually “in

trouble” on state assessments. Superintendents and school leaders are likely still the most influential” (ALSDE, 2005). Leadership in key positions sets the climate for the organization. Research findings from the Wallace Foundation and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) on school leadership were integral components in the redesign of school leadership programs.

Task Force One reviewed the standards for preparing and developing school leaders as instructional leaders. The members reviewed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), standards and developed a Code of Ethics which addressed: “Planning for continuous improvement, teaching and learning, human resource development, diversity, community and stakeholder relationships, technology, management of the learning organization and ethics.”

Task Force Two was required to “make recommendations for changes in program design and redesign proposals centering on an emphasis on practical preparation at every level of the university leadership program” (ALSDE, 2005). Task Force Three was to review the certification of school leaders. Layering these certifications would allow delineation from a novice leader to a veteran leader based on skill acquisitions opposed to years in the position. The process would require five years and multiple evaluations throughout the process. These multi-layered certifications would also be tied to salary increases.

Task Force Four recommendations call for a “seamless network of professional development to support Alabama school leaders” (ALSDE, 2005). These recommendations would include collaborations between universities in-service centers, school districts, and the State Department of Education. The goal is to promote a system which is an “inclusive coordinating entity” to maximize resources and sustain leadership development.

Task Force Five developed proposals aimed at “creating working conditions and incentives for attracting and retaining quality leaders in every ‘Alabama school’” (ALSDE, 2005). In addition to the recommendations of the five task force groups with collective memberships of 250 participants, parents, and research from SREB indicated specific areas of focus. “Redesigning leadership preparation is a direct pathway to better schools, but it is vitally important that states not waste their efforts on implementing piecemeal strategies or flawed plans for re-design” (ALSDE, 2005). States must invest the time and resources into implementing these re-design programs in order for true leadership to emerge with the appropriate skills. This approach will provide pervasive change for a broader scale of improvement over a longer period of time.

Essential action for initiating a systemic leadership re-design should begin with authorizing legislation for the re-design. This should include the purpose and specific intent of the re-design such as:

- (1) making districts partners with universities in preparation of school leaders;
- (2) re-designing programs for preparing school leaders, assistant emphasis to developing the essential competencies for improving schools and increasing student achievement;
- (3) creating a licensing structure in which the professional license is based on evidence that school leaders can improve schools and increase student achievement;
- (4) providing a new school leader induction program that focuses on continued professional development with coaching and mentoring;
- (5) providing a state leadership academy or other professional development process that strengthens current school leader capacity to work with faculty in changing school and classroom practices and increasing student achievement; and

(6) providing school leaders with working conditions that make it possible for strong instructional leadership that improves teaching and learning for all students. (ALSDE, 2005)

The recommendations from the Governor's Congress on School Leadership in November, 2004, have begun its implementation. "The Alabama State Board of Education in 2005 adopted and disseminated a set of performance assessment guidelines for university leadership programs and a significant component of the new standards was the requirement of university/K-12 partnerships to support the preparation of leadership candidates" (Reames, 2010). After the Alabama State Board of Education granted approval, the process of determining which colleges or universities would be selected to participate in the re-design process. A competitive grant process was offered to higher education institutions who sought to be a pilot organization in the process. "Auburn University's grant proposal was approved on November 15, 2005" (Reames, 2010). This approval indicated that Auburn University would be one of the four universities to participate in the new educational leadership programs.

The goal of redesigned educational leadership programs is to prepare practitioners to assume school leadership roles with the knowledge and skills they need to be a success once they have secured the position. "Over forty states have adopted the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (CCSSO) to serve as a framework for preparation" (Kottkamp, 2010). "The ISLLC standards offer new 'blueprints of school leadership' structured upon empirical findings about effective schools" (Kottkamp, 2010). These research-based findings support that student academic success is linked to school-leadership influences.

The final recommendation offered by UCEA was that “universities should ‘prepare fewer better’ by reducing the total number of programs to those fewer than 200 administrators” (Jacobson & Cypres, 2012). The impetus of the recommendation is that universities must produce fewer candidates with the requisite skills needed for the current educational environment as opposed to producing excessive number of candidates with non-essential skills.

Just as other states were redesigning their educational leadership program, Alabama redesigned its school leader preparation programs curriculum. “On November 30, 2004, Governor Bob Riley and State Superintendent Joseph B. Morton convened the Alabama’s Governor’s Congress on School Leadership to propose the development of strong leadership in Alabama Schools” (Reames, 2010, p. 437). Five task forces were developed to address leader development. This led to the redesign of educational leadership programs.

The Implementation Task Force identified important areas requiring change to address the Alabama Standards for instructional leaders. “The following areas are identified planning for continuous improvement, teaching and learning, human resource development, diversity, community and stakeholder relationships, technology, management of the learning organization, and ethic (ALSDE, 2005). The redesigned Alabama Educational Leadership program adhered to the adoption of clearly aligned instructional leadership knowledge and proficiencies (Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

The Alabama State Department of Education adopted the performance standards and included as a significant component the requirement of university K–12 partnerships to support the preparation of leadership candidates (Reames, 2010). While curriculum cohort models, field experience, and admittance procedures were all redesigned, “one area of promise was widespread support for the suggestion that the redesign should be partnership-based with local

education agencies and other university preparation programs (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr, 2006; Reames, 2010; Young & Kochan, 2004).

The redesign of university educational leadership programs throughout the nation and more specifically in the sixteen member states is a scaffold process. The ultimate goal of the redesign of the university educational leadership program is to improve student achievement. “Given the urgency for increased student achievement, it would seem that redesigning school leader preparation programs around leadership practices that have an impact on students learning would be a high priority in every university. Yet it is not” (SREB, 2006, p. 7). The process for redesigning the university educational leadership program has a blueprint of areas to address and although 22 pacesetter universities have begun the process, progress is moderate in most of the willing universities. This modest level of implementation indicates that the majority of “universities have fallen short in creating the high quality programs centered on preparing school leaders (SREB, 2006).

The weakness in redesign efforts among pacesetter universities included “a lack of collaboration between universities and school districts” (SREB, 2006, p. 34). This deficiency is in direct relationship to the university partnerships established or the lack of partnership development. Although other weaknesses are identified to include failure to create a curriculum that develops leadership skills, poor planning, and lack of rigorous evaluation, the significance of the lack of collaboration does not go unnoticed.

Although university educational leadership programs are considered the cash cows of university profits, its support received a “low level of importance. The absence of strong leadership for change within the educational leadership department have drastically retarded or derailed the redesign” (SREB, 2006, p. 10).

A factor to be considered which may increase the derailment is the number of educational leadership candidates who are graduating and being employed in spite of the redesign. This factor has influenced the progress of the redesign process. “The reluctance to change school leader preparation programs cannot be blamed on the lack of clarity about the important role school leaders’ play in the success of schools” hesitation to dive into the change process at the university level has as much to do with the university leadership as it has to do with the lack of stick-to-it-ness of policy-makers, state agencies, and department of education leadership, local school districts and local school boards (SREB, 2006, p. 10).

In addition to the curriculum framework, which is a major part of the university redesign schema, “the development and implementation of a support system for universities and districts that are working together to redesign leadership programs” (SREB, 2006, p. 21). These frameworks are built on the importance of a university-school partnership. These university-school partnerships are not unidimensional projects, they are a variety of partnership types that have different structures and goals.

One of the support systems incorporated strategies to ensure university presidents, provosts and deans of education give high priority to school leader preparation programs and support their leadership departments’ redesign efforts as indicated by the report from SREB, *Schools Can’t Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University School leader Preparation Programs*. In this report, the “study revealed about one-third of the 22 pacesetter university programs (7) have made substantial progress in developing the appropriate coursework” (SREB, 2006, p. 9)

The redesign of school leadership is an arduous undertaking requiring fundamental changes to improve the quality of educational leadership candidates. Areas which provided a key place for state agencies, universities and school districts to begin:

- Authorize a commission to plan and provide oversight for systemic redesign of the school leadership system including selection and preparation of school leaders', licensure, induction of professional development, and working conditions following a process such as the one recommended in this report.
- Require universities and local school districts to work together to select the right candidates for school leader preparation and develop new programs that incorporate relevant content and field-rich instructional approaches to ensure aspiring school leaders master the essential knowledge and skills for improving schools and increasing student achievement.
- Challenge university presidents to place a high priority on producing a continuing supply of high-performing school leaders and make it an essential part of the institutional mission, with a level of funding and staffing that supports a quality program (SREB, 2006).

The Governor's Congress on School Leadership in Alabama (2005) has had an "unmistakable paradigm shift in the belief that Alabama's school leaders must be instructional leaders as opposed to school administrators" (SREB, 2010). SREB tracked the implementation of the leadership reform and indicated several areas of focus, but the most significant being that "while many districts have embraced the changes, others have not" (SREB, 2010, p. ii). From the university and district perspective, both deans and superintendents "expressed agreement that Alabama's school leadership reforms have resulted in a greater emphasis in school leaders as

instructional leaders” (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001). Furthermore, university deans indicated that reforms have strengthened university-district partnerships; however, superintendents were not as convinced. Several other responses from university deans and superintendents echo this pattern. “The emerging picture of the reform effort is that it is the strongest at the state level, weaker in the universities and weakest at the district” (SREB, 2006, p. 21). Much of this pattern is the result of a top-down mandate. Although superintendents, university personnel and teachers were a part of the focus groups which developed these changes, the reform is yet seen as a top-down initiative.

“University and district respondents were in agreement that Alabama still needs to work on its supports from leadership reform” (SREB, 2010, p. 18). This support must come from the leaders who developed the reform components. This member list should include the policy makers who motivated university and districts to cultivate the right personnel for the process; the state agencies who found ways to support university and implementation of newly designed programs; university presidents that recognized that high performing school leaders are key to the academic growth of students and therefore a quality preparation is important; departments of educational leadership who have embraced the need for change and ownership in the curricula change process; the local school district who welcomed ownership in modification of the school leader process; and local school boards who provide opportunities for aspiring candidate to be selected. Collectively, all the aforementioned groups must reconnect to the reform process and continue with the planned changes.

Educational Leadership Program Coordinator

The redesign of the educational leadership preparations program to include partnerships requires a review of the manpower responsibilities of the university staff. Within the university

structure, “80% of all university decisions are made at the departmental level;” therefore, the responsibilities assigned to department chairperson can have a direct impact on the implementation of university-K–12 partnerships (Seagren, 1993, p. 19).

The department chairperson duties revolve around three highly interrelated factors: daily contact with administrators, faculty and students. “Additionally, the department chairperson handles the daily operations of the department” to include funding, salaries, incentives, course schedules, and other administrative tasks (Seagren, 1993, p. 21). While the list of duties can be daunting, “multiple program units are expected to represent all specializations with the department with equal enthusiasm” (Hackmann & Wanat, 2008, p. 64). The department chairperson may also serve as the university educational leadership program coordinator or assign the task to another staff member.

The university educational leadership program coordinator is typically charged with supervising all activities of the subunit and serves as the point of contact for all individual inquiries. The educational leadership program coordinator must establish and maintain connections with local school districts and administrations so that credibility is maintained. The coordinator also participates in conversations with certification agencies, accreditation bodies and other credentialing processes. The recruitment of student applicants is also a task assigned to the educational leadership program coordinator. The duties and responsibilities can be expansive and morph into other responsibilities. While the tasks mentioned are focused on the position of the educational leadership program coordinator, the responsibilities of the coordinator relative to being a college instructor are also present. In addition to preparing and teaching an adequate course load, providing students in those classes with timely feedback is also expected. Conflicts with peers due to the responsibilities associated with the position of the educational

leadership coordinator may cause additional pressure “if the peers perceive the coordinator is exceeding their boundaries” (Hackmann & Wanat, 2008, p. 65).

A new dimension in the role of the university educational leadership coordinator in the redesign of the educational leadership program is the development and sustainment of university-K–12 partnerships. Some of the opportunities for partnership development are embedded in the role of the university educational leadership coordinator and their view of their role since redesign is not documented.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 3 describes the research methods employed in the study. This chapter contains the purpose, research design, research questions, and data collection methods and data analysis. Also included in Chapter 3 is a description of the participants who contributed to the research.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the redesign of the educational leadership programs at the higher education institutions in Alabama from the perspective of the university educational leadership coordinator. All 14 leadership programs in the state were restructured as a result of the 2004 Governors' Congress report and a series of findings from the Alabama State Department of Education (2006). A significant component of the redesign was the requirement that University-K-12 partnerships support the preparation of education leadership candidates (Reames, 2010). This study focused on the universities' educational leadership coordinators' perspective after the redesign of the program was implemented. Specifically, this study reviewed how redesign impacted the universities' educational leadership coordinators' role and responsibilities and what changes, if any, have been observed.

Significance

This study was significant because it identified the level of partnership development in the educational leadership programs at 14 Alabama universities as the redesign was implemented and the status of these partnerships at the present time. This study also examined the level of

partnership implementation relative to the contextual framework and navigates the opportunities for future partnership development which was made known as a result of this study. The study explored the instrumentality and significance of the program coordinators' role in attaining partnerships as a result of the program redesign.

Research Design

The research design for this investigation was a qualitative case study. "Case study involves the study of a specific case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting" (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Additionally, the central tendency among all types of case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what results (Yin, 2013, p. 15). The case study inquiry copes with situations in which there may be more variables of interest rather than data points. Additionally, the case study method recognizes multiple sources of evidence. This type of inquiry is beneficial because it serves as a theoretical guide to data collection analysis (Yin, 2013). The case is to determine the perceptions of the role of university educational leadership coordinators relative to the factors that facilitate and hinder partnership development. The case also studies the positive and negative outcomes of the endeavor. In the case study, the positive and negative outcomes of the development of partnerships was the focus of attention or the issue and the frame of reference used to illustrate the case. A case study method is the most appropriate because it allows the investigation of how and why the partnerships were developed from the perspective of the educational leadership coordinator.

Research Questions

This qualitative study addressed four questions that grounded the inquiry:

1. What is the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in partnerships development since the redesign as perceived by those who have or are serving in this position?
2. What are the factors that facilitate partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?
3. What are the factors that hinder partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?
4. What are the positive and negative outcomes of partnerships as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinators?

Data Collection

“Data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions” (Creswell, 2013, p. 146). The types of data collection in this case study included documents, archival records, and interviews. “In case study research, documents are used to corroborate and augment evidence from sources” (Yin, 2014, p. 107). Documents which were analyzed in this case study included letters, memoranda, and other written reports. Several written reports of recommendations on how educational leadership programs should be redesigned to include partnership and the actualization of these partnerships were the cornerstone documents of this research. Archival records was a type of data collected for this research. The archival records were used in conjunction with other sources of information in producing a case study. Demographic survey data from university educational leadership coordinators was used as a part of this research.

According to Fetterman (2010) “field notes are the brick and mortar of an ethnographic edifice”, because field notes can stand alone as collected data or help provide more cultural meaning to other methods of data collection such as observations and interviews” (p. 116). Field notes differ from observations, participant interviews and other methods of data collection because field notes also help to develop descriptions of participant gestures, emotions and sketches of cultural influences. Similarly, field notes also point to other data to be collected, and to the reflections and interpretations of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Fetterman, 2010). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), field notes are usually raw data that contain abbreviations, maps and brief descriptions or documents until more formal notes can be written and coded for analysis (p. 71).

