

The Nourishment of Assistant Principals: The Effective Development of Future School Principals in Alabama

by

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[assistant principals, professional development, mentoring, leadership capacity]

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Abstract

The assistant principalship is a vital and necessary pathway to the principalship. There are more demands for the principal to be the change agent for a school system and there is great concern about the quality of preparation for assistant principals who may become the future principals of the school. Taylor and Martin (2007) suggest that assistant principals are not groomed for the principalship because they spend their time on limited matters and do not receive experiences necessary to become effective principals.

The literature compiled for this study indicated that effective preparation for assistant principals should include formal and informal mentoring, meaningful professional development, experiences, networking, and should foster their desire to aspire to become a principal. These components were the foundation for creating the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* which was used to collect information for assistant principals' beliefs about the extent to which they were prepared for the principalship as well as how their real and ideal development compared to one another. Quantitative data were collected that gathered information on assistant principals' perceptions. The study also sought to determine if assistant principals' responses to real and ideal development differed based on time spent focusing on what the literature suggests is necessary for principals to know how to do.

A one-way ANOVA was used in analyzing the dependent variables (professional development, mentoring, networking, and aspiration to the principalship) mean scores for assistant principals who agreed, were neutral, or disagreed about being prepared for the

principalship. An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test was used for experience. The Wilcoxon test, evaluated differences between in reality and ideally how much time was spent on curriculum and instruction, budget and finance, discipline, community relations, management of the school, and buildings and grounds. Paired-samples t-test were conducted to compare the ideal professional development with real professional development. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to compare whether or not assistant principals spend more time managing the school than they do on curriculum and instruction, and whether or not assistant principals are provided the opportunities to lead meetings, complete instructional observations, and balance the budget in order to prepare them for the principalship.

Findings from this study revealed most survey participants spend more time managing the school than they do on curriculum and instruction and that assistant principals are not provided the opportunities to lead meetings, complete instructional observations, and balance the budget in order to prepare them for the principalship. Scores were significantly higher for the ideal professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking than for the real professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking. Results from the quantitative analysis also confirmed the five elements from the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* as being instrumental in preparing assistant principals for the principalship. The findings from this study can help educators understand assistant principals' perceptions of how prepared they believe they are for the principalship and how their ideal development compares to their reported development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework*. Although this study cannot be generalized to all assistant principals, it is recommended that educational leaders use the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* as an appropriate framework to grow assistant principals for the principalship.

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List of Abbreviations

CLAS	Council Leaders Alabama Schools
ASSP	National Association of Secondary School Principals
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
TAP	Training Assistant Principals
ISLLC	Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
APP	New York City's Aspiring Principal Program
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
WSU	Washington State University
PPA	Promising Principal Academy
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Educational leaders are constantly looking for ways to improve educational leadership in schools. From instructional leadership to building community relationships, more and more emphasis is being placed on the development of educational leaders such as principals. The role of the assistant principal is a vital and necessary training ground for the principalship. There have been few published studies that identify the best practices for how to develop assistant principals for the principalship. For exceptions see Taylor and Martin (2007), McBride (2008), Barnett, Shoho and Oleszewski (2012), YuKwong and Walker (2010), Kwan and Walker (2012), and Allen and Weaver (2014). Taylor and Martin (2007) provided an article which examines searching for new principals and strategies for building principals through the assistant principalship. An article by McBride (2008) focused on the leadership of a former assistant principal who becomes principal and the support she received in her development. Barnett, et al. (2012) examined the perceptions of new and experienced assistant principals regarding their jobs. YuKwong and Walker (2010) offered a study on assistant principals in Hong Kong with a review of literature on the assistant principalship, the need for further study for assistant principals, and their job satisfaction. A study by Kwan and Walker (2012) examined whether or not assistant principals jobs are aligned with their career aspirations. Allen and Weaver (2014) provided help through their study to guide the work of professors in educational leadership to support the development of assistant principals. Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, and Warren (2015) conducted a study to help understand the perceptions of assistant principals in their

current jobs and what they felt would be their idealized leadership behaviors; it was discovered that assistant principals spend the majority of their time in managerial tasks.

These studies have been conducted in South Carolina, Maryland, Texas, Hong Kong, and Kentucky, but no studies indicating to what degree assistant principals report receiving development for the principalship have been conducted in Alabama. No studies indicating the best practices for preparing aspiring assistant principals for the principalship have been conducted in Alabama, the state in which this study occurred.

Research that has been done indicates that the assistant principal position does not provide the training necessary for assistant principals to become principals (Taylor & Martin, 2007). Taylor and Martin (2007) conducted a qualitative study with ten principals who had helped build their assistant principals leadership capacity in South Carolina. The authors supported other's findings that assistant principals are not rightfully groomed for the principalship, citing reasons such as assistant principals are limited in their roles and spend most of their time attending to limited matters, they don't get to see the whole picture of the school, they don't get experience in instructional leadership, and that assistant principals are usually in their position for a short amount of time before promotion.

Militello, et al. (2015) used a Q-methodology to examine 56 assistant principals' current and idealized leadership practices. They discovered that what assistant principals knew they should spend time doing and what they actually did spend their time doing were different. The assistant principals stated that they felt like they had to adhere to what their supervisor told them to do in order to safeguard their job security although they knew these practices would not serve their leadership training.

Allen and Weaver (2014) investigated the professional development needs of assistant principals in Kentucky in order to prepare for the launch of a new program in Kentucky known as the *Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals Network*. This network was developed in order to support assistant principals in their development needs. The ISLLC 2008 standards were used as the framework for the study. A 5-point Likert-scale survey was sent out to 104 assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region and 66 successfully completed the survey. It was discovered that assistant principals valued all elements related to educational leadership on the survey and rated their actual performance on the elements lower on each item.

There are countless examples of ways that administrators try to combat the ever-changing demands placed on them. Some try to improve their abilities on their own. Others attend professional development and seminars looking for results. From mentoring to professional development, assistant principals' development can be improved. Garrison-Wade, Sobel and Fulmer (2007) stated, "the days of sink or swim for new principals must end if they are to stand any reasonable chance of succeeding in their increasingly tough jobs" (p. 3). Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012) conducted a quantitative study in Texas to obtain answers from 100–400 assistant principals where they used researcher-developed or previously validated questionnaires or inventories with new and experienced assistant principals to determine in what areas assistant principals felt most developed and in what areas they felt they needed growth before becoming a principal. The author stated, "Assistant principals have been an underutilized resource in schools, being described as the 'forgotten man' or a 'wasted educational resource'" (p. 92). My study will be different from Barnett, et al. (2012) in that I will seek to find out to what degree Alabama's assistant principals' report believing they are prepared for the principalship as well as

how does ideal development compare to reported development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* created through the literature review in this study.

The Research Problem

The role of principals as leaders in schools has changed dramatically in the past decade. Bottoms (2007) suggested that the work to prepare future principals has never been more important. Public schools are facing some of their biggest challenges and excellent leaders are needed to raise graduation rates and prepare children for the 21st century. There are new accountability measures for schools as well as political pressure for all students to succeed. There is an expectation for school leaders to be instructional leaders first who are well versed in research-based pedagogy and content (Kantrowitz, 2007; Samuels, 2008). With the change in outcome expectations for schools and their leaders, assistant principals' roles have not changed because they are still mainly functioning as the manager of the school (Barnett, et al., 2012; Johnson, 2004; Katz, et al., n.d.; NASSP, 2014; The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008; Weller & Weller, 2002) so it is important to look at how assistant principals, who aspire to become principals, are developed for the principalship in their roles as assistant principals. The National Center for Education Statistics (1993) stated that 49.8% of assistant principals become principals.