I wrote my field notes within a 48 hour window following my observations because the memory of observations and events can pass quickly (Fetterman, 2010). I used a digital recording device to capture and store my field notes while in the field and then I transferred my notes to paper. My field notes provided support to help me construct and define codes and regular patterns of participant behavior that lead to the emergence of themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Fetterman, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

“One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (Yin, 2014, p. 110). For this research study (Yin, 2013) the interview data collection method was 14 semi-structured informal interviews of the university educational leadership coordinators. I used an informal approach during the one-on-one interviews between the participants and myself. I used an informal approach which allowed me to gather personal and political perspectives of the partnership development which allowed for a more open exchange of information. This method may provide an opportunity for more in-depth information exchange which may not have been

revealed through other data sources. The researcher constructed the stories of the participants in a narrative form in order to report multiple perspectives that range over the entire perspective of the case (Creswell, 2013). Interview data provided quotes, impressions, and concerns of the participants so that my interpretations and coding would present a more accurate reflection of their experiences and ensure their voices were heard (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In conducting the semi-structured interviews, I utilized an interview protocol as a data collection tool to help me organize my thoughts, inform the participants, thank the participants, and keep my interview schedule (Creswell, 2013; Fetterman, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I conducted 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Field Notes

Creswell (2009) stated that “reliability can be enhanced if the researcher obtains detailed field notes by employing a good-quality tape for recording and by transcribing the tape” (p. 209). These field notes were used to develop codes and ultimately the major themes that emerged through the transcribed interviews.

Data Analysis

The collection and analysis of data can be challenging for case study research. The process of data analysis involved several steps to include organizing the data, engaging a read-through, coding and organizing themes, representing the data and forming interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative data analysis consists of preparing the data with the intent to reduce the data into themes for the purpose of coding. As data is coded, condensations of themes resulted which allowed the data to be represented by figures (Creswell, 2013). While Huberman and Miles (1994) adopt a systematic approach to analysis in qualitative inquiry, they state that

Wolcott uses a more traditional approach to research for ethnographic and case study analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 180).

The process of data collection and analysis are “interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (Creswell, 2013, p. 182). The best representations of the process is a spiral image which is reflective of the process I used. After gathering the data, the process followed that which is outlined by Creswell (2013) and Miles and Huberman (1994). The data was classified into categories to allow for forming of codes. Detailed descriptions developed which led to the creation of themes. In the process of coding, winnowing occurred in which information which was not needed was discarded. As suggested by Huberman, Miles and Creswell, preliminary counts of data codes determined how frequently the codes appeared in the database. The frequency of code appearance gave way to the creation of themes. Interpreting the data meant that frequency of themes correlated to the frequency of insight relative to the study.

Assumptions

- All of the information provided by the participants was a truthful and accurate depiction of their perceptions relative to partnership development.
- The participants were all asked the same questions; however, additional questions were added to some interviews.
- Participants were not pressured nor coerced in any way to provide any sensitive information relative to partnership development and their university.
- All schools interviewed are a part of the partnership development process of the educational leadership program.

Background and Setting

In 2004, Alabama Governor Bob Riley established the Governor's Congress on School Leadership in which groups of stakeholders worked together with the focus of transforming the philosophical and conceptual framework of the development of educational leaders (SREB, 2010). The stakeholders of this group, 150 delegates, were divided into five task forces which resulted in a report which detailed a change process to improve the preparation process for educational leaders in the state of Alabama. The final report from the Governor's Congress on School Leadership was released in 2005 with a series of recommendations from each of the five task forces. All indicated that principal preparation programs in Alabama and across the nation needed to be updated with the guidance of policy leaders and the new standards from ISLLC and state boards of education (SREB, 2010).

Task Force One reviewed the standards for preparing and developing principals as instructional leaders. The members reviewed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards which addressed: "Planning for continuous improvement, teaching and learning, human resource development, diversity, community and stakeholder relationships, technology, management of the learning organization and ethics."

Task Force Two was required to "make recommendations for changes in program design and redesign proposals centering on an emphasis on practical preparation at every level of the university leadership program" (ALSDE, 2005). Task Force Three was to review the certification of school leaders. Layering these certifications would allow delineation from a novice leader to a veteran leader based on skill acquisitions opposed to years in the position. The process would require five years and multiple evaluations throughout the process. These multi-layered certifications would also be tied to salary increases.

Task Force Four recommendations called for a “seamless network of professional development to support Alabama school leaders” (ALSDE, 2005). These recommendations would include collaborations between university in-service centers, school districts and the State Department of Education. The goal was to promote a system which is “an inclusive coordinating entity” to maximize resources and sustain leadership development.

Task Force Five developed proposals aimed at “creating working conditions and incentives for attracting and retaining quality leaders in every ‘Alabama school’” (ALSDE, 2005). In addition to the recommendations of the five task force groups with collective memberships of 250 participants, parents and research from SREB indicated specific areas of focus.

“Redesigning leadership preparation is a direct pathway to better schools, but it is vitally important that states not wastes their efforts on implementing piece meal strategies or flawed plans for re-design” (ALSDE, 2005). States must invest the time and resources into implementing these re-design programs in order for true leadership to begin to develop the appropriate skills

University and K–12 partnerships were also a strong component of the findings from the task force participants; although not explicitly stated, partnership formation was suggested throughout all five task force reports. In the task force reports, the necessity for university and K–12 partnerships became evident because of the tasks and the roles of those involved. Some states were required to include LEAs in the selection of candidates. Real life internship experiences, the role of and need for formal and informal mentoring of aspiring leaders and the coordination of professional development opportunities which included the development of relationships with stakeholders were all important new mechanisms that university programs were required to include (ALSDE, 2005). All thirteen Alabama leadership programs participated

in the redesign process and all thirteen were expected to develop and sustain strong university K–12 partnerships. While “university district partnerships will need continuing work, these new relationships require time to work out shared expectations and boundaries” (Board, 2010, p. ii).

Participants

Pseudonym for University Participants

1	Warrior University
2	Pride University - Primary
3	Pride University - Secondary
4	Freedom University
5	Historic University
6	Solider University - Primary
7	Solider University - Secondary
8	Stars University
9	Stripes University - Primary
10	Stripes University - Secondary
11	Flag University - Primary
12	Flag University - Secondary
13	Eagle University - Primary
14	Eagle University - Secondary
15	Salute University - Primary
16	Salute University - Secondary
17	Patriotic University
18	American University - Primary
19	American University - Secondary
20	Liberty University

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that credibility is a substitute for internal validity. Credibility “is to carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability of the findings will be credible, and secondly, having the findings approved by the constructors of multiple realities being studied” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). A qualitative researcher will have created truth and value in a study if the research has represented those multiple constructions adequately. This study used the following approaches to achieve credibility and therefore true value: “(a) prolonged engagement in the field, (b) triangulation of data sources, (c) member checking” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301).

Ethical Conditions

In this case study the associated protocols include thinking of the researcher as a detached objective outside expert. Other components include the avoidance of deceptions, no breaches of promise and/or confidence (Schwandt, 2007, p. 90). The researcher entered into a contract which explains the purpose of the research and received approval from Auburn University and its Institutional Review Board (IRB) on October 15, 2015 (see Appendix A). An informed consent document (see Appendix B) was signed by all participants informing them of the right to withdraw from participation without consequence which was explained to all participants (Schwandt, 2007, p. 91)).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher/investigator is a doctoral program candidate and a district administrator affiliated with one of the partnership universities. At the time of the study, the investigator was not employed by any of the universities in which the partnership process was being studied; however, the researcher served as a district representative with an affiliated partnership

university. The researcher has worked in a K–12 district and served in multiple positions within the district. Currently, the researcher is working as a district administrator with the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), therefore the researcher is very familiar with educational processes and procedures at various levels.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations. This is a single case study with multiple participants; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other similar case studies with fewer numbers of participants.

Another limitation is the role of the researcher and her role in the study. In a qualitative research study, the researcher is the instrument. In this study, the researcher represented her employing district at the partnership meetings with the affiliated university, therefore the researcher had personal insight of the partnership process and was familiar with the educational leadership coordinator of one of the thirteen university coordinators interviewed for this study.

The redesign process, which included partnership development, began in 2005. The subjects interviewed for the study were the university coordinators of the educational leadership programs. Some of the university coordinators who were originally a part of the partnership development had retired but still participated in the interview while others who had retired were unable to be reached. In interviewing their replacements, the level of detailed information to the initial process was not recoverable and therefore may have impacted the perception of the partnership development achieved.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the Governor's Congress on School Leadership established the commencement of leadership development in the state of Alabama. Beginning the statewide

paradigm shift from school leader to instructional leader was a huge undertaking. The redesign of the school leader preparation programs was the result of the shift which included a modification in all components of the preparation of school leaders to include certification, coursework, internships, recruitment, and professional development. The aim of the multifaceted approach was to improve the instructional leadership pipeline in Alabama and to ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

As a part of the redesign, formal university/K–12 district partnerships must be established for the purpose of designing and implementing a leadership preparation program focused on preparing school leaders to improve student achievement. This study sought to answer questions about the university and K–12 district partnership development progress from the perspective of the university educational leadership coordinator. Information gained from this study will identify success and roadblocks to partnership development and implementation. The findings will also provide meaningful context to aid in the development of educational leadership programs in Alabama. Policy makers and others seeking to foster school/university partnerships in educational leadership and other program areas will gain information to modify their approach to partnerships based on knowledge gained from this study. Additionally, this research will add to the body of work in partnerships and should provide impetus for future research.

Summary

In Alabama, state leaders recognized that school improvement and achievement would not occur without effective school leaders. The redesign of the school leader preparation program must include formal university/K–12 district partnerships. This research seeks to answer the question of what is the role of the university educational leadership coordinator, which factors facilitated and hindered partnership development, and the positive and negative

outcomes of partnership development. All of the revelations are from the prospective of the university educational leadership coordinator.

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

Introduction

As public education received intense criticism for the lack of academic achievement of students, a review of educational leadership programs ensued. Levine (2005, 2006) wrote a series of articles which ignited and supported a call to reform educational leadership preparation programs across the nation. As the need for the redesign of educational leadership programs became more apparent, school/university partnerships were seen as an underdeveloped area of best practices (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Camarena, 2010; Barnett & Jacobson, 2012; (Korach, Seidel, & del Carmen Salazar), 2012).

As policy makers and leaders in the field of educational leadership began to rethink how school leaders were being prepared, collaboration between universities and K–12 districts became more evident. Partnerships between universities and K–12 can help participants take significant steps toward developing learning organizations to improve student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2007). University-K–12 partnerships began to develop as a result of the redesign and this study used the framework of Barnett et al. (2010) to gauge the level of partnerships development with University-K–12 districts in the Southern state of the study.

The purpose of this study was to examine university and K–12 district partnership development through the eyes of the university educational leadership program coordinator after the redesign of educational leadership program in one Southern state. The study examined the role of the coordinator, the factors that facilitated and hindered partnership development from the

university coordinators prospective. A second focus was to identify best practices for future implementation of partnership with the LEA's and universities.

Data Collection Procedures

The primary data source for this study was personal interviews. Interviews were performed face to face, telephonically or with video assistive technology. The interview process provided insight to the lived experiences of the educational leadership program coordinator from the partnership development perspective. As a function of the interview process, the interviewee responses are in the form of authentic feelings (Schwandt, 2007). An interview script was created based on a list of the pre-determined questions that each participant was asked (Appendix C). This semi-structured format was aimed to elicit stories of the educational leadership program coordinator.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then shared with participants for member checking. The interviews were then coded. Charmaz (2001) "describes coding as a "critical link" between data collection and their explanation of meaning" (p. 3). Coding enables the researcher to identify the intersection of themes of the participants (Saldaña, 2012). Interview data provided the researcher with the verbatim quotations so that the interpretation would more closely reflect the lived experiences of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Research Questions

This study was designed to allow the researcher to answer the following questions:

1. What was the current role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in partnership development and implementation as perceived by those who have or are serving in the position?

2. What were the factors that facilitated partnerships success as perceived by the university educational leadership program coordinator?
3. What were the factors that hindered partnerships success as perceived by the university educational leadership program coordinator?
4. What were the positive and negative outcomes of partnerships perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?

Setting

This study occurred in a southern state with 4.8 million residents. The state has 61 colleges and 14 educational leadership programs which participated in the study. In 2005, this southern state began the process of redesigning educational leadership programs of which all 14 universities with educational leadership programs participated. As a component of the process, many admissions to the educational leadership programs were closed to allow review and development of appropriately aligned coursework which included partnership development between the university educational leadership program and the LEA's that it served.

Participants

The participants of this study were the program coordinator for each of the 14 participating universities. The redesign of educational leadership programs began in 2005; some program coordinators had transitioned to other positions. This study began in 2015. The participants included program coordinators involved during the redesign process and current program coordinators for each university. There were seven universities that had one respondent who served in the position of the program coordinator from the initiation of the program design to the present day. The remaining seven universities had changes in personnel which resulted in two respondents for the study: the coordinator who was involved in the initial redesign process

and the person who presently serves as the program coordinator. Pseudonyms were used for all of the universities that participated in the study. Additionally, Respondent A and Respondent B were used to differentiate between program coordinators who were involved during the redesign phase and those who became coordinators after the initial redesign process was completed. If no change in coordinators had occurred or a coordinator was unavailable due to extenuating circumstances, only the current program coordinator was interviewed and this person was referred to as the Respondent. Four universities had the original program coordinator as the only respondent and three universities had a new program coordinator which was the only respondent. Seven universities had both the original program coordinator and the current program coordinator as the respondents therefore these seven universities had two respondents. There was a total of 21 respondents for the study.

The chart below is a visual schematic that displays the pseudonym of the college / university which participated in the study. The chart also indicates the number of respondents per participating university.

Pseudonym for University Participants

Warrior University	Respondent
Pride University - Primary	Respondent A
Pride University - Secondary	Respondent B
Freedom University	Respondent
Historic University	Respondent
Solider University - Primary	Respondent A
Solider University - Secondary	Respondent B
Stars University	Respondent
Stripes University - Primary	Respondent A
Stripes University - Secondary	Respondent B
Flag University - Primary	Respondent A
Flag University - Secondary	Respondent B
Eagle University - Primary	Respondent A
Eagle University - Secondary	Respondent B
Salute University - Primary	Respondent A
Salute University - Secondary	Respondent B
Patriotic University	Respondent
American University - Primary	Respondent A
American University - Secondary	Respondent B
Liberty University	Respondent
Victory University	Respondent

Each respondent participated in a semi-structured interview in the format of their choice: face-to-face, telephonic or video-technology assisted. The interviews were tape-recorded and ranged in length from the shortest conversation of 21 minutes to the longest conversation of 96

minutes. The experiences and perceptions of the 21 participants were told in their own words. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed to determine common themes. Additionally, themes were collected to show connectivity of concepts throughout the fourteen universities.

Role of the University Educational Leadership Coordinator

Generally, the literature suggests that the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator constituted a variety of responsibilities to include but not limited to “leading monthly meetings, routine course scheduling and delivery, recruitment and admission of students, hiring adjunct professors and mediating student problems” (Hackman & Wanat, 2008, p. 77). The respondents identified these tasks as part of their role and also identified other management duties. Among these duties assisting with curriculum development and maintaining knowledge of the certification process and keeping abreast of changes in the administrative licensure process. These are incorporated as a component of the role of the university educational leadership coordinator as administrative tasks. The university educational leadership program coordinator is sometimes considered the “point person on everything,” however, an essential factor of the role is to “connect, maintain and sustain relationships with the local school district and administrator organizations so that credibility is maintained with practitioners” (Hackman & Wanat, 2008 p. 65).