With the change of expectations for principals, assistant principals who may be the future principals require new types of training in order to be prepared for their current and future roles. Taylor and Martin (2007) supported that assistant principals are not rightfully groomed for the principalship. Allen and Weaver (2014) concur that “many assistant principals feel unprepared for the current role thereby indicating the need for meaningful and relevant development” (p. 15). This study will be different from Taylor and Martin (2007), Militello, et al. (2015), and

Allen and Weaver (2014) in that I will seek to find out to what degree Alabama assistant principals believe they are prepared for the principalship and to discover how ideal development compares to reported development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* created through the literature review in this study. The research problem that will be addressed in this study is: To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship and how does ideal development compare to reported development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework*?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study includes five elements that are critical to developing the leadership capacity of assistant principals who aspire to the principalship. These five elements emerged from a review of the literature which has been published primarily within the last ten years.

The first element is that professional development should be offered to assistant principals to help them in their growth (Gajda & Militello, 2008). A participant in the Barnett, et al. study (2012) said, “[My principal] encourages me to attend workshops and conferences that will help me gain experience and knowledge. She takes me to principal’s meetings and other functions that are going to expose me to what being a principal is” (p. 115).

The second element is mentoring of assistant principals, which can be both formal and informal. McBride (2008) suggested that “Building the leadership capacity of others is one of the most important jobs we have. Ultimately, this commitment and the learning of everyone involved may be the “silver bullet” of our success” (p. 24). The third component is networking. Peterson (2002) noted that networking can build links to professional organizations which can provide school leaders with useful resources. The fourth component is needed experience for the

principal role. Assistant principals need experience in all realms of the principalship and do not need to be trained only in the management of day-to-day school operations (Celico, 2007). The final component is aspiration to the principalship. Aspiration for the principalship is imperative to create future school leaders (Cohen, 2008). These five components made up the conceptual framework for this study. They are presented in visual form in Figure 1.

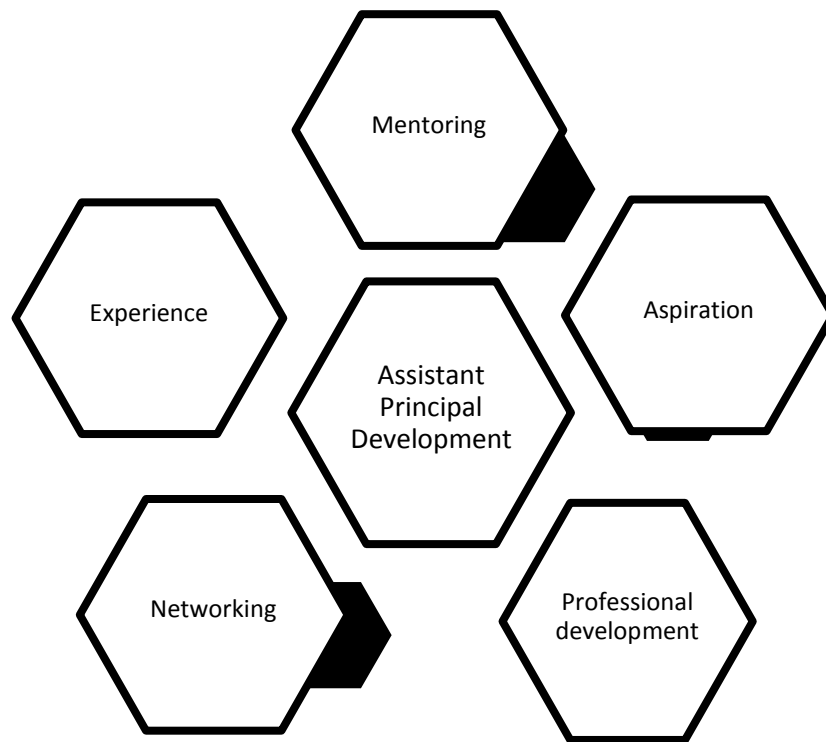


Figure 1: Assistant Principal Development Framework

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship and how their reported ideal development compares to their actual development across each of the five areas of the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* that I developed through the literature review in this study.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship?
2. How does their reported ideal development compare to reported actual development across each of the five domains in the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study?

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which assistant principals in Alabama report being prepared for the principalship and how their reported ideal development compares to their reported actual development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* created through the literature review in this study. In doing so, the study helped to determine what development assistant principals' report currently receiving and how that compares to best practices for developing assistant principals for the principalship. There is a great deal of research that warrants the use of the elements which make up the conceptual framework: professional development, mentoring, experience, networking, and aspiration, but there are not any studies that explore the combination of all five components together. This study is based on elements grounded in research, but the five elements have not been explored as one conceptual framework together.

The literature from this study explains the best practices/framework which guided the survey development. The survey was created and revised with the help of the committee to determine real and ideal development of assistant principals through the five components that made up the Assistant Principal Development Framework. Through the survey, I intend to report to what degree Alabama assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the

principalship and to what extent assistant principals' report receiving professional development consistent with the Assistant Principal Development Framework shown in Figure 1. The findings of this study could have an impact on the way assistant principals are developed for the principalship in the future.

This study allowed educational leaders to look at how assistant principals are currently developed and apply it to their own school setting. To this end, it was acknowledged that not everything perceived by the participants in this study was transferable to all assistant principals, but some things were being that are schools, their needs, and training available is different. The result for determining best practices for preparing assistant principals for the principalship has the potential to transform future practices in training assistant principals for principal preparation. The study should also foster additional research on this topic.

Limitations

This study had limitations. I began the study by researching key words such as 'assistant principals', 'professional development', 'mentoring', and 'leadership capacity' in Auburn University's web libraries, Principal Leadership magazines and articles, as well as books with information on how to develop a future school leader. I also researched what assistant principals felt least prepared for once they took on the principalship and for studies that have been conducted with assistant principals. The literature included in this study is mainly from the past ten years (2004–2014).

Another limitation of the study is that the primary researcher is an assistant principal and I have preconceived ideas about what development assistant principals may need. To overcome this limitation, I did not participate in the survey. Another limitation of this study could be that assistant principals may have answered the questions in a way that they believed they should

instead of giving their honest opinion. Answers were anonymous which may have helped respondents in answering honestly, but that cannot be assured.

A third limitation could be that this survey has not been used in a study before. Only assistant principals from Alabama will be used, which provides a representative sampling. Using perceptual data may also been seen as a limitation.

Assumptions

In the survey, I assumed that people answered truthfully because anonymity was preserved and the volunteers for the study could withdraw at any time without ramifications. It was important that an accurate perception of the assistant principals' regard to growth opportunities was understood. Since there was a possibility that assistant principals would feel pressured to answer in a way that would reflect positively on their school systems, assurance of confidentiality was given.

A second assumption was that the Alabama assistant principals who responded were a representative group who were diverse enough to represent all types of assistant principals.

Definitions of Terms

Aspiration: Having a hope or ambition of becoming a principal.

Experience: Exposure to events or real on-the-job training.

Mentor: a colleague advising, sharing, or training another to support and help them adjust more effectively.

Networking: connecting with others in a meaningful way in order to open doors, increase contacts, knowledge and resources, create opportunity, advancement, and mentoring opportunities.

Professional Development: The continuous process of learning new knowledge and acquiring the correct skills needed for the profession.

Organization of Study

This study includes the following sections: Chapter II, Review of Literature, includes a detailed look at how the conceptual framework was created which guides this study. It provides an overview of literature related to the topics in this study including how the assistant principalship is preparation for the principalship and how the assistant principalship is not preparation for the principalship. Chapter III, Methods, discusses the design of the survey instrument based on the research questions guiding this study. Chapter IV gives the results of the study. The study concludes with Chapter V, which contains discussions of the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies. Chapter V also offers a summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on the research findings. Final sections are reference lists and appendices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

School administrators need development to become effective leaders and to continually grow in their field. “Leaders are not born, nor are they created in the vacuum of a graduate classroom. They are developed, yes, with solid training, but also molded by experience and forged through the fires of real-life, on-the job challenges” (Bossi, 2009, p. 26). Assistant principals are one leader who is often overlooked in the school setting as well as the literature in education. This study will acknowledge the assistant principal’s perception of how they are developed and grown in their assistant principal position and what tools they really need to become effective instructional leaders and the future principal in the school.

Although many assistant principals enter into the principalship, the majority of research indicates that the administrators’ movement is not seamless (Briggs, Rhines, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013). Assistant principals are most often associated with being the managers of the school who oversee discipline and keep the building operation under control (Ash, Hodge, & Connell, 2013; Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, & Warren, 2015). They work in the shadow of the principal when entering into the field of administration and rely on the principal for leadership development (Portin, 2009). Taylor and Martin (2007) supported that assistant principals are not rightfully groomed for the principalship. For their qualitative study, they interviewed ten principals who identified specific strategies to help build their assistant principals for promotion to the principalship. The strategies included the principals asking about career goals when

hiring, hiring assistant principals who were solid with instruction, getting on the same page quickly with their protégé', involving the assistant principals in all aspects of running the school, getting out of the way, having difficult conversations, providing professional development, and cheering for the assistant principal (p. 24–25).

This literature review is organized into the following subcategories: the principalship, assistant principal is preparation for the principalship; assistant principal is not preparation for the principalship, and summary. The review begins by looking at what a principal should know and be able to do in order to be an effective leader. This is important because the assistant principal is training to fill the principal's role. The second section will provide literature on best practices that have worked for assistant principals who are aspiring to the principalship through the lenses of the conceptual framework for this study which include mentoring, professional development, experience and networking. The next section will look at literature that supports how assistant principals are not receiving effective training for the principalship and how it can be improved. This section is also based around the conceptual framework components of experience and aspiration. Finally a summary will be provided.

The Principalship

In this section, I will look specifically at what a principal should know and be able to do in order to determine if assistant principals are being prepared for the principalship. The principalship has become more complex and demanding than ever before (Ash, et al., 2013; Brown, 2006; Lynch, 2012; Portin, 2004). The leadership provided in schools is second only to teaching in increasing student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Schools today are looking for principals who can be team builders, cultivators of leadership, shape the vision of the school, help teachers upgrade their skills, and use data for school

improvement (Portin, 2009). According to Ash, et al. (2013) the primary function of the principal is to be the instructional leader of the school. One of the first steps and most important for schools, is to hire a principal who is capable of leading the school effectively. Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, and Warren (2015) indicate that while the teacher is the most influential role for a student, the role of the principal is the most influential variable on teachers.

Hiring Effective Principals

Ash, et al. (2013) suggested that there are two elements that inhibit schools from hiring effective principals. The first is that there is a shortage of qualified applicants because there are multiple responsibilities and the job has become more complex. The second reason offered is that while the student population grows so do the demands of the job. In their article, the authors examined current principals who had demonstrated an ability to increase student achievement in their schools. The authors were able to uncover five critical practices that these successful principals exhibited. These practices were: 1) Focus on the direction, 2) Build a powerful organization, 3) Give life to data, 4) Ensure a student-focused vision and action, and 5) Lead Learning.

Tirrozi (2001) found that the reason there was a shortage of qualified applicants or a barrier to attracting qualified applicants was because the job responsibilities and the compensation in comparison were not sufficient. Job stress and the time that is demanded in the principalship were also cited as factors to discourage more applicants. Following these were societal problems which make it difficult for students to focus on instruction, testing accountability, inadequate funding for programs, bad press and public relations, and tenure not being offered to principals and assistant principals. The inability to hire effective principals

elicits the question of how then do school systems strengthen the pipeline to hire the best principals?

Strengthening the Pipeline

Mendels and Mitgang (2013) reported that in Gwinnett County, Georgia, the schools' main district office had changed its name to Instructional Support System. The leaders at the central office had realized that their most important job was to support the principals in the schools as instructional leaders. The school system had also realized that there was a need to strengthen the pipeline for school leadership so they began building a pipeline of administrators who were willing to take on underperforming schools and built methods to support those administrators in the first years.

The first objective the authors offered to strengthen the pipeline included starting with the standards to recruit, hire, and evaluate principals. Secondly, the authors stated that principal training needed improvement. The authors suggested that course offerings for future administrators should tie in closely with the realities the principals will face on the job. Hiring practices needed tightening, experience should be required and observing and assessing them in the job would also be helpful. Finally, the authors suggested that school systems attracted strong leaders to struggling schools by increasing salaries and allowing the administrator to choose their own teachers.

The second objective was to support principals throughout their careers. The first way the authors suggested doing this was to use better assessment measures for the principal. Second, the authors suggested that school systems invest in mentoring and professional development. Traditionally, mentoring has not been included as training, but Gwinnett County has now implemented a program for all new principals to participate in at least two years of

mentoring. Other schools in the nation also include mentoring programs. In New York City, principals received at least 72 hours of mentoring in their first year. In Rhode Island, schools regard mentoring and professional development as a right for new principals. The third way suggested is to provide a way to collect data and provide training for how to use it.

Next school systems found that principals needed support in focusing on instruction as well as help in planning for changes in leadership and not leaving them to chance. Christie, Thompson and Whiteley (2009) asserted that when principals became strong leaders, students would also achieve at a higher standard. The authors first noted that while the ISLLC standards were a great start to revamping what principals are expected to know and be able to do, the standards can also easily become another box to check off. The authors suggested that there are four principles that should drive planning for improvement in educational leadership and two components that are most important to the principalship. The first is to not separate leadership from teaching quality and the second is that the primary role of the principal is as instructional leader which is important to anyone aspiring to the principalship. Christie, Thompson and Whitely noted that important principles to becoming a principal were changing pre-service programs to attract better candidates to the principalship, focusing professional development on grooming principals to be instructional leaders, providing mentoring and coaching on the job, and evaluating the principals continuously. After finding a principal who is qualified for the role, the next step is continuing to support the principal in their role.