“Teacher and principal preparation has historically existed in silos where prospective teachers and principals learn theories and methods within university settings that they are expected to apply at some point within classrooms and schools” (Korach et al., p. 3). One possible bridge to span the divide between theory and application is the creation of school and university partnerships (Zeichner, 2010).

The Role of the Educational Leadership Program Coordinator in Partnership Development

In the state which this study occurred, a decisive step was made when the governor and the state superintendent forged an alliance which propelled 200 educators to focus their action to improve the development of educational leaders. A component of redesign required partnership development between university and K–12 districts. The findings indicate that program coordinators served two primary roles; partnership development and partnership continuation.

Partnership Development

Educational leadership program coordinators of the participating universities began the process. Respondent A from Soldier University was already a part of the educational leadership staff in 2005 and became chairperson for Instructional Leadership in 2006. The first year was full of attending meetings and then they started developing the program. Respondent A went on to say:

I served on the superintendent's consortium representing the educational leadership program. I continued to work in this role of partnership development and program redesign for 10 years.

Respondent B for Soldier University continued the partnership development and served as the lead liaison between Soldier University and K–12 districts. He stated:

I helped to organize the principal's advisory committee and I served as the Program Coordinator for Instructional Leadership.

The respondent from Historic University stated that coordinating for the Instructional Leadership Program was her primary assignment. This included partnership development and all aspects of the internship placement, as well as teaching coursework at the university. She explained:

At Historic University, we see partnerships as a crucial component in meeting the needs of the K–12 system, it is a critical piece when we (the university) made changes. We have a partnership that focused on development and structure of curriculum, and another partnership which was dedicated to intern placement. Our partnership development was intentional with specific outcomes in mind. As our needs changed, the types of partnerships we developed changed.

Warrior University’s respondent has served as the Educational Leadership Coordinator for eight years. She stated:

One of my main objectives was to work very closely with our partners, we wanted to stay current with the K–12 trends so we are not so far removed when we are teaching theory and practice. Partnerships are a big piece of that pie.

Eagle University Respondent A served as the Program Coordinator for eight years during the redesign process. She worked on the redesign curriculum committee for two years. In this role she developed partnerships with K–12 districts since she had firsthand knowledge of the intent of the partnership. She reported:

The intent was to involve partners not only in the process but also to have partners working with us [the university] co-teaching in the classroom. As a veteran from public education, partnership development is essential in developing instructional leaders.

Eagle University Respondent B served as the newly appointed program coordinator. She asserted:

I have the opportunity and responsibility to connect with partners to listen for ways that we [the university] can help. Although I’m not on the frontline in K–12 education, I feel strongly that we [the university] need both, university and K–12 supporting continuous

improvement in education. This is what inspired me to want to be active, I want a close partnership with people on the frontline.

Flag University Respondent A has been in higher education for 15 years, 12 of those as the Education Leadership Program Coordinator for Flag University. He reported:

During my tenure as program coordinator, the primary focus was partnership development and internship placement. I took a brief departure from Flag University and have just returned in a new position; however, I was the point of contact for the state directed redesign and partnership development. We developed partnerships with all of the K–12 districts we served.

Stripes University Respondent A served as program coordinator during the initial stages of the redesign process. She was a faculty member for 12 years and served as program coordinator for 8 years. She mentioned:

During my tenure as program coordinator, not only did we develop formal partnerships, we also merged the educational leadership programs of two campuses. This merger consisted of a review of every course on each campus to determine the sustainability of the course. The program coordinator for Stars University, which is the main campus for the educational leadership program for Stripes University, was the lead for the redesign process although the same processes were to occur on both campuses.

Respondent B from Stripes University is an associate professor for the Educational Leadership program and has been a part of the staff for the past eight years. She noted:

My K–12 experience has been an asset in partnership development and supporting the redesign process. We have redesigned our program so that it is more in line with things that are actually happening or need to be done in schools.

The respondent from Stars University has been the program coordinator for 14 years. He stated:

As the program coordinator, I tend to be the focal point for making district partnerships happen. K–12 district superintendents had great influence on the state department of education which drove the redesign of programs in the state. This group strongly encouraged that there be active partnerships between universities and K–12 districts.

The respondent from Freedom University has been the program coordinator for three years after having served 15 years in public education. Her inspiration in developing partnerships was to enable the students to gain real world experience of what it is like to be an instructional leader.

Salute University's respondent indicated her reign as program coordinator lasted 15 years during which she advocated for a semester long internship for aspiring administrators. She shared:

Having spent 24 years as a public school administrator, I have respect and affection for the principal position. I saw the difference strong leadership made in the quality of education due to a highly effective leader which is why I advocated for the semester long internship with principals who were considered highly effective.

Salute University's current educational leadership program coordinator, Respondent B, reported:

Building community partnerships as a personal strength and felt very comfortable speaking about K–12 education.

Respondent A of American University was the program coordinator for five years and a staff member in the department for seven years. She became program coordinator right about the time American University was redesigning its program. She stated:

I was the one who orchestrated the partnership development from its inception at American. We were supposed to consult with our school district partners in the area and have official partners with memorandums of agreement. I was the person calling on superintendents and asking them to become partners.

Respondent A of American University stated there was no inspiration to developing partnerships between university and K–12 districts, as this was mandated. She went on to say:

We (all universities) received some specific direction from the state department with definitive components of the redesign process.

Respondent B of American University served as the program coordinator following Respondent A. Respondent B served for six years in the role and utilized her seven years in public education in the role. A new program coordinator was recently chosen for this university beginning Fall 2015; however, Respondent B has continued to support partnership development from American University.

Partnership Continuation

Respondent B from Flag University is currently serving in the role of Program Coordinator and has done so for the past two years. She stated:

My focus has been maintaining established partnerships which was a smooth transition from K–12 to higher education. My inspiration in developing partnerships was the realization that higher education could not do without K–12 if the goal was to develop effective instructional leaders. At the beginning of the redesign process, I was in K–12 education and now that my position has changed, I see the significance of these partnerships from the higher education perspective.

The respondent for Liberty University is the current program coordinator and has served in this role for the past six years. She stated:

I was responsible for fostering LEA (local education agency) partnerships, maintaining those partnerships in all program admission and reviewing assessment capacities. I was charged with getting those folks involved with the partnership process.

She went on to say:

I not only fostered and maintained LEA partnerships, but I serve on a national committee with the National Association for Multicultural Education. I am very strategic to ensure that my vocation, my profession, my passion, and my mission all overlap so that teaching, research and service overlap.

Patriotic University's respondent has served as the program coordinator for 22 years and combines his past public school experience in building partnerships. Having served as a former state assistant superintendent and a district superintendent, this respondent was actively involved in setting up partnerships, recruiting students and teaching courses on and off campus. He teaches classes where established partnerships are present. Partnerships with everyone involved make for a win-win experience for students.

The role of the university educational leadership program coordinator is multifaceted in that the responsibilities support partnership development and partnership continuation while completing administrative tasks. The majority of the participants indicated that partnership development was a major portion of their daily schedule. Although partnership continuation is linked to development, it was important to have a strong foundation built so that moving forward, program coordinators could dedicate more time cultivating those partnerships.

Factors That Facilitated Partnership Success

Partnership development with university and K–12 districts was a required component of the redesign of educational leadership programs. Higher education faculty members began the partnership development process. This partnership development process included identifying K–12 districts to become partners, identifying and cultivating a point of contact, and initiating dialogue to explain the urgency in partnership development. The factors which facilitated partnership success included the mutual recognition of the value of the partnership, program coordinator’s familiarity with K–12, and the program coordinator’s years of experience in K–12 setting.

Mutual Recognition of the Value of the Partnership

The mandate of partnerships between university and K–12 districts was explicit in that partnership development was an outcome of redesigning educational leadership programs. All partnerships were to be formalized with the focus of redesigning coursework to benefit the students of the educational leadership programs. These students were employees (teachers and administrators) of the partnering districts. The interviews of the university educational leadership program coordinators shed light on the expectations of partnerships and the value of partnerships in leadership development. All 21 of the respondents indicated the responsibility of partnership development was assigned to the program coordinator. Seven of the 21 respondents were in the position of university educational program coordinator when the initial redesign process began. All of the respondents indicated they served in the role as the lead or main point of contact for partnership development. Independently and collectively these respondents were the focal point in developing the partnership to include scheduling meetings with K–12 districts, developing memorandums of agreement, and other program coordinators reevaluating

coursework for curriculum redesign. Respondent A of Soldier University stated: The first year of partnership development was full of attending meetings and developing the new program.

Respondent A from American University shared:

I was the one who orchestrated the partnership development from the inception and also the person calling on the superintendents and asking them to become partners. I think the partnerships are more about communication and opening up dialog between districts and universities.

The respondent from Warrior University stated:

First and foremost we want to stay current with the K–12 friends and we don't want to be so far removed from the classroom.

The respondent from Freedom University remembered:

I make sure that teaching the right content, teaching the right curriculum and preparing candidates for the partnership process. The partnership with the districts facilitated collaboration with superintendents; however, continuing the communication with subordinates to the superintendent strengthens partnerships.

Busy work schedules of district leaders (superintendents) created opportunities for other district leaders to become involved in the partnership development process for the LEA.

As a result of the partnership development, the respondent from Warrior University espoused:

I bring advisory councils to the campus to meet whether it is to share practice data or program data. I really believe our program gets better and better the more we involve our K–12 partners in our educational leadership program.

The respondent from Freedom University indicated:

Curricula is stronger when we have partnerships, it is relationship building for us. We know we have to get out there and meet the K–12 partners and establish a relationship with them so they can communicate with us about the program and about the students. We sat down at the table with partners to develop their course sequence, curriculum and their program entrance requirements.

Respondent A from Soldier University responded:

We are building capacity within our clientele, within the folks we are training. Not only are we building capacity but also modeling how to build this collaboration and how partnerships are kept engaged.

Respondent B from Soldier University stated:

We take the partners' input and cater what the project is going to be to make sure they get instruction and guidance in areas where principals were weak; therefore our candidates come out with something practical. We were very intentional with developing relationships specifically with the school systems in our immediate contact area.

The respondent from Stars University indicated:

Partnerships expanded how we connect with the K–12 districts. Partnership development fostered a process with higher education which the State Department stated we must do. We served 23 school districts and have memorandums of agreement with all of those districts.

Respondent A from Flag University reported:

I developed initial partnerships by meeting with the Superintendent who established a district liaison and support team. I communicated with the liaison the requirements for

higher education. We were required to establish a new admissions process and revamp our whole curriculum to include meeting a new standard.

Respondent A from Eagle University indicated:

Partnerships are really important aspects of leadership development. We look at developing partnerships strategically.

Respondent B from Salute University stated:

The connection between University and K–12 districts has really fostered that type of learning environment where our professors have an understanding of what is going on in the K–12 world. I have seen K–12 people interacting with the university staff, when I observe their body language and the way we talk with each other it demonstrates this new connection. The expansion of this rapport between these us and the K–12 folks has grown because of the experiences and interactions of the University staff with the K–12 staff.

To demonstrate the strength of partnership development and expectation, Respondent A from American University had a unique perspective and stated:

I had many meetings with small groups of superintendents. Sometimes the composition of the superintendent meetings included, principals, assistant principals and assistant superintendents. They would meet to find out what was needed in the way of a leader who was prepared to lead a school in their district. We started writing these things down. Eventually, we added value to the curriculum, added teachers and leaders to our classes. In time we added more and more students as we started having cohorts of learning in other locations. As we had new students coming from districts that we hadn't served before, we added a memorandum of understanding with that district and they became a

partner. Partnerships developed in different ways in each of the 14 university preparation programs. All of them approached the redesign differently so probably they also approached partnership development differently.

Respondent B of American University stated:

We brought those people to the table who are in the work force dealing with the day to day changes.

Liberty University's respondent was excited about partnership development and emphasized:

If you talk about the progress we've made, it is in connections and collaboration and the work has become very district specific. We developed a core of partners on the advisory council and had superintendents and principals come to those meetings. We have built enough partnerships not just with the LEA's but also to develop an outreach. Our networking is powerful.

The respondent from Victory University was very pleased with the relationship developed with the partners. She stated:

I meet periodically with the area superintendents and we get a lot of feedback from them. The superintendents were very adamant about the need of us being in the classroom and developing the personal relationship with those candidates. Our superintendents and administrators feel free to pick up the phone and say "Hey, I had a thought..."

Pride University respondent B summed it up this way:

Partnerships are useful in facilitating collegiality to share information. The university staff needs to understand the practical matters that go on in the K-12 setting.

Collaboration and collegiality has proven to be effective, but specifically when you start talking about the partnerships.

Soldier University respondent A indicated:

We were really working with about 25 different school districts in the area that we serve. Some of these folks were recruited to accompany us in meetings with the state department. As we spent time in the superintendents' meeting with the college, the big superintendent consortium, we talked and shared gathered additional input.

American University respondent A stated:

Anytime we had new students coming from districts that we hadn't served before, we had to go and do a memorandum of understanding with them and the district became a partner.

Program Coordinator Familiarity with K–12

The third facilitating factor was the program coordinators' familiarity with the K–12 environment. Of the 21 respondents for this study, 20 had served in public schools. The span of years of experience ranged from nine years to 30 years in public education. Of the 20 respondents, the positions which were held included teacher of grades K–12 in English, math science, social studies, psychology, music, technology, elementary education and media services disciplines. Respondents had also served in the role of assistant principal and principal in elementary, middle and high school. District office experience or above school level experience included curriculum director, assessment coordinator, federal program director, assistant superintendent and superintendent. State level positions were achieved by respondents including curriculum coordinators, educational specialists for curriculum and assistant superintendent. The location of this study was a southern state in the United States of America, however, respondents also gained experience from other states located in the southeastern geographical area.

Educational Coordinators' Years of Experience in K–12 Setting

The university educational leadership program coordinators who participated in this study displayed a wide variety of experiences which influenced their perceptions and perspectives of partnership development. The backgrounds of these participants enabled them to approach partnership development from that very unique vantage point. Despite the fact that one coordinator did not have K–12 experience, she brought the specific skill set of adult learning into the partnership development process for her university. Having served as the director of corporate partnerships for a northeastern university, the partnership skill set was the key element in her selection for the university position. Table 1 provides a visual representation of the university educational program coordinators' years of experience in a K–12 setting.

Table 1

University Educational Program Coordinators' Years of Experience in a K–12 setting

University	Respondent	Years of Experience
Warrior University		22
Pride University	Respondent A	9
	Respondent B	16
Freedom University		15
Historic University		15
Solider University	Respondent A	30
	Respondent B	14
Stars University		10
Stripes University	Respondent A	0
	Respondent B	18
Flag University	Respondent A	7
	Respondent B	27
Eagle University	Respondent A	30
	Respondent B	10
Salute University	Respondent A	24
	Respondent B	18
Patriotic University		31
American University	Respondent A	10
	Respondent B	18
Liberty University		10
Victory University		20

This experience appeared to be an important factor in the coordinators' ability to work with school districts and in their commitment to the partnership endeavor. Respondent A from Soldier University shared:

Prior to this role in higher education, I served as a public school educator for 30 years in a variety of leadership positions and had strong ties to the educational community which assisted me in developing partnerships.