Principal's Role

Lynch (2012) contends that traditionally, principals have functioned in schools as the disciplinarian and teachers' boss. Today's principal is responsible for managing funds, personnel, and planning for the school's future. Most importantly, Lynch supports the idea that

the principals' main job is to function as the school's instructional leader. This means that the principal's main job is to attend to instruction and be sure that all students are learning at the highest possible rates. The author proposed that principal preparation programs need to spend more time attending to special education courses for administrators because they are not as knowledgeable as they should be when entering into the principalship.

DuFour and Mattos (2013) recommended that the main job of a principal was to create professional learning communities in schools. The authors advocated that in order for a principal to create a professional learning community, their first fundamental duty was to ensure that all students are learning at high levels; in order to do that principals must be able to enlist the staff to examine every program and practice used in the school to see that it is aligning with the purpose of all students learning. The second job is to organize their staff into teams so that they are more willing to take responsibility for student learning and work together to achieve school goals. The principals must be able to work with the teachers to create curriculum, pacing guidelines, and administer assessments. The fourth responsibility is to use student data to determine if they are learning; if students are not learning, the authors suggested that the principal should be able to create a learning environment where students who need additional support can receive the enrichment needed to become proficient. The authors go on to say that these professional learning communities, which are created by principals, would create learning communities among teachers where they would help one another improve teaching, help one another to teach and reach students, and network with other teachers to improve teaching strategies. The idea that professional learning communities are a duty of principals, would also suggest that principals would need training on how to lead the professional learning communities

and be prepared in the principalship to change the culture in their schools and create teams who wanted to work together.

In another study, Lazaridou and Iordanides (2011) utilized a questionnaire with two guiding questions where answers were recorded on a five point Likert scale. The participants were a convenience sample of 109 teachers in northern Greece. The questionnaire was used to determine how the principal could most improve the effectiveness of a school. The questions were derived from literature concerning the principal's role in improving school effectiveness. In their study, they also discussed that the principals' role for effectiveness has been marred by what specific strategies principals should use to create effective climates. Some qualities that the authors suggested that principals should be capable of promoting in the schools included encouraging the faculty to work together harmoniously, creating an open climate, valuing teachers in their decisions, providing conditions and resources for quality teaching, promoting positivity and high expectations for learning and nurturing the learning and enthusiasm, evaluating student progress and meeting with teachers and parents to review the school's progress, being reliable, purposeful, flexible, and handling managerial matters effectively, respecting students and teachers, holding them accountable, and engaging in formative supervision with opportunities for professional development.

Another way offered to build and change school culture was to stimulate conversations among teachers to improve student instruction (Seashore & Wahlstrom, 2011). This did not require principals to model good teaching, but it did require them to insist on providing instruction and learning on a daily basis. Principals must also need to be able to remove the barriers that cause teachers to work in isolation and motivate them to work as a team. Secondly, Seashore and Wahlstrom suggested that the principal must create a relationship of trust among

the staff. The foundation of trust will lead to the teachers finding a voice and thus lead to them trusting their principal. Their article also found that professional communities were best developed when the principal used a shared leadership structure. In supporting principals in their present needs, it is also important to look at how to prepare them for future challenges.

The Future of Principals

The future of the principalship will include new challenges and qualities future principals will need, including the ability to facilitate learning for both the adults and the students. Another quality is the ability to navigate the future of the school. The principal must be willing to be a change agent, develop community bonds, and provide a successful future for everyone involved (DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Leone, Warnimont, & Zimmerman, 2009; Seashore, et al., 2011).

The students of schools today are from all socioeconomic levels and principals must work to provide support and resources equitably to students and teachers. Principals of the future will have to encourage the boards of education to provide incentives to attract and retain teachers, insist on professional development, and be prepared for rapid changes in technology. It is also the instructional leaders' responsibility to see that educators are equipped with professional development to use technology and are using the technology effectively to teach students in the classroom. With added government pressures, principals need to empower their staff to make decisions and demand accountability with school change (Leone, et al., 2009).

Principals have a need to stay abreast of the current trends in education and provide resources for their staff members to learn. Continuous improvement processes should be put in place by the principals so that they are ahead of state mandates. Future principals must be prepared to "face many challenges, and build bridges that help both teachers and students move from where they are to where they need to be" (Leone, et al., 2009, p. 91). There are more

diversity and social issues that influence the ability of students today and principals need preparation to address these needs. Individual and multicultural differences should be recognized and celebrated in the school environment and seen as an asset to the school organization rather than a setback.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP; 2013) report “Rethinking Principal Evaluation” recounted the findings of NASSP who had created a committee to look at current principal evaluation methods and develop a framework with domains of leadership responsibility. The committee concluded that there were six key areas where principals needed to focus their energies to improve their schools for the future. The first was professional growth and learning. This did not only include learning opportunities for themselves, but also for their students and faculty.

The second domain was student growth and achievement. The report found that principals must be able to look at all types of data in schools, not just standardized scores, but also referrals, benchmark assessments, attendance rates, school participation, scholarships, etc., and determine where the school stands. The third domain was school planning and progress. The principal should be able to execute the school improvement plan and utilize the people in the school in the most appropriate ways and develop the capacity of a strong leadership team. School culture was the fourth domain. NASSP (2013) felt that the principal should be able to develop and maintain a school culture that is positive and “where students, teachers, and other staff are motivated to collaborate, work smarter, and take risks to achieve higher goals” (p. 34).

Professional qualities and instructional leadership functions are the fifth domain. NASSP (2013) felt that how the principal is evaluated offers the most beneficial glimpse into what degree this goal is achieved. The final domain was stakeholder support and engagement. This

domain contains all of the outside of school factors and the ability of the principal to build strong relationships with students, families, and community partners.

School leadership today and for the future requires the principal to ask themselves and answer affirmatively, “Did my leadership make a difference in improving the academic achievement and social and emotional well-being of students?” (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 435). It is the responsibility of this instructional artist to create a climate of excellence, create a vision for continuous improvement, promote excelling in teaching, and commit to provide relevant professional development for everyone. For 21st century principals, it is important to understand what the future holds and examine what changes are coming in the educational landscape.

The U.S. population and school age population are changing dramatically. “Hispanics and Asians will constitute 61% of the nation's population growth by 2025” (p. 435). A commitment to abandoning the status quo and understanding the demographic, social, economic, and educational trends are a necessity of principals. A large percentage of students who enter schools will speak a different language than English and school leaders must be prepared to offer instructional methods necessary to meet their needs. There is a shift in transience and reform efforts must consider a constantly changing student body. Population growth also leads to new buildings for schools. The report found that the greatest demand for school construction would be for communities that have not begun yet and enrollment shifts must be considered. In school finance, the elderly will be the nation’s largest bloc of voters which means finding new ways to engage them in the school life and programs.

Finally, being the principal means that the principal must be aware of how technology can alter course delivery while not ignoring a student’s personal growth and development. There will still be football games, yearbooks, and school dances, and those activities cannot be replaced

by technology. Technology offers potential to enhance learning and must be used and monitored appropriately by teachers and instructional leaders. The school leaders must also find a balance between technology and other resources. “There is great danger in cutting other resources to buy computers” (p. 436). It was predicted that motion pictures would revolutionize the education system and supplant the use of textbooks. It was also predicted that the radio would become as common in the classroom to instruction as the blackboard. Principals must have the skills to weigh in on what technology should be purchased and the pitfalls of using it inappropriately.