Respondent B from Soldier University also shared:

Coming from administration and K-12, I would like to have a hand in administration here in higher education and so it gives me an opportunity to make partnerships better.

The respondent from Freedom University connected her experience from K-12 when she recalled:

During my previous employment with a K-12 district, I served in career and technical education, as an assistant principal, principal at middle school, high school, and alternative school. I also served as an elementary school teacher. I previously was an elementary teacher, so I can hit, touch, and teach classes on every aspect, from elementary to middle, high school, central office here at Freedom.

The respondent from Liberty University plainly stated:

My experiences from K-12 give me a different vantage point of how I see things.

Having 10 years in public education at K-12, it gives me insight of things that could be improved and how to develop better partnerships.

Respondent A from Flag University concluded:

Generally speaking, a disconnect exists between the university and K-12 perceptions on partnerships. As a university staff member, I know that unless you are supervising field

experiences you are not in the schools every day. However, just knowing the issues in K–12 is important. I started out as a secondary education teacher. I served as an interim principal between two schools to simply deal with instructional related issues; I am familiar with those issues and how they can impact partnership development. To sum it up, my K–12 connections afforded me insight and as I developed partnerships, I utilized those connections.

Respondent A from Pride University recalled:

Many of us were teachers a long time ago, but then after we got our degrees and started teaching at a college level, then we kind of lost touch with what went on in the classroom, the everyday things, so by having those partnerships we can know what's going on in the school, what their needs are!

The respondent from Warrior University went on to say:

I actually have 22 years of experience in a neighboring southern state. 15 of those years I served as a school principal. I served at a pre K–5 school and then I served at a pre-K–12 school. Because of my experience as a principal and superintendent, I can say with conviction, this is what I would like to see happen. Plus, when I was principal in a neighboring southern state, one of our universities there had a branch in our town. They formed really tight partnerships with schools in that southern state so I can recognize strong partnership development.

Salute University respondent B stated:

My first job was directing a band and teaching classroom music at a school that was K–8. I taught classroom music to the younger grades, and then in fifth grade they started in

band. I found my K–12 experience helpful in developing community partnerships, but connecting with the higher education community is where I am utilizing those skills.

The respondent from Patriotic University recalled:

I think my background in K–12 had a lot to do with my approach. I was convinced early on that all good learning didn't necessarily occur on the campus of Patriotic University, although a lot of good learning did. I think experience and research has proven that a partnership with everybody involved with a win-win mentality just made it a better experience for students.

Eagle University respondent B summed up her comments:

Having ten years in public education prior to coming to higher education, I believe that practice should inform theory development. My experiences in K–12 will help inform theory development for my students. My avenue to improve theory is the classroom and through our K–12 partners.

Respondent A of American University had 20 years of experience in public education prior to joining the ranks of higher education. She has supervised all grade levels between Kindergarten through 8th grade at a university in the Midwest and emphatically stated:

My experience with K–12 had a significant and positive influence on my ability to develop partnerships.

The respondent from Freedom University had been the university educational leadership program coordinator for three years after having served 15 years in public education. During her public education residency, she served a district in close proximity to Freedom University and she affirmed:

The personal interaction with K–12 school and district administrators enabled me to develop several local partnerships for Freedom University.

Factors that Hinder Partnership Success

Partnership development is a complex process. Just as there are factors that facilitated partnership development and implementation, there are also factors which hindered partnership success. Factors which were reported by the respondents varied from university to university; however, five hindrances were identified to include: the lack of financial support; time and distance to develop a partnerships; changes in personnel; lack of support from university staff and attitudes of the university staff about partnerships.

Financial Support

A common factor which was a barrier to partnership success was a lack of appropriate financial support. Fourteen of the 21 respondents indicated that some aspect of funding or the lack of funding inhibited partnership development. Five of the respondents in the study provided a barrage of comments that the lack of funding is a keen issue, prohibits getting financial support, prevents stipends for mentors or reimbursements for expenses and does not support professional development needs. For example, the respondent A of Eagle University reported: I was impressed that one of the universities in the southern part of the state received funding for its educational leadership program development. This university utilized the funds by paying stipends for semester long internships. Other universities did not receive the same level of funding nor were there educational leadership programs structured in a way to be able to utilize the funds. This was a disadvantage to our students because we could not utilize the funds. Eagle University's respondent B thought:

If the college of education with larger educational leadership programs were provided seed money, it would support partnership development.

Although Salute University received funding, Respondent A recalled:

The funding quickly evaporated which resulted in partnering districts that could not afford substitutes thereby inhibiting district participation. Once the funds were gone, continuing the number of face-to-face meetings decreased. Funding was a key factor in partnership development.

The Patriotic University respondent stated:

I can imagine where partnership development would be if the state provided every university with funds to use with partnering school districts.

Respondent A from American University forcefully stated:

Partnership development without monetary support is an unfunded mandate. The question is how does that improve education?

The Liberty University respondent asked a rhetorical question in response to the funding issue:

How does the State Department of Education expect us to deliver true partnerships between the university and K–12 without financial support?

Respondent A from Pride University concluded:

We have limited resources, therefore the financial support is necessary. We had two pots of money and they disappeared for various reasons. When we had money we could invite our partners, offer them a meal as they come after work. After the meal we could sit and deliberate for 2 or 3 hours. Now, when partners come there is little to offer during those meetings. Due to the limited resources the number of meetings has now declined from five per semester to five per year.

Changes in Leadership

As partnerships developed between the university and K–12 districts, changes of personnel occurred within the K–12 districts and the university staff. As the leadership changed with the K–12 personnel, the necessity to develop relationships with the newly appointed leadership staff evolved. If relationships between the university and the partnership sustainment was realized. However, if the newly established relationships between the university and K–12 was challenging, sustainment of the partnership deteriorated. The respondent from Warrior University identified leadership transition as a barrier to partnership development. The respondent remembered:

We have had a lot of leadership changes in our partnering schools within the school district. We have made a connection or formed a partnership with a specific district and everything was going well. After one year the personnel changed and the process started all over again.

Respondent A from Soldier University affirmed:

Changing superintendents affects partnership development. When a superintendent leaves, especially in the areas where they were elected, it causes a huge problem. When a new person comes in now we've got to build a relationship with them and hope for longevity.

Stripes University respondent B asserted:

Turnover in K–12 schools leadership, central office level and schools level can be a barrier. We have to back track and do a little bit of training and so forth to get the new staff on board.

Flag University Respondent A recollected:

Partnership development is even more challenging when a new superintendent is hired from another state. I have observed this situation in which the new superintendent was hired from another state. I easily surmised the new superintendent had no familiarity with the college nor the past relationship of the college with the district. Our partnerships were severely compromised. When these kinds of changes occur, ultimately you have a say for one or two years in a partnership you may have had for several years prior to the change in leadership. When the newly appointed leader evaluated the partnership they are looking at how the partnership plays and their agenda. So right then the focus for the newly selected leader is to keep their job.

Just as changes in K–12 leadership effect partnership development, changes in university staff also influence partnership development especially of that change is with the university educational leadership program coordinator. The effect on partnership development when a change occurs at the university level could be as disruptive as when the change occurs at the K–12 level. The following responses relate to changes of university staff.

Respondent A from Flag University also stated:

I had an opportunity to become a dean at a university in another southern state so I chose to exercise my option to leave. I left. It could be said the same concerns which occurred when K–12 district leadership changes were also felt when the new person that replaced me. When the new university educational leadership program coordinator replaced me, she had to go talk to the districts about partnerships development. I knew all the ins and outs, bells and whistles about the partnership development because I was there from the beginning. She had to start over because she did not have that knowledge.

Flag University Respondent A stated:

One of the barriers was the transition of the new university educational leadership program coordinator. When we get new personnel at the university, they're really trying to define their roles here at the institution so they generally will spend most of their time getting acclimated and not developing partnerships.

Respondent B from Salute University supported the changes in personnel as a barrier as he shared:

We have a relatively new department at Salute University. When so many staff members leave, maintaining partnerships becomes challenging.

Changes in leadership with K–12 personnel altered partnership development and the ability to sustain partnerships. Partnerships previously developed loss momentum in most cases when changes in leadership occurred in K–12. As changes in leadership occur with the university educational leadership program coordinator, it also impacts the momentum of partnership development.

Time and Distance to Develop Partnerships

Time to engage in partnership development between University and K–12 districts was identified by university program educational leadership coordinators as a factor which impacted partnership development. Responses by the educational leadership program coordinators indicated this was a barrier to partnership development. Of the 21 respondents, 12 of them directly stated the time in developing partnerships is a huge concern other respondents indicated the time constraints from university responsibilities is a competing barrier to partnership development.

Respondent B from Soldier University addressed time as a barrier from the University and K–12 district vantage point. He stated:

Time was definitely a barrier for the K–12 administrator and for the university education leadership program coordinator. University staff have these partnership responsibilities as well as all the other duties. K–12 school leaders are extremely busy and although as the university staff member, I schedule visits. The K–12 leaders may not have time to meet with me.

Respondent A from Stripes University agreed with her successor in that it takes time to develop a relationship. Stripes University respondent B asserted:

In developing partnerships with K–12 districts you must realize that you don't know what's going to happen with that principal's schedule. Anybody who's been in K–12 knows that it is an extremely busy time. If you schedule a visit you may have to wait until the principal is available. Partnership development in secondary schools require a lot of face-to-face wait time in schools.

Eagle University Respondent B remarked about the time constraints from the K–12 perspective:

K–12 educators are very busy dealing with demanding urgent issues. There are 60 to 80 hours per week jobs that makes partnership development a challenge. There are just not enough hours in the day to do that and do it well.

Salute University Respondent B characterized the time factor by saying:

Sometimes it's hard to carve out time to get into the K–12 schools without some type of release. Chances are, you're not going to have very much of an opportunity with the principal because they're usually dealing with all the stuff they have to deal with on a daily basis. I think it's probably what happens in those situations, it boils down to resources, being able to have the resources to provide the needed time. When you have most of all of a department leave, there's no institutional memory. People are sort of just

searching around trying to figure out things for a while. Most of the time, I'm in my office making our reports, getting together admissions, working on the master schedule. That certainly is a barrier because I want to be out and about and interacting with people in the community. Much of my time is just trying to figure out where the information I need to know is located. Sometimes I go the State Department website when I can't find what I'm looking for here at our college.

Soldier University respondent B shared his concern:

We ask these administrators to do so much in the school. It could be supervising curricula and extracurricular activities to developing relationships with parents and community. Those kind of things weigh on K-12 administrators and then we [university staff] contact them and say "Hey let me hang out with you for a half a day." I say all of that to say for them to carve out time for us to really develop that partnership during the school year is a lot to ask.

Time requirements in developing partnerships from the K-12 perspective was a momentous request. Time obligations for university-K-12 staff are just as far-reaching of a demand based on the university requirements for staff. Stars University respondent espoused:

I think that part of it is the time commitment as professors are asked to establish partnerships, teach, conduct research and/or publish. The time commitment has been a real barrier to visualizing the development of these partnerships.

American University's respondent A's explanation illustrated her perspective partnership which was:

The partnership development was another whole layer of work on top of everything we had to do with getting your own classes ready, just whole layer of work. When you have

dissertations on the program committee, the work really fell onto the program coordinator. You have that administrative role, you can ask your faculty to help, but it's you that has to keep it moving, keeping it driving, keeping the relationship strong, planning the meeting, making the calls, ordering the food and everything to make the project a success.

Warrior University respondent plainly stated:

From the K-12 perspective some will express the concern of infringement of their time with that "yada, yada stuff." Especially when you couple that with travel time to and from the K-12 site. If you are going to do anything with the partner you must consider the commitment of a half to a whole day from your regular duties.

The prior quotes showed that little consideration was given to the level of work required to organize the formal partnerships in addition to the assemblage of university and K-12 staff necessary to do the work of restructuring the course offering and assignment of the educational leadership program. Soldier University respondent A argued:

The problem of course would be finding a time when all parties could meet. That has always been a logistic nightmare. Getting in the school more often takes a big effort with all the other things that are going on and people working towards tenure and promotion and serving on college committees and professional development and going through changes at the university level. This all increases the impact of time as a factor to hinder successful partnerships.

Flag University respondent B indicated:

Another barrier indicated by Respondent A from American University which was connected to having such a large area of the state to serve is the distance created by the size of

the service area. Subsequently having more partners means that when changes are suggested we [the university] must get feedback. The respondent stated:

A huge hindrance with the partnerships is because of the design; we can't change a syllabi or shall I say it slows us down significantly. We must have buy in or feedback to make changes in the syllabi and scheduling and maintaining a meeting to suggest the change can be extremely time consuming and a huge barrier to being responsive to data or the needs of the K-12 district.

Barriers to partnership development are financial support, time and distance to develop partnerships, changes in leadership, lack of support from the university staff and university attitudes about partnerships. The lack of financial support impacted partnership development because it inhibited partnering districts ability to provide stipends for reimburse for partners. The time required to develop university K-12 districts partnership was substantial and altered the progression of partnerships from the university educational leadership program coordinator and the K-12 district.

Lack of Support from University Staff and University Attitudes about Partnerships

Although partnership development was mandated at the university level, university staff priorities did not shift immediately, consequently, the responsiveness at the university level varied. Even though the educational leadership program coordinator initiated these partnership as a directive from university leadership, all university staff did not acquiesce to the change. In these cases, it appeared that the program coordinator was working alone in developing partnerships with support of other staff members and the dean. Respondent B for Stripes University cautioned:

Partnerships were talked about between higher education and K–12. Well, there might be a partnership between the faculties that work in that program. Up to the dean’s level which is my boss, they don’t necessarily understand the time required to develop and support these partners. The lack of understanding between the dean and the program coordinators creates problems in partnership development. Between the state department and the superintendents, there is a divide in communication which fostered negative attitudes about partnerships.

Flag University Respondent A stated:

As an example, a university staff member has said my priority is tenure. Therefore developing partnerships may not be a focus for that person. There are more mandates on higher education to be more available to K–12 partnerships than I think districts are being encouraged to merge partnerships.

Eagle University respondent B professed:

If I want to earn a raise every year and if I want to eventually earn full professor, I have to demonstrate that I have a few publications; every year I make a substantial effort towards a national and international reputation through my writing. Those are big pressures and you think we have to do in order to get a publication or two each year were willing to pay for it. Additionally, I don’t think partnership is a prime important category for all practitioners, especially those at the university level.

Salute University respondent B affirmed:

University professors are under pressure to research and publish and bring in grant money, teaching classes, chairing dissertations, yada, yada, and yada. Sometimes it’s hard to carve out time to get into the K–12 schools without some type of release.

The respondent from Stars University questioned the attitude of the university in his response as he rhetorically stated:

What have universities done to discourage school districts from wanting to connect with them? The resistance is there when the university is asked to provide professional development. I pose the question of why not connect to the university. There are other ways that the university could connect to the school districts to help them in their search; however, we don't see that happening. It seems as though they would rather spend the money and bring companies from New York and other people come in to train their leaders. Instead of our school districts going out and hiring these guys, these consultants come in and work with them. I would really like to see our LEA partners use the expertise that's at the university to help them to do a better job of creating effective learning.

The respondent admonished the interactions and asserted:

I think the State Department of Education increased these barriers at the university level. We had the add-on. Then we were told, "You can't effectively train an instructional leader with just an 18 hour program." So the add-on option was removed as an option, programs were restructured without the add-on and now the add-on option has returned. That inconsistency on the part of the State Department just tells university people let's just wait because you're going to go on to something else eventually.

Flag University respondent B stated:

Sometimes at the university level, the instructors are a little frustrated because the Alabama code and our accreditation requires us to have partnerships with K-12. However, K-12 doesn't have partnerships so the relationship is one-sided in its inception

since the development of university-K–12 district partnerships was made a responsibility of the university. This was expressed as a component of the redesign. As a result the significance of partnership development rests on the shoulders of the university staff.

Eagle University respondent A made the connection:

Partnerships are a one-sided requirement and the university reward system. She stated when it comes to going out and doing this work in partnership development, there is the reward only for the K–12 and not the university. Teaching and publications is how you are promoted. Why would any professor with this knowledge go out and worry about developing their partnership?

American University respondent A stated:

Partnership development was another whole layer of work on top of everything we had to do with getting your own classes ready, just whole layer of work. There is not a removal of duties because you are developing University and K-12 partnerships. You are serving on dissertations committees while you develop partnership. The work really fell onto the program coordinator for partnership development. You have that administrative role, you can ask your faculty to help, but it's you that has to keep it moving; making the phone calls and ordering the food for face to face meetings with the K-12 districts.

Positive and Negative Outcomes of Partnerships

Positive and negative outcomes have emerged as a result of partnership development. The intended aftereffects of partnerships may vary from the perspective of the State Department of Education, the university, and K–12 districts. This section reviewed the positive and negative outcomes from the university educational leadership program coordinators perspective. As the

university educational leadership program coordinators shared their perspectives, it was clear that many more positive outcomes of partnerships were identified than negatives.

Positive Outcomes

There were many ways in which coordinators perceived the partnership program as benefitting students; fostering graduate student success, networking, clearer and consistent communications with K–12 districts, and university assignments based the needs of K–12 districts.

Fostering graduate student success. A positive outcome of university-K–12 partnership development shared by the respondent of Historic University dealt with progress monitoring the success of the graduates. The respondent indicated that she monitored the career progression of candidates who graduated from the educational leadership program of Historic University. Partnerships with K–12 districts enabled her to place candidates and provide a network of support for her students. She tracked her graduate students in the Master’s and Educational Specialist program and stated:

No one requires me to track our graduates, I just do that. I have those first year principals who graduated from our program come back and talk to my current students. They’re in class and then I have this third year principal come in as well and they say, ‘Okay, when you get your first job, you need to let me know...’ In order to build relationship, my students know that I’ll be expecting them to come back to share their experiences. They do! They’ll call me and they’ll say, ‘I know you wanted us to let you know what going on with our careers so’ It makes us [the university] more relevant. It helps us prepare those candidates that we have that are about to go out, we hope, get jobs. Partnerships enable me to network with various district and keep in contact with my students.

Stripes University respondent A indicated a positive outcome of partnership development by stating:

...collaboration added more selectivity in who was going into the graduate programs because the applicant had to have the approval of the school district before they could come to the university. Partnership forced the universities to involve K–12 personnel in the redesign. After partnership development K–12 personnel were involved with a lot of things at the university, not only with the selection of candidates to enter the educational leadership program but the evaluation of candidates as well, this was beneficial to all concerned.

The respondent from Victory University stated:

The positive outcome for K–12 is that they are growing their own leaders and those leaders are developed with the appropriate skill set.

Respondent A from Flag University noted:

A positive outcome of partnerships is that the university shared the completion of a year of the data relative to mentoring. This is how your principals are assisting our students on these competencies. I think it's important enough for you to know what we're doing so let's look at some hard numbers.

Networking. University and K–12 leaders had increased opportunities to interact with one another on various levels. These networking opportunities increased the partnership development which ultimately helped to build positive relationships between both groups. Pride

University respondent A affirmed:

University-K–12 partnerships helped us to work together as a somewhat unified group. Our partners do everything with us, from the admission to supporting us through the

program and so on. K-12 districts get to meet students from the other districts that come to interview to be admitted to the educational leadership program and so they get to see the quality of students that we are admitting into the program. K-12 districts get to see some good people so when they have completed the program they know if they see somebody they can employ. We have partners from the different districts come in and present lectures for all our students together, and that was a big plus. We haven't had it this year yet, so hopefully we'll have it in the spring. We've had 4 or 5 to come to speak to all the students and that was a good thing. By the time the speaker was leaving, they were exchanging email and telephone numbers, all because this is something they were interested in and they want to find out more about it—NETWORKING.

Stripes University respondent B indicated:

Because students do a lot of networking when we are out there in our partnering schools job opportunities are shared. Whether it be when the partners have actually participated in teaching a class of our graduates or getting facetime with district leaders, it's all networking and communication. It comes down to the fact, we can't do it alone. The more partnerships that we develop, then the more opportunities we'll have for our students.

Respondent B from American University stated a positive outcome was the networking and growth of the programs because of the connections to K-12. Again, the importance in having both K-12 and university leaders working together to foster positive results through partnership development.

Clearer and consistent communication. Increased communication, another positive outcome of partnership development, was expressed by Pride University Respondent B:

We have the advisory meetings. We involve superintendents with most of the major decisions that are made concerning changes with the curriculum or program evaluation. Involving the superintendents created the environment to talk about progress. Constant communication with districts and ensuring that we were completing that which was mandated by the State Department showed our credibility. Partnerships facilitated that type of collegiality. The idea of shared responsibility for these our students, our schools is partnership. In other words, the idea of collective responsibility was practiced.

Everybody is involved in the field of ownership because we shared the decision making.

Salute University respondent A is emphatic about partnership development is its positive outcomes. She stated:

We have clearer communications between university and K-12 because we are all supposed to be on the same page. There are better prepared candidates for teaching and principal positions. The employers, K-12 districts have a chance to really look at the candidates before hiring them. The positive outcome is the benefit of teamwork. Our framework which we developed shows the principal that they are not in that position by themselves and they have a network of support.

The respondent from Freedom University stated:

I think that the redesign which forged partnership development has made the university aware of the importance of partnerships in preparing our candidates for the job in K-12. I don't think that K-12 really understands the value of the partnerships. Now that partnership have been established, we must change the focus of our partnerships as well. University and K-12 districts operated without intermingling of philosophy. Partnership

development has provided opportunities to exchange information and initiate a mutual respect for each other.

The respondent from Stars University concluded:

A positive outcome to partnership with university and K–12 districts is that university staff routinely communicates with K–12 partners. These communications include changes in our programs and new programs that we are offering. The networking with K–12 has improved our program and that is a benefit to our students.

The Warrior University respondent affirmed a positive outcome of the partnership:

We do have a much better communication line. We asked our partnerships to district identify a coordinator who we can work with because the superintendent may be busy.

Eagle University Respondent A indicated:

I've seen firsthand how much stronger our program is because of the partnerships. They have brought really wonderful ideas and suggestions to us about what we need to do to make the program more effective. They are starting to ask us for professional development. We have developed international partnerships. We provide our students with the opportunity to visit others K–12 districts. One of the trips is to Australia. We visited Australia for 3 weeks for \$3900 when it's a \$9000 trip. The university pays for over half of it. I don't see other universities sending their people to Korea for 10 days so they can get exposed to Korean culture and know what educational benefits can be gleaned from interactions between these educational programs.

The respondent from Liberty University affirmed that an outcome of partnership development is that we value our partners.

We need our partners. They come to every table that we have. They participate in our teacher education, committee meetings and our advisory council. We're listening to them and valuing what they're telling us is most critically important and we're also balancing that with what we know about the research and best practice and what we're seeing in the literature. So really trying to embrace practice and bridge theory to practice and do that in meaningful ways that we had not done before.

American University respondent A is hopeful that partnerships have allowed:

School district leadership to feel that their university partners are more responsive to their needs. Previously, it was believed that university is not connected to the needs of the K–12 district. Since partnerships development has occurred, the university is more attentive to the needs of the K–12 districts.

Soldier University respondent B cited:

A major change in their program because we are project based and we try to fit it to school systems. We must remember that there is still a core framework that we have to work within. We have to always be cognizant of the fact that there's standards that these people have to meet in Alabama. The courses that we offer have to be able to address those standards and we can't be stumbling or so willing to bend over backwards to help you with whatever is going on and those standards get compromised. This has been a huge success for our university and especially our graduates.

Negative Outcomes

The literature indicated numerous negative factors on the development of educational leaders however all of those factors did not transform into negative outcomes of partnership development . There were no definitive negative outcomes discussed by the university

educational leadership program coordinators, but there were some statements made which led to a negative connotation to partnership development.

Stripes University respondent A indicated a negative outcome of partnership development was that programs became smaller from the coordinator's perspective. Although the smaller number of participants had to do with the changes in program requirements for participation, i.e. more selectivity. She went on to say that:

At different universities, educational leadership had traditionally been a source of revenue due to the high numbers of students enrolled, therefore, lower numbers of participants created a decrease in the number of courses that could be taught and university staff required to teach them. This decreased options for students to complete course requirements.

The respondent from Stars University also indicated a negative outcome of partnership development. He stated:

The negative outcome [of the partnership] is that it makes it harder to redesign programs in a timely fashion. I have to go out and I've got to convene a panel of LEA partners to come in and look at my course syllabi and to give suggestions and help us create assignments.

Although not seen as a negative outcome, both of these comments do suggest that there were unintended consequences as a result of the partnership development between university and K-12 districts.

Summary

Public education has received intense criticism relative to the lack of academic achievement of students. A series of articles written by Levine supported the critical review of programs which prepare educational leaders. These educational leadership programs found themselves in the cross-hairs of mandated reform. As a component of reform, a review of best practices resulted in the identification of partnership as an underutilized reform strategy. A review of literature uncovered support for University-K-12 district partnership development. Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) “found that exemplary school leadership preparations programs are ones where positive relationship exist between universities and school districts” (pp. 16).

University and K-12 district partnership development was required of the university and therefore designated university personnel began the process. The university educational leadership program coordinator has the responsibility of recruitment, coordination of teaching schedules, and keeping abreast of certification rules and procedures. Additionally, the university educational leadership program coordinator was also tasked to develop University-K-12 district partnerships. As a condition of the partnership development, the role of the program coordinator lent itself to establishing a rapport with the K-12 district staff.

Factors which facilitated partnership development included the mutual recognition of the value of the partnership, the program coordinator’s familiarity with K-12, and the educational coordinators’ years of experience in K-12 settings. Partnership development with K-12 and university staff was influenced by the expectation that partnership would be developed as mandated through the mutual recognition of the value of the partnership. University staff began the process of partnership development which included formal relationships which were

documented through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the local education agency and the university. University educational leadership program coordinators utilized a varied skill set in developing partnerships. A common characteristic shared by the university program coordinator is the shared K–12 experiences of the coordinators. Of the 21 program coordinators, 20 had years of experiences in K–12 ranging from 8 to 30 years. Although one coordinator did not have K–12 experience, she brought another skill set into university partnership development. Her skill set was extensive knowledge in creating and providing professional training for staff development and teaching the adult learner, both of which complement the University-K–12 partnership development process.

Factors which hindered partnership development included the lack of financial support, change in leadership, time and distance to develop partnerships, the lack of support from the university staff and university attitudes about partnership development. Respondents provided varied statements relative to the components to demonstrate the difficulty in developing University-K–12 partnerships.

Positive and negatives outcomes of partnership development varied from and between the universities; however, the overarching theme for positive outcomes include the improved communication and dialogue between the university and K–12 districts. Negative outcomes were not readily identified, but negative comments centered on the time needed to make changes since K–12 had to be an essential element in changing curriculum to be taught to the participants. Getting all the participants in one place was a challenging logistic which slowed the timetable for change.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the experience of partnership development between University and K–12 districts from the perspective of the university educational leadership program coordinator. Furthermore, the study examined the role of a university educational leadership program coordinator in partnership development. A second focus of the study was to examine the factors which facilitated and hindered partnership success. The final area of focus for the study was to examine the positive and negative outcomes of partnership development. A qualitative study approach was utilized for this study. This methodology was beneficial because it allowed data to be collected from more than one point of interest. Evidence was collected through 21 semi-structured interviews, along with a review of literature and primary source documents providing additional data.

Themes emerged from the data collection process, the analysis of the themes lead to the development of areas of study for Chapter IV. In this chapter, the researcher summarized findings, identified implications, and suggested considerations for future research.

Overview of the Redesign of Educational Leadership Program and University-K–12

District Partnerships

Numerous articles have examined the success of the United States educational system only to identify the lack of student academic achievement as an overwhelming concern. Information from *A Nation at Risk* (1983), *The Holmes Report* (1988, 1990), and *the Levine Report* (2005, 2006) indicated a restructuring of educational leadership programs was

quintessential to regaining public confidence in education and schooling. In 2001, the Governor and Superintendent of a southern state assembled a team of 200 educational leaders to examine and make recommendations for improvement in the process which prepared and developed educational leaders in the colleges and universities around the state. These leaders reviewed all components of educational leadership programs and developed recommendation for improvement. The recommendations included the development of a Code of Ethics, a redesign of educational leadership preparation program with a focus on the practical preparation of school leaders, and modification of the certification process to include skill acquisition for educational leaders.

SREB and its team of educational professionals weighed in on an area of focus and a 2006 article entitled *School Leadership Change Emerging in Alabama: Results of the Governor's Congress on School Leadership*, indicated the redesign of educational leadership programs throughout the nation would ultimately improve student academic achievement. One area noted for implementation was partnership development between university and K–12 districts. SREB noted the lack of collaboration between university and school districts continued and this deficiency is in direct correlation to the lack of partnership development. The documentation of partnership development was an incentive for this study to analyze the factors which facilitated and hindered partnership development and success, to inspect the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in partnership development, and to scrutinize the positive and negative outcomes of conceptual partnerships development.

The framework utilized to measure the types of partnerships between external resource systems and school districts was developed by Barnett et al. (2010). This framework provided an explanation of each type of partnership, the characteristics of each of the partnership models

and the range by which partnerships develop. Details of the framework explained that partnerships developed from simple to complex and this developmental axis also delineated the level of interactions of the partnership participants. The partnership levels were independent agency model, vendor model, collaborative model, and symbiotic partnership model and spin-off model.

The partnership level with the least of amount of interaction is the independent agency model, in this model the organization functions in complete autonomy. As partnership development advanced through each of the outlined levels, the amount of interaction between the parties increase. The level of interaction in the spin-off model was so extensive the result was a newly developed organization.

Research Question 1: What was the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in the partnership development and implementation as perceived by those who have or are serving in this position?

Hackman and Wanat (2008) detailed the myriad of responsibilities assigned and delegated to the university educational leadership program coordinator. The description of the role was vast and included academic, administrative and clerical responsibilities that were performed by the educational leadership program coordinator. There was limited research available on the role of educational leadership program coordinator. Evidence indicated that the educational leadership program coordinator was responsible for the development and implementation of university-K-12 district partnerships. Of the 21 university educational leadership program coordinators interviewed as a part of this study, all indicated that they were assigned the task of partnership development. The 21 respondents represented 14 universities in one southern state.