Principals must understand high stakes testing, and know that the students who score the lowest are the ones who demonstrate the greatest academic needs; this can be predicted from household income and level of the parent’s education. There are also staff requirements and hiring to be aware of, including a need to hire which results in a lowering for certification. Principals must be willing to stand up and have a voice about what is best for the students. The principal’s job in transforming the school is “70–90 percent leadership and only 10–30 percent management” (p. 438). The author points out that a predilection for management does keep the buses running and the cafeteria under control, but it is not transformative. Principals today need to have a commitment to leadership to help them adapt to the changing circumstances in schools. Principals must be able to look towards the future, align the staff with the vision, and then inspire them to make it happen.

How Assistant Principalship is Preparation for the Principalship

In this section, I will look specifically at how the conceptual framework is supported by literature to show in what ways assistant principals are prepared for the principalship. I will begin by looking at how professional development and continuing education, mentoring, networking, and experience can prepare assistant principals for the principalship.

Professional Development

Professional development is defined as “the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, especially through continued education” (Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, n.d.). Assistant principals are in need of professional development in order to grow in their positions (Gajda & Militello, 2008). There are a multitude of possibilities for assistant principals to receive professional development, although there is a gap in the literature as to what professional development offered is most effective (Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel, 2005; Rogers 2005; Thompson, 2010).

Some examples of professional development may include coursework, mentoring, or attending conferences or sessions where professional development is offered. If the assistant principals are preparing for the principalship, it would be helpful to participate in professional development geared towards their future careers. School systems can determine if the professional development offered is effective in preparing principals and investigate what professional learning opportunities are currently available to these future principals in their districts. Workshops, conferences, and training opportunities are helpful to assistant principals in order to help them grow into future principals. Planning for particular training opportunities for assistant principals can happen at the beginning of the year and be integrated into the job as part of the professional development plan (Lynch, 2012).

Professional development geared towards the strengths and weaknesses of the assistant principal is another important concept, as there is much empirical evidence that relates to the need to attend workshops and conferences related to development. A participant in the Barnett, et al. (2012) study said, “[My principal] encourages me to attend workshops and conferences that will help me gain experience and knowledge. She takes me to principal’s meetings and other

functions that are going to expose me to what being a principal is” (p. 115). Walking into the principal position on the first day of your first year as principal will probably not yield positive results for the principalship; preparation and experience beforehand would behoove a novice administrator.

The Union Pacific Railroad, a non-profit organization who offers service to over 21 states in the country, began a program in 2002 to help principals in professional development. This particular principal partnership model recognized that the principals’ job is one of the toughest in the nation and is modeled after approaches that are used in businesses. Principals themselves determine what professional development they need to be more efficient in their jobs and the partnership attempts to provide that professional development. Some of the components used to make up the professional development are a network of consultants, a summer leadership institute, and networks of the principals themselves. “Meaningful professional development is best when it is peer-to-peer and imbedded directly in the work principals do” (Hoffmann & Johnston, 2005, p. 16). Principals in this program may also request specific development for themselves. Currently, Alabama does not receive services from Union Pacific Railroad.

In Alabama, the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) offers ongoing professional development opportunities to all members. There are conferences, institutes, and webinars available to administrators. Some of the sessions cover topics such as strategies for teaching low-income students, effective communication and collaboration skills, and hot topics in special education (Campanetta, 2010, p. 20). There are three assistant principals conferences held in north, central, and south Alabama during the school year. Many assistant principals also participate in the annual summer convention, respective fall affiliate conferences, leadership trainings, and a law conference where hot topics on current educational law are presented.

Assistant principals are also given the opportunity to participate in the online professional development offered through CLAS. The institutes and conferences professional development prospect also offers assistant principals the opportunity to network with other assistant principals in the state.

Zimmerman (2011) suggested developing a professional learning/growth plan in order to grow as an administrator. She states that the plan developed should include aspects “related to attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs” (p. 112). The article goes on to say that the most learning occurs when the administrator is willing to put themselves in a situation that requires them to use a new skill. For example, if an administrator needs to learn more about working with community members, they should seek opportunities to go out and work in those settings. The author also supports the idea of personal and professional growth through experience, reflection, developing theories from experiences, and mentoring. Briggs, Davis, and Cheney (2012) stated that it is not enough to train principals without also examining the setting and conditions that a principal will have to work in once they are in their role. State and district policies need to align with the support of instructional improvement for the school and the school improvement must be the highest priority. According to Briggs, Davis, and Cheney, assistant principals who want to become future principals need “preparation, certification, induction, ongoing professional development, evaluation, compensation, promotion, and licensure renewal” (p. 1). These future principals are then charged with recruiting and retaining the very best teachers and most importantly driving student learning, so learning how to be instructional leaders is crucial to their development.

Nicholson, Harris-John, and Schimmel (2005) conducted a study in the four state region of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. The data was collected through seven semi-

structured interviews with representatives from the departments of education, professional development centers, state and local leadership academies, and professional associations of principals. These authors discovered that it was difficult to extract research on principal's professional development from literature provided information on principal preparation and performance. They further found that most documents discussed problems with principal training as a whole and did not make distinctions between preparation and professional development. There was also an absence of any scientifically based research that linked professional development to changes in principal's behavior, how the school functions, or student learning. The literature that was found only provided anecdotal information with no follow up or validation. These authors stated that this would suggest that most of the literature that is out there is only conjectural and not scientifically based.

Zepeda, Parylo, and Bengston (2014) conducted a recent qualitative study to find out what principals in four Georgia school systems are currently using for professional development. The authors applied the principles of adult learning theory and conducted a cross-case analysis. Nine common practices were revealed:

1. professional development was connected to career development,
2. individualized professional development,
3. multiple sources of professional development were used,
4. adapted and not adopted,
5. professional development was aligned and focused,
6. ongoing professional development was ensured,
7. mentoring through professional development,

8. data informed and job embedded, and
9. there was a strategic plan in place for the professional development.

The learning opportunities were learning centered, relevant, and had a goal. The authors also noted that the professional development was rarely self-directed. Professional development for aspiring principals may come in many forms. One form that some assistant principals take is to continue their education.

Continuing Education

Rooney (2008) suggested administrators continue their education and never stop learning. In education, we hold our teachers accountable for teaching and for the students for learning, so administrators in the school should be accountable for the teacher's learning. Administrators have to stay up to date on literature and best practices surrounding schools and one way to achieve that goal is to get out of the building and become a part of professional workshops and conferences or through education courses. Based on Rooney's findings, administrators must "Attend professional meetings—and tell teachers you are out learning" (p. 82). Assistant principals who are moving towards the principalship will often continue coursework in order to stay abreast of recent trends in education.

In 2006, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) demanded a revamping of administrators' preparation programs in Southern colleges (Archer, 2006). In the years before, students were taking classes that fit their schedule and the college programs had no requirements to join an administrative program. The programs involved research, theory, listening to lectures, and regurgitating information. None of this was preparing future administrators for what to expect, so courses required were revamped in order to better prepare aspiring principals.