Each respondent indicated partnerships development became a crucial assignment for their respective universities. The responsibilities of each university program coordinator varied, however, there were some commonalities which spanned all participating universities. The tasks which were equally delineated throughout all participants included:

1. Establishing a relationship with the superintendent of the designee for each district
2. Coordinating face to face meetings with superintendent at a minimum of twice a year.
3. Creating and coordinating the development of a memorandum of understanding to solidify formal partnerships with districts. This was to be completed for every district of which there was a university student enrolled.
4. Coordinating and facilitating meetings in which curriculum changes could be processed and gain consensus for all changes.

These designated tasks were to be performed by the university educational leadership program coordinator in addition to the responsibilities required as a staff member. So on top of the partnership development outlined above, the program coordinators throughout this southern states were also tasked with the list described by Hackman and Wanat (2008). The list is not all inclusive; however, it does archive the following:

1. Coordinating schedules for students;
2. Maintaining relationships with districts;
3. Developing and assisting with internship placements;
4. Keeping abreast of certification requirements;
5. Teaching course load of minimum of three per semester to include the feedback to students;
6. Completing research in order to publish articles.

The response from the study participants collectively concur that the university educational leadership program coordinator served in a critical role in which he/she maintained connections with the university staff and connections with the K–12 districts. The development of partnerships with formal documents created another layer of work for the university educational leadership program coordinators without any reduction in teaching responsibilities.

The responsibility to develop and sustain partnerships fell solely on the shoulders of the educational leadership program coordinators. The development of partnerships with K–12 was required as it was a part of the redesign, therefore completing the task was not optional. The university educational leadership program coordinator had a delicate relationship with the district due to internship placement requirements. When completing an internship in the educational leadership program, students are required to fulfill planned assignments. The assignments were developed collectively from the input of university staff and K–12 district leaders. Placement coordinated by a university staff member, which enabled the student to spend a specified amount of time under the direction of an educational leader at a prescribed location, was a major component of the internship process. Expectations of the internship varied based on setting but could include disciplining students, organizing and/or supervising after school programs, summer school programs, enrichment programs, reviewing lesson plans, and any other task delegated to the intern. This coordination required knowledge of the school district personnel to ensure the placement met the needs of university students.

The familiarity with the process created a natural fit for the university educational leadership program coordinator to facilitate formal partnerships between the university and K–12 districts. Little consideration was given to the level of work required to organize the formal

partnerships in addition to the assemblage of university and K–12 staff necessary to do the work of restructuring the course offering and assignment of the educational leadership program.

“Successful university-district partnerships can be a challenge to develop and sustain” as reported by Sanzo, Myran and Clayton (2011, p. 294). The challenge began with the initial task of partnership development which was added to the responsibilities of the university educational leadership program coordinator. There was a lack of understanding by the university leaders and/or state department education officials as to the numerous and complex task already assigned to the university educational leadership program coordinator.

The importance of university-school district partnership development is imperative; however, the level of interaction to develop effective partnership was significantly underestimated. As evidenced in the literature, university-school partnerships are critical to the success and efficacy of preparation programs (Grogan et al., 2009). The necessity of university partnership development was also a pivotal component in the redesigning of educational leadership programs and the university educational leadership program coordinator was the linchpin in the development of those partnerships. This is noted in the barriers which were identified, which included not having enough time, inadequate funding and a lack of understanding of the role of the coordinator and the need for school/university partnerships.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that facilitate partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership program?

From the findings, the major factors that facilitated partnership success were expectations of partnerships, educational leadership program coordinator’s familiarity with K–12, and their years of experience in K–12 setting. The mandate of partnership between university and K–12 districts required all colleges and universities with educational leadership programs to develop

partnerships. This requirement established a common expectation for all higher education entities. In order to maintain compliance to expectations, all of the participating universities began developing formal partnerships. The respondents of the study, the university educational leadership program coordinators, began collaborating with other program coordinators within the state. These collaborations were with other university coordinators to establish some commonalities with the K–12 districts they served or intended to serve. Communication was initiated with K–12 districts by establishing a point of contact for the university educational program coordinator. The findings suggested that all university educational leadership coordinators initiated developing partnerships which created a universal conversation throughout all of the K–12 districts. This universal conversation generated interest from the K–12 districts to meet the expectations established by the Governor and State Superintendent from the suggestions of the redesign.

Not only were the expectations to develop partnerships widespread, but the resultant work from partnership development became a comprehensive expectation. All university-K–12 district partnerships established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which formalized the requirements of the partnerships. These requirements included K–12 participation in course development, selection of students for enrollment in the educational leadership preparation programs, alignment of course assignments to meet the needs of the K–12 schools, revising and developing entrance requirements to the program. These commonplace expectations empowered university educational leadership program coordinators to maneuver through the challenging process of developing partnerships.

The establishment of a K–12 point of contact to begin partnership development was the first step in the process. The level of understanding that the educational leadership program

coordinators had of the K–12 organization was a factor in facilitating the university educational leadership program partnership development. In the initial phases of development, the District Superintendent was the only point of contact for partnership development which allowed the university educational leadership program coordinator to develop and establish a personal relationship with the superintendent. Evidence indicated that the development of this relationship between the university educational leadership program coordinator and superintendent allowed the coordinator to gain timely feedback from its K–12 district partner. Due to the size of the district or the preference of the superintendent, other district stakeholders were tasked to attend meeting to build capacity and knowledge about the purpose of partnership development. Similarly, depending on the task, the university educational leadership program coordinator was able to gather information to complete assignments without requiring so much of the superintendents' time by utilizing the information provided by the other stakeholders in attendance.

Of the 21 university educational leadership program coordinators, 20 had experience at the K–12 level. The years of experience ranged from the nine years to the greatest amount of 30 years. The university educational leadership program coordinators indicated their experience with K–12 benefitted them in their development of university K–12 district partnerships. The university educational leadership program coordinators indicated that relating to their K–12 experiences when meeting with K–12 district staff garnered respect. The respect from the K–12 staff resulted from the fact that the university education program coordinator had first-hand experience in the K–12 setting. Even as the university educational leadership program coordinator worked to align curriculum, when they shared their experiences with K–12 district leaders, a level of mutual respect began to develop. A review of the respondents' comments

revealed the more knowledge and understanding of the K–12 structure as a result of spending time in the K–12 world, the better the relationship development became between the superintendent and the university educational leadership program coordinator. Deeper relationship development between the superintendent (district) and the program coordinator (university), the more partnerships were valued the partnership development. The more valuable the partnership, the more likely that the partnership was sustained.

The university educational leadership coordinator's length of time in K–12 provided them with a wealth of job experiences they could relate to and share with the district staff. Several of the university educational leadership program coordinators knew the K–12 district staff and had personal ties to their communities. Additionally, several of the respondents had been employed by their district point of contacts earlier in their careers, and each had developed a mutual respect both personally and professionally.

Many of the university educational leadership program coordinators had diverse experiences within their K–12 years. This diversity proved to be a real asset when providing suggestions in implementation of professional development or other administrative concerns. Fourteen (14) of the 21 respondents have 15 or greater years of experience and were acquainted with various administrative positions at varying school levels as well. Experience of the university educational leadership program coordinator was an element within this factor. Eight of the university educational leadership program coordinators had multi-state experience in K–12 settings other than the state in which this study took place. Having knowledge and development from another state provided a broader base of information for the educational leadership program coordinator to provide suggestions. On occasion the university educational leadership

coordinators indicated they shared and utilized this knowledge with their partnering districts all of which fortified their connectivity to the K–12 arena.

Research Question 3: What are the factors that hindered partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership program coordinator?

Major factors that hindered partnership success were the lack of financial support, changes in leadership, time and distance to develop partnerships, the lack of support from the university staff and university attitudes about partnerships. Results of the study indicated that all of the participants addressed funding as a concern in partnership development, more specifically, the lack of funding was reported by all participants. One university received a considerable amount of initial funding. However, the amount was not sufficient to complete partnership development and was quickly depleted without any availability of replacement funds.

When funds for partnership development were available they were used for stipends/reimbursement, travel budget, offset meeting cost and other minimal concerns. The reimbursements allowed the university educational leadership coordinator to offset the cost of travel assumed by the superintendent and other participants in order to attend meetings and participate in important outreach practices. However, they were very seldom available. This lack of the reimbursement funds forced superintendents to utilize funds from their districts. Professional development funds in districts were already very limited and the reoccurring cost of attendance for partnership meetings placed an unnecessary financial burden on the districts. This financial burden was reflected in the limited participation of additional K–12 staff members at partnership meeting.

University educational leadership program coordinators would schedule partnership meetings which would last from two to four hours. Superintendents were offered refreshments

or a light meal as the setting was a working lunch. Funds for partnership development were used to support the mealtime meetings. As funds were depleted, the “working lunches” were eliminated because they were cost prohibitive. The productivity and partnership development was not impacted favorably because of the inability to schedule longer meetings and the financial limitations. Scheduling longer meeting was more beneficial than scheduling multiple meetings however funding issues impacted the ability to do both.

Funding from partnership development was also used to provide substitutes so that K–12 school leaders and teacher leaders could participate in the partnership development meetings. Involving additional stakeholders increased the capacity of partnerships; however, when funding became nonexistent the level of participation decreased, therefore, the lack of funding caused a strain on partnership development.

Changes in leadership was cited by seven of the participants in the study as a factor which inhibited partnership development. The changes in leadership referred to the K–12 district leadership (superintendent) and the university educational leadership program coordinator. Specifically stated, the superintendent either resigned, was non-renewed or not re-elected.

Changes in K–12 leadership was a sizeable hindrance to university-K–12 district partnership development. University educational leadership program coordinators spent a considerable amount of time scheduling face-to-face time with the superintendents of the partnering district. The relationship developed provided the university educational leadership program coordinator with access to principals, teachers, and other K–12 personnel. This access to K–12 personnel built partnership capacity and increased the data sources of timely information to the university. A change in district leadership did not guarantee the university

program leadership coordinators the same level of access to district leaders and information which had been previously established.

Consequently, the dedication of the new district personnel had to be aligned to purpose of the partnership. The focus of partnerships can sway significantly based on the desires of the superintendent. If the new superintendent does not support the partnership development with the university currently serving the district, he/she may choose to abandon that partnership and initiate a partnership with a different university, maintain the partnership with half-hearted dedication, support the partnership with modification or completely support the partnership as developed. If the new superintendent chooses to abandon the inherited partnership for a new university then all the effort previously exhibited have to be redirected and some cases completely relinquished. This rebranding of the district partnership can leave the former students without a connection; therefore, a new relationship with other districts may be necessary.

Although changes in district leadership proved to be a significant barrier to partnership development, changes in university leadership can be as detrimental. A participant in the study shared his story about changes in university leadership as it related to partnership development. The participant had been the university educational program coordinator for 15 years and was the initial program coordinator with the redesign process. This university educational leadership program coordinator was extremely familiar with all of the K–12 partnering districts and also had been employed by one of the districts. Popular and respected, this coordinator built strong relationships which matured into strong university-K–12 partnerships. The university educational leadership program coordinator accepted a job offer at another university in another state. Although the university educational leadership program coordinator's replacement was

able to maintain robust partnerships, the replacement spent the majority of time in the first year developing relationships with the partnering schools. The newly hired university educational leadership coordinator experienced some hesitation and reluctance from the K–12 district staff and the partnership development temporarily lost momentum.

In another example, the university educational leadership program coordinator retired and the replacement coordinator was not only new to higher education but was also new to the state. In the transition of the university educational leadership program coordinator, crucial documents of the partnership development were lost. Essential contacts and relationships were left unattended so much so that many of the partnerships were discontinued. This transition proved to be a daunting task for the newly appointed university educational leadership coordinator. The coordinator spent most of the time learning the structure of K–12 education for this new state since he did not have any prior knowledge of the organizational structure. Other time was spent attempting to locate or recreate archived or anecdotal documents to determine where and how to reengage the partnership development for his new employer.

As a result of this less than optimal transition, minimal time was spent on partnership development. The vast majority of the time was spent determining who the district leadership was and establishing a method to secure a meeting with the leadership. The partnership development with K–12 districts and the university was non-existent which ultimately meant the seven years consumed developing partnerships were not recoverable. The instructional knowledge about partnerships lost as a result of a change with the university educational leadership coordinator was damaging and counter-productive to ultimate primary goal of educational partnerships which was to align the theory and practice to result in improved academic achievement for students.

Changes in K–12 leaders and university leaders presented a barrier to partnership development; however, the time required to develop partnerships can be equally daunting and a considerable barrier as well. Of the participants in the study, 57% identified time to develop partnerships as a barrier to partnership development and directly mentioned this factor. Other participants in the study eluded to time as a barrier when referring to their schedules or the position requirements for the university. Although this study was from the perspective of the university educational leadership program coordinator, several mentioned time as a hampering factor for the K–12 partners’ perspective as well. Collectively, the university educational leadership program coordinators stated K–12 principals and superintendents were very busy and asking these educators to give up two to three hours to discuss changes in university coursework was unreasonable. The changes in coursework or implementing any other redesign requirements of partnerships would mandate multiple meetings that only added to the amount of time necessary to build and sustain partnerships.

Approximately 95% of the university educational leadership program coordinators in this study had experience in the K–12 arena and understood the K–12 timelines and responsibilities; as a result, the university staff was less assertive and more patient when meetings were cancelled or rescheduled. This tolerant disposition only delayed completion of the specified task and required additional meetings to be scheduled. The amount of face time necessary to develop and sustain these university-K–12 partnerships was a colossal undertaking and the entire process added an additional layer of work to the university educational leadership program coordinator list of job responsibilities.

The minimal level of involvement of the university educational leadership coordinator to develop partnerships required considerable effort to include phone calls to arrange meetings,

travel to and from the meetings, attendance of the meetings and scheduling subsequent meetings. These are minimal actions for initial development of one K–12 partner, however, multiple partnerships were to be developed and these steps would be duplicated for each in order to effectively serve the K–12 districts.

The time and distance required to develop partnership was identified as a factor which hindered partnership development between university and K–12 districts. Partnership development was required of the university as a result of the Governor’s Congress of 2004. The assignment of the university educational leadership program coordinator to develop partnerships caused a significant amount of time dedicated by university personnel; specifically, the education leadership program coordinator managing the time requirements of partnership development collided with university personnel who were working toward a tenure status. A contingent problem in developing partnerships with districts with only one student enrolled in the program was the probability that this district was a considerable distance from the site from the university. University educational leadership program coordinators identified the travel distance to these outlier districts and it was in some cases a two hour drive or more. Occasionally the travel distance would be a problem with the partnering district as well. Developing partners so far away made it challenging to form relationships with the superintendent and school leaders of that district. University educational leadership program coordinators hypothesized that developing and supporting partnerships with these outlier districts had the potential to drain already limited resources. These prevailing concerns partially justified the lack of support and dissenting attitudes about partnership development from university staff.

The lack of support from university staff emanated from the lack of ownership in the partnership development process. University leadership were made aware of the requirement to

develop university partnerships; however, the assignment of partnership development given to university educational leadership program coordinators occurred by happenstance, not as a result of strategic planning. The aftermath of this initial assignment of partnerships resulted in shallow commitment from the dean's level of interaction, yet the commitment at the university educational leadership program coordinator was significantly more intense.