Graduation Requirements for Administrators

Now courses often require students to apply what they are learning. These types of courses also usually work with a cohort of people. The idea here is that you are more likely to stay with the program and each course builds on the next one. This idea would also imply that networking with future co-workers could lead to beneficial relationships in the future (Beachboard, Beachboard, Li, & Adkison, 2011). Christie, et al. (2009) suggested that “collectively, educational administration programs are the weakest of all the programs at the nation’s education schools” (p. 2). This is unfortunate because of the difficulty of the job that principals and superintendents are responsible for doing and because of the increasing number of administrators who will need to be hired in the coming years. The research on principal preparation programs suggests that there are specific programs that are essential for developing effective leaders. The authors here suggested that there are three components to make up those courses and they are: content, methods and structure.

The content of the programs taught should use current research on school leadership, management, and instructional leadership. The coursework should occur in a logical sequence and the activities in the classes should link theory with practice. The method for delivery should include internships in the field; it is important to note that today more than 90% of all administrator programs require an internship of some type. The methods should also involve problem-based activities and assessments, grouping of aspiring administrators with experienced school leaders in cohorts, and there should be coaching from mentors. The structure of the programs should begin with collaboration between the university and school districts.

Some of the courses that are now required of all administrators from Alabama’s colleges and universities include personal and professional development, finance management,

curriculum theory and practice, and mentoring classes (see Appendix A). For example, Alabama A&M requires the course ‘Mentoring for Educational Leaders’, Alabama State University requires ‘Mentoring in Administration’, Auburn Montgomery uses ‘Mentoring in Educational Leadership’, Samford University has ‘Mentor Training and Professional Development’, Troy University utilizes ‘Mentoring Methods and Techniques’, the University of Alabama has ‘Instructional Supervision and Mentoring’, and the course ‘Mentoring for School Leaders’ at University of Alabama in Birmingham. The University of Montevallo has ‘Leadership and Mentor Training’, while there is ‘Mentoring Strategies for Workplace Learning’ at the University of North Alabama, and the University of South Alabama offers ‘Mentoring Leadership’.

Elmore and Levine (2012) have discredited principal preparation programs, citing lack of judicious screenings of applicants, outdated coursework, real experiences through internships, and little attention given to help their graduates find jobs or advance to tenure. The authors found that “two-thirds of principals reported that their preparation programs had not prepared them for the realities of leading a school” (Briggs, et al., 2012, p. 1). The preparation programs could also be a contributing factor to that almost half of the principals assigned to schools leave within the first five years of beginning with a majority of those exiting the first three. According to the authors, principals and assistant principals are challenged in their jobs because of increasing responsibilities they face and there is a lack of support to develop them and prepare them for the roles.

Brown (2006) argues for four changes in the preparation programs offered for aspiring principals. The first argument is that colleges and universities do not require tough admission requirements. Brown explained that essays, recommendations, and documentation for the

applicant are all necessary before entering into classes. Second, coursework should be revisited to include classes that are tied to everyday experiences of administrators and less to theory. Thirdly, standards are needed for the coursework. Universities should be held accountable for preparing the school leaders to move into the principal position. Lastly, the author argues that learning experiences should be authentic for the learners. Assistant principals or aspiring principals should be placed with outstanding administrators and even mentors to develop the full idea of what it means to be a good principal.

Grissom and Harrington (2010) asserted that a school district's main goal for professional development for principals is to enhance their effectiveness. Their study examined administrators' professional development and their performance in a sample of schools. The authors used data from a restricted-use version of a Schools and Staffing Survey that is authorized every four years by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The data covered public schools only. Administrators completed school-level questionnaires and surveys about the principals with a random selection of teachers completing the surveys as well as data from the central office. The measure of principal effectiveness was constructed by using a questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale. The measure of principal effectiveness was constructed from responses. A Spearman correlation matrix showed responses to be highly correlated. An exploratory factor analysis and statistical tests confirmed the suitability of the data. Not all types of administrator professional development correlated in a positive way with teachers' ratings of their principals' performance. It was shown that principals who participated in course work were rated lower than principals who were professionally developed through mentoring.

The bar of expectations for school leaders must be raised and that starts with administrator preparation programs (Tirrozzi, 2001). The author states that principal preparation programs should be taught by individuals who were experienced in school leadership, mentoring programs should be provided for these administrators, substantiated professional development should be provided, and aspiring principals should be sought out and encouraged to grow. The qualifications of candidates should be increased as well as skills taught that are needed for the 21st century (Pak, 2008). One method continually mentioned for preparing assistant principals for the principalship is informal and formal mentoring.

For this dissertation, professional development is defined as the continuous process of learning new knowledge and acquiring the correct skills needed for the profession. The core concepts of professional development that appear in the survey questions will relate to how accessible professional development is and what types of professional development are offered to current assistant principals who aspire to the principalship both realistically and ideally.

Mentoring

A mentor is defined as “someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person” (Mirriam-Webster, online dictionary, n.d.). In Greek mythology, Mentor was a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus’ son Telemachus and was adopted in the English language to mean someone who imparts wisdom on a younger person. While mentoring for teachers has been around since the early 1980s, the idea that novice principals should also receive mentoring has only recently gained credence (Aarons 2010; Holloway 2004; Olson 2007). In fact, before the years 2000, only a few states required all new principals to undergo mentoring.

McBride (2008) suggested that “Building the leadership capacity of others is one of the most important jobs we have. Ultimately, this commitment and the learning of everyone involved may be the ‘silver bullet’ of our success” (p. 24). Some school systems have developed and implemented plans for mentoring of assistant principals. One of those school districts includes Washoe County in Nevada. The school district understood that one essential element of professional development for assistant principals was through mentoring. Mentoring would provide assistant principals with the leadership tools they needed to grow including coaching, modeling, peer observation, reflection, and constructive feedback (Washoe County School District, 2012–2013). The opportunity to participate in mentoring also opened the door to networking with other professionals.

Mentoring from experienced principals created an opportunity for assistant principals to grow into the principalship. Providing novices with guides in their current field or profession is used in many areas of life. In public education, mentoring for teachers became widespread in the 1980s. According to the report, ‘Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons From the Field’, “Some form of teacher mentoring is now required in at least 30 states and research suggests that teachers who receive mentoring tend to be less likely to leave their assigned schools or the profession after their first year” (The Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 5). Knowing that mentoring provides stability, support, and longevity, why are schools not also requiring administrators to participate in mentoring?

Mentoring and coaching relationships can be beneficial for assistant principals to experience growth (Bossi, 2009). Any person new to a profession needs support and guidance. According to Bossi,

Coaching aims to support the coachee's success today, while building the capacity for independence and ongoing, continuous leadership growth. The three to six hours a month spent with the coach do not 'add one more thing to an overflowing plate' of responsibilities, because coaching is focused upon the work in which the coachee is already engaged. (p. 26)

Some people move into the assistant principalship as former teachers and the first year requires a steep learning curve in need of extensive training (McBride, 2008). There are observations to be conducted, meeting procedures to learn, challenging parent conversations to have, and learning how to give feedback to teachers effectively; leaders in the school system can help alleviate these concerns by providing mentoring partnerships to help coach assistant principals through the minefield of knowledge needed for an assistant principal.