University educational leadership program coordinators questioned the dean's level of understanding for partnership development and this concern was reflected in the minimal funds diverted to the partnership development from the dean's budget. Inversely, the reduction of teaching assignments for the university educational leadership program coordinator was not materialized, nor was this option considered based on the perception of the university educational leadership coordinator. These actions by the dean or the lack therein confirmed the opinion of the university educational leadership program coordination work with partnership development was not understood nor supported by the dean.

One example of the problem occurred at one institution where the dean's level of understanding partnerships grew, but additional responsibilities were added to the university educational leadership program coordinators. One of these additional responsibilities included expansion of partnerships. To expand partnerships the dean expected there to be a MOU (which was the formal partnership agreement) to broaden to the districts of every student enrolled in the program. Participants of the study commonly shared this example as evidence of the dean's lack of understanding. Furthermore, participants shared this and it was an unrealistic expectation which created false partnerships.

False partnerships were those who had MOU's but did not experience any of the authentic partnership development practices which included face-to-face meetings, exchange and

feedback in course development and participation in the admissions process. Although deans may not have known this practice was occurring, by them not being actively involved in partnership development, it did help to facilitate false partnership development. The lack of support from university staff and university attitudes about partnership development provided specific concerns from the university educational leadership program coordinator. Paramount in the concerns is the lack of valid understanding of partnership development from the dean of the educational leadership program. The lack of knowledge from this position fostered misunderstanding and misinterpretation on the partnership development process. University educational leadership program coordinators shared this lack of financial support through the limited funds diverted to partnership development. The lack of organizational support was evident through the lack of modifications to teaching schedules and other responsibilities to enable additional time to be spent with partnership development.

University faculty are expected and required to publish a designated number of articles in order to earn tenure. The concept of 'publish or perish' and the connection to tenure and promotion was considered an astronomical hindrance to partnership development. University educational leadership program coordinators were met with this disposition from other university faculty and staff when assistance was solicited from this group. Participants divulged that university staff frequently reminded the educational leadership program coordinator of staff responsibilities of grant writing, teaching classes and chairing dissertations. University staff members who shared this list of responsibilities with university educational leadership program coordinators mistakenly thought a reduction in these responsibilities had occurred for the university educational leadership program coordinator. Development or support in the development of partnerships was not a component of the list. University staff shared with

university educational leadership program coordinators that partnership development was not an essential element of their work.

As mandated in the redesign, partnership development was the responsibility of the university. University educational leadership program coordinators shared their frustration as they realized the university accreditation process required them to develop partnerships with the K–12 districts. This realization exposed a partisan partnership process which facilitated resentment from the K–12 partners and objection from the university staff. University educational leadership program coordinators shared this objection and reluctance was most obvious when face to face collaborations were scheduled. The perception of the university educational leadership program coordinator revealed that when opportunities for K–12 districts to utilize university staff as professional development consultants, the K–12 districts would choose other providers.

Question 4: What are the positive and negative outcomes of partnerships as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?

As the university educational leadership program coordinator reflected on the development of university-K–12 district partnerships they revealed more outcomes that were primarily positive. The positive outcomes varied from each of the participants; however, common themes became apparent. All participants approached their partnering district with the same requirements. Dialogue between university and K–12 partners' fostered purposeful communication geared toward improving the development of aspiring educational leaders. Prior to the requirement of university-K–12 district partnership development, these entities had very limited interactions; however, as a result of these partnerships, deliberate conversations focused on curriculum to be provided to aspiring educational leaders have occurred. These conversations

have happened throughout all universities with educational leadership programs within the state where this study was conducted.

As the collaborative conversations transpired with university-K-12 districts, a powerful practice of having a district liaison or point of contact for each K-12 district attend the meeting ensued. The participation of this representative in the meetings where university staff would be discussing programmatic modifications to change curriculum is the first of a reoccurring pattern by which both entities are present; therefore, decisions were made in unison rather than in isolation. Continued collegiality fostered connection to university resources and included opportunities to provide K-12 districts with research based professional development.

Another positive outcome of university-K-12 partnerships is the networking for employment of educational leaders. K-12 district leaders, as a part of the redesign, participated in the review of admission criteria of educational leadership candidates, which allowed districts to interact with prospective leadership candidates. When K-12 districts incurred openings in leadership positions, they considered those candidates who had the skill set for which they (K-12 district leaders) helped develop. Often times these candidates were participants in the university partnership with the district.

The respondents noted that the educational leadership program improved as a result of this program. Educational leadership candidates studied a curriculum which was jointly developed between leaders from the university and K-12 had class assignments which were pertinent to real life issues in K-12 education. Of all the positive outcomes, this change of appropriately selected assignments had the most immediate impact on the curriculum alignment and on strengthening the partnership bonds between university and K-12 districts. Maintaining

the communication to ensure course assignments remained connected to the needs of the K–12 districts was a byproduct of the jointly created assignments.

Throughout the interviews, very few negative comments were made, but there were some negative connotations that did surface from five of the participants that were notable to include that on the surface could be seen as potential negative outcomes as a result of university and K–12 district partnership development. Smaller numbers of participants in educational leadership programs broadened contact areas to service in K–12 district partnership. Increased selectivity in educational leadership program participants decreased the number of students admitted to the program. The reduction in students in the educational leadership program conversely lowered the number of university staff needed for teaching assignments thereby inversely diminishing the financial incentive previously created by having had larger numbers of students in the educational leadership program. The purposeful reduction of students in the educational leadership program was to protect the quality of the educational leadership program. It was a conscious decision by the State Department of Education to have quality rather than quantity. It was designed to develop exceptional, well prepared educational leaders. The reduction of university staff and financial benefits was an intentional consequence of program improvement for educational leaders.

Collaboration and participation of university and K–12 districts in redesigning curriculum to be taught in the educational leadership program is not a miniscule task. Even if a consensus was easily met on the goal of designing the curriculum, changes were not made quickly. Subsequently, slower progress in redesigning and making changes in curriculum content at the university level were significant negative outcomes to partnership development. If participants did not easily reach consensus or a hindrance of all entities was delayed or prohibited, the

necessary changes were postponed. The labor required to change documents was seen as a significant negative outcome of partnership development.

Summary of Findings

In summary, the role of the university educational leadership coordinator was paramount in developing university K–12 district partnerships. Of the 14 universities which participated in this study, all utilized the university educational leadership program coordinator to develop partnerships. Expectations of partnerships, university educational leadership program coordinators' familiarity with K–12 and experience in the K–12 setting were factors which facilitated success. Conversely, lack of financial support, changes in university and K–12 leadership, time to develop partnerships, lack of support from university staff and university attitudes about partnerships were factors which hindered partnership development. Finally, the positive and negative outcomes of partnership success are identified with the realization that although a vigorous process, the positive outcomes far outweigh the negative.

Discussion and Reflection on the Findings and Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study as related to university-K–12 district partnership development led the researcher to engage in an analysis to determine if the original conceptual framework of this study aligned with the findings or if the framework should be altered. The original framework utilized for this study was developed by Barnett, Hall, Berg and Camarena (2010) in which partnerships developed on a spectrum from least complex to levels of extreme complexity in which the creation of a new organization can occur. In review, the beginning levels of partnership development were independent agency, vendor model and collaborative model. The more advanced levels of partnership are symbiotic partnership model, spin-off model and new organization model.

Based on evidence, which included document review, self-reporting and interviews, the partnership development of all the participants fell into three levels at various points in the partnership. The levels were vendor, collaborative and symbiotic partnership model. The vendor model of partnership development is exhibited through basic definition as a contract for services model. “The basis of the exchange in the vendor model is a quid-pro-quo between partner organizations which is clear, relatively narrow in scope, agreed upon up front and typically for a short period of time” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 241).

The relationships developed under this model tended to be cooperative and/or coordinative in nature which means interactions to plan professional developments or internship placements were present. Educational partnerships which function at this level are exemplified by internship placements for the school district. The university, with the coordination from the university education leadership program coordinator, entered into an agreement with the K–12 district for all students who meet the criteria to complete an internship at one of the district schools. Coincidentally, this contract can be terminated at any time just as the school district can terminate the internship at any time. The university can also end the contract but they are less likely to do this without having another placement arranged for the assigned university student. Universities with this level of partnership typically have memoranda of understanding which outlined the parameters of the relationship; however, they lack authentic collaboration with their K–12 district partnerships.

Based on the evidence, 57% of university-K–12 partnerships function at the vendor model level. This level of partnership indicated the interaction was minimally meeting the standards to be considered a developing partnership. Positioned in this group was Salute University, Stripes University, Pride University, Eagle University, Liberty University and

Victory University. These participants actively participated in the redesign process to include partnership development; however, they lacked the comprehensive interactions to move into the collaborative model of partnership.

Half of the programs in the state were at the vendor stage because the coordinator was new or unfamiliar with the lay of the land. These vendor level university-K-12 district partnerships were similar in that they all experienced a change in the university educational leadership program coordinator at a crucial period of partnership development. This changed the effectiveness of the partnership development which relegated these identified universities to minimal development and growth. Although the newly appointed university educational leadership coordinators all had the K-12 experience, many were new to the area or had positions which did not allow them to become familiar with the K-12 clientele prior to the transition of these staff members. The vendor model universities (Pride University, Stripes University, Flag University, Eagle University, Salute University, Liberty University, Victory University) would very likely have had partnership development at the collaborative level had it not been for this change.

The university-K-12 partnership development level was so successful for Salute University, its partnership would have been considered symbiotic prior to the change of the educational leadership program coordinator. Additionally, the new educational leadership program coordinator was so overwhelmed because he was from another state and totally unfamiliar with the K-12 districts which the partnership would serve. Although equipped with the appropriate skill set, the learning curve to gain familiarity not only with the state department educational system but also with the partnering districts was a monumental task.

The level of understanding for partnership development by the dean for Salute University came into question as it related to selecting a replacement for the university educational leadership program coordinator. The dean's selection of a replacement who did not possess any knowledge of the partnering community, nor the state department structure was counterproductive to partnership development. From the interview, the respondent confirmed that much of his time was spent locating documents, researching the partners, attempting to make connections to state department of education officials, and very little of his time was spent with K-12 district partners; therefore, this partnerships had become less interactive as opposed to more interactive. Although all of the participants categorized in the vendor model group have fallen prey to this misdirected partnership, none have experienced the significant loss of momentum as much as Salute University.

The description of the collaborative model of partnership demonstrated "intensive and sustained mutual exchange and benefit; additional time to reach mutually agreeable structures and outcomes" (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 25). The collaborative level of partnerships are "much more complex, time consuming, and therefore a greater commitment of human and financial resources; projects tend to be complex, are conducted for long periods of time and partners display mutual care and concern for one another" (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 21). Evidence of the mutual care and respect was demonstrated when the participant from American University described the intense and fierce reaction from their partners when they were informed the dean was attempting to disband the education department and combine it with the liberal arts department. The K-12 district partners launched the campaign to thwart this plan. Here's where our partnership strength came in. We alerted the superintendents and assistant superintendents who were our partners and we said,

You need to know what's happening. We're really worried about our future. We've got the strongest program in the college of education. We have 50 students ready to be admitted into a new master's cohort and they're saying we can't admit them.

Something's going on and we have heard that they're trying to dissolve us. We need you to speak out.

We got our partners to write letters to the president of the university, to this new dean. One of the partner assistant superintendents wrote a letter to the newspaper and then got interviewed and got on television. We also contacted our former students, but our partner superintendents were very vocal and it's because we were supplying them with their future school leaders. An email got the faculty alerted. We had a meeting and at that faculty meeting, which was all the faculty of the college of education, someone spoke up and said, "I think we should take a vote of 'no confidence' on the dean of the college of liberal arts and sciences." That happened. Anyway, the president sent the provost over real quick to have meetings with us and in a couple of weeks after that, they decided to reinstate the school of education. This is partnership collaboration at its best. This partnership would have been considered a symbiotic partnership because the K-12 district was so strong in supporting the university program which was in grave danger of being dissolved. However, because of that connectedness of the K-12 districts who readied themselves for a battle, the university educational leadership program of the school of education was saved. The district really fought the battle on behalf of the university educational leadership program.

Based on the evidence, 29% of university-K-12 relationships functioned at the collaborative model of partnerships. The level of interaction of these partnerships (American University, Stars University, Freedom University and Soldier University) was on the cusp of

having symbiotic partnerships. The university educational leadership coordinators of these universities have spent the time building personal and professional relationships with the K–12 district partners they served.

Collaborative model partnerships are successful because the university educational leadership program coordinators built relationships and capacity with both organizations to sustain partnership development. Not only was the university educational leadership program coordinator familiar to the K–12 district staff, the district was familiar with other members of the educational leadership staff. Even though two of the university educational leadership program coordinators transitioned to other positions and were replaced, these university-K–12 district partnerships did not lose momentum in sustainment nor development. The level of commitment to partnerships from university staff and the long term benefit of developing educational leaders from K–12 districts puts these partnering organizations in the position to sustain growth through changing times.

The deans of these collaborative model partnerships (Freedom University, Soldier University, Stars University American University) understood the significance of university-K–12 partners from their positions. In so much as the respondents acknowledge the support of their deans, they also recognized it was their responsibility to consistently ensure university-K–12 partnership development was foremost in conversations with the dean.

As partnership development progresses from mutual gain received by each organization a level of compounding of benefits through joint efforts described the symbiotic partnership model (Barnett, 2010). “Mutually conceived goals, objectives and policies which can only be achieved through combined effort of partners” gives additional insight of the characteristics of the symbiotic model (Barnett et al, 2010 p. 26). Based on the evidence, only 14% of university-K–

12 partnership functioned at the Symbiotic Model of partnerships. Warrior University, Historic University and Patriotic University narrowly fit the characteristics of a Symbiotic Model. These university educational leadership coordinators had several factors which supported this position of symbiosis due the most significant being that the positions in which they serve had a very specific description of work which enabled them to focus their efforts more directly on partnership development and not numerous other task. Historic University has a staff member defined as a clinical professor who focused on building the relationships with K–12 districts without the pressures of publishing. She also indicated that her district contacts have her personal cell phone number and that the relationship is so supportive the boundary between university and K–12 joint projects are blurred into disappearance.

Similar reports were shared from Historic and Patriotic Universities. These purposeful university-K–12 district partnerships are well established and the university educational leadership program coordinators have served in these positions eight or more years which promoted partnership stability. The longevity of the university educational program coordinator in the position enabled these coordinators to build capacity through the district leadership so that relationships could be sustained even through changes in district leadership.

This level of partnership is an anomaly for university-K–12 district partnership development, but the university educational leadership program coordinators selected to serve Historic, Patriotic and Warrior University had a unique skill set which guaranteed its success. The Patriotic University educational leadership program coordinator was a former District Superintendent and well versed on how to develop and sustain partnerships. Additionally, prior to joining the university staff, he worked locally in surrounding K–12 districts for over 20 years and brought his years of experience and connections into his current position.

Longevity in the position of university educational leadership coordinator was a factor which enabled these universities to reach the symbiotic model of partnerships. A point of consideration for these universities should be the concern that these staff members will retire or opt to accept other positions at some point and time in their career. These university educational leadership coordinators have been in these positions for eight years or more. A barrier to partnership development could be the challenges their replacement's may encounter which possibly may cause these universities to lose momentum. If these changes occur, the university staff should anticipate some change in the partnership level; the amount will vary depending on the skills and qualities of the person chosen to replace the university educational leadership coordinator.