McBride (2008) explored the lived experience of a former assistant principal turned principal in an article entitled 'Developing Adaptive Leaders'. This assistant principal had the opportunity to participate in a program for mentoring to help develop him as a leader. The program was provided by the district that he worked in and provided four main components: a professional development team, mentor consultant support, leadership seminars, and a multi-year learning community/cohort program. McBride noted, "This time commitment and personal engagement by the superintendent speaks volumes about our district's commitment to building leadership capacity from within" (p. 22). It was found through this article that this model provided the best learning development for leaders in today's changing and challenging schools. The training that was offered supplied opportunities to invest in future principals, i.e., current assistant principals and teacher leaders and offered programs and training to improve their performance.

In an article showing how mentoring increases induction for school principals, Hall (2008) delineates a system similar to that used by teachers. The article offers statistics to show that there is currently a shortage of principals and that sometimes, “confusing roles, times, mismatching of mentors, and novices, and a lack of goals can prevent mentors from being useful” (p. 450–451). It is important to note that the author found that mentoring programs were one of the best ways to insure success of novice principals.

Mentoring not only offers help for novice principals but also for the guide (Peter, 2010). Peter conducted a case study where participants were identified based on gender, race, and demographic region. The primary participant was a first-year African-American female who had previously served as an assistant principal. Her district-provided mentor was Ms. Jones who guided her in her instructional leadership. The two worked through an academy that gave them guidance with mentoring and allowed them freedom to create their own relationship, both personally and professionally. Data was collected through several different methods including interviews and observations. The participants were presented with interview transcripts to insure that they were accurately represented.

Over half of the states now require mentoring in the principal’s first year, but many of these programs are falling short of their potential (Olson, 2007). In studies conducted by the Wallace Foundation, schools have made coaching and training a major component of preparing school leaders. This report attributes the surge in mentoring partnerships to the critical role of school leaders and the shortage of school leaders available. The authors found that these programs offer limited data about being effective. Most of the information gathered only reports on the mentors and their mentees satisfaction levels with their relationships as opposed to

gathering data on whether or not the relationships led to retention or drop out or improvement in instruction.

The third component is that the states need to gather data to find out if the program is working with the focus on the change in new school leaders. The study argues that for school districts to fund the project, the data must show evidence that the mentoring is working. Interestingly, the report *Getting Principal Mentoring Right* also stated that state-level funds for mentoring are typically under \$1 million a year and generally range from about \$100 to \$1,500 which is not enticing to sitting principals “to spend a minimum of 50 hours of contact time with new principals, and many more hours getting trained, filling in forms, and performing other duties” (Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 9). The fourth suggestion is that the new principals be provided with mentoring for a minimum of one year, and ideally two or more years. The author stated that the focus of the mentoring is to prepare school leaders to put learning first and learn how to gain the support of the community.

Aarons (2010) noted that while school principals are under pressure to improve schools, the nation needs to spend more time recruiting and training school leaders. Transformation in schools only happens with strong leadership and as the principalship becomes an increasingly tougher job, candidates of high quality will recoil. Currently, NASSP is proposing a School Principals Recruitment and Training Act, an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The bill would authorize spending \$200 million on aspiring principals. These principals would participate in a residency program before moving on to a low-performing school and would continue in professional development. In return for the grant money, they would spend four years at a school and offer improvement in the school outcomes in three to six years. The bill is also requesting mentoring programs for school leaders during their first three

years on the job. Aarons also reported on other districts and universities who are teaming up to improve principals. In Richmond, Virginia, the Commonwealth University and the University of Richmond have established Project ALL or Authentic Learning for Leaders. This program trains teacher leaders who want to become principals. The program offers professional development opportunities and deepens the experiences for aspiring principals.

Chicago schools are working on an innovative project to groom future principals in order to upgrade its school leadership (Maxwell, 2013). The goal is to be able to install 300 leaders in the state's school system to turn around the chronically underperforming schools. The initiative involves a new principal evaluation system, bonus pay for those who meet district performance goals, and outside coaches for the new leaders. The district created eligibility criteria that any person who wants to be considered as a principal candidate has to demonstrate before being approved for the hiring process. Those same competencies are used to evaluate the principal's job performance.

The first full year of the program has not ended, so the district does not know how many aspiring principals will successfully complete the requirements, and it is too soon to tell whether or not their endeavors will be successful. It is also important to mention that not everyone is in favor of this initiative. There was little input from local principals or unions in Chicago and some of those people are skeptical that the effort will last before it is replaced with another idea. District officials did note that the plan was created by studying high-performing principals and what methods they used to become successful.

According to (Maxwell, 2013) there are six competencies that principals will be evaluated on: "continuous improvement of teachers; setting up professional learning communities; building a culture of college and career readiness; family and community

engagement; self-discipline; and vision” (p. 25). The professional development is tailored to each principal; first year principals meet monthly with senior leaders who can offer advice and shared lessons. The potential candidates who want to participate in the mentoring are put into cohorts in order to learn together. The aspiring administrators are put into simulations and are asked to look at data and formulate plans for how to improve the school.

In another study by Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) to investigate mentoring experiences of female administrators to determine if there were differences in the effectiveness based on different mentoring approaches, it was determined that mentoring relationships for women who aspire to administrative positions is important, and that methods should be developed to promote a culture of mentoring. In this study, female administrators in Tennessee were contacted by email and asked to complete a survey. The sample included 706 female administrators with 239 participants. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents had had a mentor and many had had more than one mentor. These mentoring relationships were found to help new employees develop their leadership skills and advance in the organization. The authors stated that the relationship benefitted both the mentor and the mentee; the mentee is benefitted through the knowledge gained and the mentor is benefitted by passing on their wisdom and experience. It was also interesting to note that women lag behind men in leadership positions in K–12 and higher education. As noted by Dunbar and Kinnersley, in the United States “just under 22% school superintendents are female, with more than half of them serving in small or rural districts and higher education, only 21% of college and university presidencies are held by women (p. 17). For women who aspire for these administrative positions, it would be wise for them to have a mentor; in fact the female administrators in this study indicated that having a mentor was important to their current success. The study also noted that mentoring worked out best when

the mentor and mentee had many similarities. This may prove difficult for a woman new to administration, but research suggested that a woman from another school district can also be effective. Also, it was noted that mentoring relationships that developed naturally and informally were more beneficial than formal relationships where the mentor and mentee were matched in a program. Mentoring was found to be beneficial in that it helped to raise the confidence levels of the administrators. Additionally, it gave the mentees more exposure, coaching, and protection from being criticized.

New principals struggle in their first years because of the unrelenting stress and their textbook understanding of the real world practice they live in (Holloway, 2004). Some of the issues these new principals face include “the need to master technical skills; the demands of a wide range of constituents; personal feelings of inadequacy; the fast-paced environment; the task of supervising teachers; and most of all, the sense of isolation in their new role” (p. 87). Holloway cited evidence that new principals found sharing experiences with colleagues helped them to adjust more effectively and confirmed a need for collegial support. One development opportunity that new principals requested frequently was the opportunity to network with other principals. This would give them the chance to “exchange ideas, evaluate the demands of their jobs, and discuss how to implement change at their schools” (p. 87). Mentoring programs give principals support that they need, according to Holloway. School districts should not assume that new principals are coming into the principalship with the tools they need to lead their school. The job can be lonely and intimidating and a mentor may ameliorate the feelings of isolation if the mentor has been trained effectively and engages the mentee in activities and experiences suited to their job.