In summary, the level of university-K-12 district partnerships varied from one university to another. Over 57% of the university participants were considered to have partnerships at the vendor model of development. Lack of authentic interaction between the university and K-12 district inhibited partnership development. University and K-12 district personnel changes, in addition to the fluctuating support from the dean, relegated 7 of the 14 participating universities to this position.

The collaborative model partnerships resulted from mutual exchange and benefit from the participants. Twenty-nine percent of the university educational leadership programs had partnerships at the collaborative model level. The symbiotic model shared mutually conceived goals, objectives and policies demonstrated a more collaborative interaction than any other level observed by the participants of the study. Three of the 14 universities or 14% are considered to have partnerships within the symbiotic model. Table 2 lists these levels.

Table 2

Participants' Level of Partnership Development

University	Vendor Model	Collaborative Model	Symbiotic Model
Pride University	X		
Stripes University	X		
Flag University	X		
Eagle University	X		
Salute University	X		
Liberty University	X		
Victory University	X		
American University		X	
Stars University		X	
Freedom University		X	
Solider University		X	
Historic University			X
Warrior University			X
Patriotic University			X

Implication for Action

This section addresses the issue of how this research on university-K-12 district partnerships can further the understanding of importance of partnership development. The anecdotes of the university educational leadership program coordinators provided insight into partnership development after the redesign of educational leadership programs across the nation, but specifically in a southern state. These narrative stories provided vivid descriptions of the

process of developing partnerships. The findings revealed the university-K–12 partnerships have positively impacted leadership development in the state of the study.

Findings from this study should be shared with deans of Schools of Education, educational leadership instructors, educational leadership program coordinators, district superintendents, state superintendents and school principals. One of the important implications was that the dean must fully understand the importance of partnerships to the university. Ensuring this understanding will enable the dean to divert any discretionary funds to support partnership development. Additionally, the dean can influence staff schedules and stimulate partnership discussions among university instructional staff.

One implication of this study is that the program coordinator for education leadership is not like any other program coordinator relative to the requirements for the position. The university system does not recognize the difference in the educational leadership program coordinator and coordinators in other programs. The mandates from the state make this position unique.

A second implication is that university educational leadership program coordinators with K–12 experience were familiar with the K–12 organization structure. Program coordinators who shared anecdotes of their K–12 experiences when meeting with K–12 partners noticed the attitudes of those partners were more receptive, thus providing an opportunity for dialogue. These exchanges validated the experiences of the university educational leadership coordinator. Thus, it seems vital that individuals in this position have such experience and knowledge.

A final implication for this study is that the school district offices need training so that the school system leaders have a better understanding of the partnership and the importance of

partnership development. Program coordinators could provide school district offices with this training and in doing so, they would start developing the partnership.

One major hindrance to university-K–12 partnership development was the time to develop partnerships. Overwhelmingly, connecting with an identified district point of contact, scheduling meetings, and attending numerous site visits were daunting tasks when completed for one district partner but when these tasks are multiplied by 7 to 10 districts partners, this time commitment can be staggering. This requires additional staff members or a reduced number of responsibilities for those professors involved with partnership development.

A secondary hindrance is the change in personnel with the school district; however, university staff changes were also very impactful. Typically, the point of contact for district partnerships was the District Superintendent; therefore, opportunities to support partnership development received a level of importance as a result of the superintendent's support. As district leadership changed, importance of partnerships fluctuated based on the pleasure of the superintendent.

University educational leadership program coordinators devoted a considerable amount of time to becoming acquainted with the superintendents' philosophies and often catered activities to support the superintendents' likes and/or dislikes; as a result, a change in the direction of partnerships development. Partnership development had just as much to do with relationship development between the university educational leadership coordinator and the superintendent as it had to do with partnership outcomes. Even as much as district superintendent changes would alter the course of partnership development, so would a change in the university educational leadership program coordinator. Surprisingly, a change in the university educational leadership program coordinator would re-route partnership development,

some diversions were temporary, a slight loss in momentum and other changes were detrimental to the partnership development. Whether slight or significant, any loss in partnership development is critical, and therefore, it is imperative that partnership development is not left solely to one individual within the university

Consideration for Future Research

From the findings and analysis of this research, a number of potential research opportunities exist. If the dean identified partnership development as significant, a clinical staff member could be assigned for the sole purpose of developing partners. The dean of the college of education has the opportunity to influence funds to support partnership development and assign staff to partnership development. An investigation of university-K-12 partnerships development success and sustainment with university who have a clinical staff member assigned could be a future study.

Another future area of research would be to duplicate this study to include other states that have an area of partnership development as a part of their educational leadership program. It was noted that the redesign of the programs in this state was mandated in an effort to improve school leadership within the state. Replicating this study in other states that also have a partnership component would be beneficial to analyze their results and determine how partnerships are impacting schools.

Other opportunities for future research could include duplication of the study of university-K-12 partnership development from the perspective of the K-12 district point of contact. This would give valuable insight into the perceptions of K-12 relative to their partnering university and the partnership, and how the university-K-12 partnerships are fitting the needs of K-12. As identified from several of the program coordinators, the partnership

development was seen as one sided because it was the university that was focusing on the partnership. By having the perspective of the K–12 district, this could provide additional opportunities for the university to become more involved with K–12. Once gaining this information, best practices could be identified to improve future partnership development.

The final future research recommendation would be to replicate the study at universities that have a clinical professor on staff that is developing partnerships versus those universities that do not utilize a clinical professor in the educational leadership program in developing partnerships. Through this research, more information could be gleaned on partnership development and its impact on the educational leadership program.

Summary

This study has identified the role of the university educational leadership coordinator in partnership development, both facilitating and hindering factors of partnership development, and the positive and negative outcomes of university-K–12 district partnership development. The voices from the 14 universities and 21 participants gave insight to the level of partnership development present at each of their representative universities.

The framework utilized to measure the types of partnerships between external resource systems and school districts is developed by Barnett et al. (2010). This framework provided an explanation of each type of partnership, the characteristics of each of the partnership model and the range by which partnerships develop. This framework assisted the researcher in identifying the level of partnership development for the participants of the study. The Barnett framework explained that partnerships develop from simple to complex and this development axis also delineated the level of interactions of the partnership participants.

University-K-12 district partnerships are the fundamental link in improving leadership development for administrators and allows the university to remain current in meeting the needs of K-12 leaders. The university is responsible for developing the leaders in our schools, and if they are not current in research and practice, then they are not equipping those leaders to meet the needs of their students.

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APPENDIX A

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
REQUEST FOR EXEMPT CATEGORY RESEARCH**

For information or help completing this form, contact: THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE, 115 Ramsay Hall
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm>

Revised 2/1/2014 Submit completed form to IRBsubmit@auburn.edu or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

Project activities may not begin until you have received approval from the Auburn University IRB.

1. PROJECT PERSONNEL & TRAINING

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI):

Name Lisa Brooks Coleman Title Graduate Student Dept./School EFLT- College of Ed.
Address 1401 Fall Branch Dr., Phenix City, AL 36867 AU Email lbc0009@auburn.edu
Phone 334-448-1070 Dept. Head Sheri Downer

FACULTY ADVISOR (if applicable):

Name Ellen Reames Title _____ Ph.D _____ Dept./School ELFT- College of Ed.
Address Haley Center, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36849-5221
Phone 334-844-3067, 706 -573-7563 AU Email reamseh@auburn.edu

KEY PERSONNEL: List Key Personnel (other than PI and FA). Additional personnel may be listed in an attachment.

Name	Title	Institution	Responsibilities
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

KEY PERSONNEL TRAINING: Have all Key Personnel completed CITI Human Research Training (including elective modules related to this research) within the last 3 years? YES NO

TRAINING CERTIFICATES: Please attach CITI completion certificates for all Key Personnel.

2. PROJECT INFORMATION

Title: University Educational Leadership Program Coordinators' perceptions of University - School District Partnership Development

Source of Funding: Investigator Internal External

List External Agency & Grant Number: N/A

List any contractors, sub-contractors, or other entities associate with this project.

N/A

List any other IRBs associated with this project (including those involved with reviewing, deferring, or determinations).

N/A

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY			
DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:	_____	by _____	APPROVAL # _____
DATE OF IRB REVIEW:	_____	by _____	APPROVAL CATEGORY: _____
DATE OF ORC REVIEW:	_____	by _____	INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW : _____
DATE OF APPROVAL:	_____	by _____	
COMMENTS:	_____		

3. **PROJECT SUMMARY**

a. Does the research involve any special populations?

- YES NO Minors (under age 19)
 YES NO Pregnant women, fetuses, or any products of conception
 YES NO Prisoners or Wards
 YES NO Individuals with compromised autonomy and/or decisional capacity

b. Does the research pose more than minimal risk to participants? YES NO

Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. 42 CFR 46.102(i)

c. Does the study involve any of the following?

- YES NO Procedures subject to FDA Regulation Ex. Drugs, biological products, medical devices, etc.
 YES NO Use of school records of identifiable students or information from instructors about specific students
 YES NO Protected health or medical information when there is a direct or indirect link that could identify the participant
 YES NO Collection of sensitive aspects of the participant's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or use of alcohol
 YES NO Deception of participants

If you checked "YES" to any response in Question #3 STOP. It is likely that your study does not meet the "EXEMPT" requirements. Please complete a PROTOCOL FORM for Expedited or Full Board Review. You may contact IRB Administration for more information. (Phone: 334-844-5966 or Email: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu)

4. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

a. Subject Population (Describe, include age, special population characteristics, etc.)

University faculty who were and who are knowledgeable about the development of partnerships with K-12 School Districts. Participants most likely served in the role of the University Educational Leadership Program Coordinator. *All above the age of 18.

b. Describe, step by step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants.

- N/A (Existing data will be used)

1. Potential participants will be given a consent cover letter and consent form to sign that explains the university partnership development with school districts, factors that facilitate and hinder partnership development and the purpose of the study. 2. Confidentiality of the participants and the collected data will be explained to potential participants. 3. An opportunity to ask clarity questions will be extended to participants. 4. An explanation will be given that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

- c. **Brief summary of project.** (Include the research question(s) and a brief description of the methodology, including recruitment and how data will be collected and protected.)

The purpose of the proposed study is to add depth and knowledge to the research on partnership development between the University and K-12 district.

Research Questions:

1. What was the role of the university educational leadership program coordinator in partnership development and implementation as perceived by those who have or are serving in this position?
2. What are the factors that facilitate partnership success as perceived by the university educational leadership program coordinator?
3. What are the factors that hinder partnership success as perceived by university educational leadership program coordinator?
4. What are the positive and negative outcomes of partnership as perceived by the university educational leadership coordinator?

Qualitative Methods will be utilized:

Interviews (University Educational Leadership Program Coordinators) will be audio taped to increase accuracy of the transcription; the audio will be transcribed omitting names. The audio files be deleted when transcription is completed.

- d. **Waivers.** Check any waivers that apply and describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

- Waiver of Consent (Including existing de-identified data)
- Waiver of Documentation of Consent (Use of Information Letter)
- Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

- e. **Attachments.** Please attach Informed Consents, information letters, data collection instrument(s), advertisements/recruiting materials, or permission letters/site authorizations as appropriate

Signature of Investigator	<u>Lisa B. Ac</u>	Date	<u>8/2/2015</u>
Signature of Faculty Advisor	<u>Ellen Kramer</u>	Date	<u>8/18/2015</u>
Signature of Department Head	<u>Shirley Damm</u>	Date	<u>9/4/2015</u>

DOCUMENTS INCLUDE IN IRB SUBMISSION:

1. IRB
2. Citi Certificates for Coleman
3. Citi Certificates for E. Reames
4. Informed Consent Dated 8.30.15
5. Interview Questions
6. Site Authorization Letter

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT****

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Lisa Coleman (ID: 3540687)
- **Email:** lbc0009@auburn.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** 334-298-0534

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - Non-AU Personnel
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Report ID:** 10445140
- **Report Date:** 08/01/2015
- **Current Score**:** 82

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID:1127)	05/29/13	3/3 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID:504)	05/29/13	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID:505)	05/29/13	2/5 (40%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID:508)	05/29/13	4/4 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citisupport@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative
at the University of Miami

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Lisa Coleman (ID: 3540687)
- **Email:** lbc0009@auburn.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Leadership
- **Phone:** 334-298-0534

- **Curriculum Group:** IRB Additional Modules
- **Course Learner Group:** Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 10445139
- **Report Date:** 08/01/2015
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID:508)	05/29/13	4/4 (100%)
Auburn University (ID:12239)	05/29/13	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative
at the University of Miami

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Course In The Protection Human Subjects

IRB Member

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Complete Modules
Basic Course	1924785	80%	88%	07/16/2008	07/30/2008	07/29/2013	<input type="button" value="View"/>
Refresher Course	10258911	80%	85%	06/08/2013	06/08/2013	06/07/2018	<input type="button" value="View"/>

Research with public school students

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Complete Modules
Basic Course	1924786	80%	100%	07/28/2008	07/30/2008	07/30/2013	<input type="button" value="View"/>
Basic Course	10258912	80%	100%	06/08/2013	06/08/2013	06/07/2018	<input type="button" value="View"/>

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel (Blue) - Basic/Refresher

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel (Blue) - Basic/Refresher

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Complete Modules
Basic Course	11464661	80%	82%	07/16/2008	10/07/2013	10/06/2016	<input type="button" value="View"/>

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT



AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “University Educational Leadership Program Coordinators’ perceptions of University –School District Partnership Development. The study is being conducted by Lisa B. Coleman under the direction of Dr. Ellen Reames in the Auburn University Department of Educational Leadership. You were selected as a possible participant because you are age 19 or older and are currently serving or previously served in the role of the University Educational Leadership Coordinator.

What will be involved if you participate? If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in an interview and an anonymous survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately one hour. The interview will be audio taped and the recording destroyed upon completion of its transcription. A pseudonym will be used to ensure your anonymity.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with study. If you participate in this study you might expect to increase your knowledge of university/school district partnerships. We/I cannot promise that you will receive any or all benefits described.

If you change your mind about participating? If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn, the Department of Educational Leadership, or the Auburn University Leadership Partnership.

Participant’s initials _____

Page 1 of 2

Your privacy will be protected. Any information with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Dr. Ellen Reames at reamseh@auburn.edu or Lisa Coleman at lbc0009@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have a question about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or email at hsubjec@auburn.edu or IRBChair @auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY, YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's Signature Date

Investigator obtaining consent Date

Printed Name

Printed Name

Co- Investigator Date

Printed Name

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Interview Questions

1. What is your position at the university and how does your position relate to University-K-12 District partnership development?
2. What things have inspired you to be active in the University-K-12 District partnership development?
3. In what ways do you feel the University-K-12 District partnership has improved the overall educational leadership development?
4. Since transforming the State's educational leadership programs to include partnerships began in 2005, what is the progress of your university with K-12 District partnership development?
5. In what ways do you feel the K-12 student outcomes and/or achievement changed with the implementation of University-K-12 District partnership?
6. What factors do you think have presented barriers to University-K-12 District partnership development?
7. What factors do you think have presented benefits to University- K-12 District partnership development?
8. What do you think are the positive and negative outcomes of University-K-12 District partnership development?
9. Are there any other things you would like to tell me in reference to partnership development?