Mentoring, for this dissertation, is defined as a colleague advising, sharing, or training another to support and help them adjust more effectively. Specifically, the assistant principal could be trained formally, informally, or by a combination. In the survey, I will look specifically at how often mentoring is offered, what types of mentoring are offered, and whether or not the assistant principal has/would find it beneficial. Another method for preparing assistant principals for the principalship can be through networking opportunities.

Networking

A network is defined as “a group of people or organizations that are closely connected and that work with each other” (Merriam-Webster, online dictionary, n.d.). Assistant principals need to network with other administrators, as Grissom and Harrington (2010) assert that building strong professional relationships with other administrators is an important component of development opportunities. A network of colleagues in the same position can help with problem solving, research availability, and professional arguments. More importantly, networking can remove the isolation that principals many times feel. Whitaker (1996) suggested that when principals network, they are provided with support that may prevent burnout because they can seek advice from other professionals which may in turn improve school performance.

Networking with other administrators is another way that principals can grow. Networking can be accomplished in a variety of ways including meeting with the district principals and assistant principals to discuss school related issues, attending webinars or workshops with other administrators, or online in discussion boards. Some school systems or education institutions offer opportunities for administrators to network. For example, in 2011 Auburn University developed an Assistant Principal Consortium where area assistant principals have an opportunity to come together and discuss relevant issues and problem solve through

work experiences. There are also district level meetings available for administrators in Alabama held throughout the year. At these meetings, principals and assistant principals are exposed to relevant hot topics in education as well as methods for conducting school business in the most efficient manner.

Research suggests that networking with other assistant principals can impact the ability of the assistant principal's development. One respondent in the Barnett, et al. (2012) study stated, "You need to network because you never know how long you're going to be at the same job or if a better job comes available" (p. 115). Another way assistant principals are given an opportunity to network is through the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). These increased networking opportunities and professional development support for assistant principals include a variety of communication and technology media for assistant principals. Peterson (2002) also noted that networking can build links to professional organizations which can provide school leaders with useful resources.

Networking: System Support

Although principals today are faced with the challenge of leading schools in the 21st century, they are still working largely in isolation and do not receive the professional development needed (Neale & Cone, 2013). Principals are lacking a supportive community of fellow principals before being certified and then becoming school leaders. Assistant principals and principals need systems of support and currently only five states require preparation of principals that include all components of effective leadership development (Briggs, Rhines, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013). The School Leaders Network has now grown to networks serving more than 400 principals in six locations. The administrators meet monthly and are guided by a trained facilitator. The learning is research based and focuses on student

achievement. The administrators share best practices, work on leadership skills, and discuss issues that are fostering or inhibiting their individual efforts in school (Neale & Cone, 2013). The principals are able to discuss and problem solve together with publications, tools, and professional learning. These networks increase community, capacity, and change school cultures.

The authors also attempted to imply that improving professional practice for principals means ongoing systemic and organizational change. Conditions are created where participants can share, listen, and learn about the challenging questions of the principalship in a safe place and learn about themselves as leaders. Creating the safe space for networking was attributed to the facilitator, establishing group norms, and risk taking by veteran group members. The purpose of these networks is to harness knowledge of participating principals and build upon existing strengths. Principals reported that the networking opportunities have improved their leadership capabilities because they are able to look at their school problems from a different perspective. The School Leaders Network conducted a case study in San Antonio and found that “60% of the members had adopted new leadership tools and facilitation techniques learned from their network” (Cone, 2010). Three out of four principals also said they had become stronger and more confident leaders as a result of working with other principals as well as more confident in confronting matters at their school that affected learning.

Social Networking

The report *Principals See Value in Social Networking* (2010) found that the majority of principals surveyed agreed that social media networking provided a way for educators to share information, resources, and could also be used as a tool for students’ learning. Most principals felt the students’ motivation could benefit through online collaboration as well as learning to take

a more social/collaborative view of learning. The principals in the discussion group supported the idea of online networking, but none of the principals surveyed had school/district policies in place deemed adequate to support the networking.

Purcell (2012) alleged that 61% of the principals surveyed had joined a social network, citing reasons such as connecting with friends and family. Forty-five percent (45%) cited connecting with professional peers and colleagues as the reason they had joined social networks. Purcell indicated that “56% of the principals had attended/participated in webinars and 27 % used Google Docs. The use of Widgets, Flickr, Twitter and Digg were in single digits” (p. 6). Although principals reported seeing value in social networking, they also reported that school systems/districts have not budgeted for professional learning with networking. Many times the term “social networking” is what causes problems for people and “educational networking” may help people evaluate social networks objectively. Purcell points out that typically people either love social networking or they hate it. People who enjoy it see that it is an opportunity to make connections with people across the world, share their ideas with others, and can also have an opportunity to expand their own technology skills. For principals and assistant principals alike this could offer the connections for “job searching, information gathering, homework assistance, self- expression, and connecting with people who have similar interests and goals” (p. 34).

The report also explores the people who do not support the social networking aspect of school administrators. They argue that there is not enough time spent making connections in person and that this delays social skills. They also point out a delay in grammar and spelling due to the acronyms and abbreviations used. The report finds that people are spending too much time on a computer and not enough time in physical activity. However, the author provides professional reasons to use social networking. One is that it provides the administrator with a

way to stay current on the latest trends in education. Administrators are able to find out what the latest gadgets are, get reviews about the newest technologies, and keep up with the best practices in the field. Most importantly, perhaps, they can also network with other professionals.

Mabrouk (2009) argues that networking “is a powerful technique that has the capacity to transform the quality of your professional life” (p. 1). The author alleges that networking is a social process that involves both give and take and is usually between two individuals. There are many purposes networking serves including opening doors, increasing contacts, knowledge and resources, opportunity, advancement, and mentoring. Mabrouk does suggest that before participating in networking, the person should know what goals they want to achieve from the experiences. Networking can bring professional growth and personal satisfaction in helping others and the author indicates that there “is a wonderful inherent synergy in the “give” and “take” that occurs in networking (p. 2). It is suggested that you network everywhere you go, including the grocery store and church or conferences you attend.

Two guidelines that Mabrouk (2009) identified in choosing people to network with included asking yourself if the person has any particular skill or ability that could benefit her now or in the future. She also considered whether or not she has anything to offer the other person in the same respect. If the answer was yes to both of these questions, she would try and establish a networking relationship. This question also enabled the author to have a more diverse networking population. Mabrouk suggested that in order to begin the networking relationship, you could offer your business card to someone and ask for one of theirs. The method she used was that she wrote on the back of the card where she met the person and the skills or knowledge she may use in the future, and then sends an email expressing appreciation for their time and sharing with them how she may one day be useful for them professionally. She also noted that if

you become friends with your contact, you will want to keep track of important dates in their lives including birthdays and anniversaries.

Some useful networking tools Mabrouk (2009) suggested were carrying business cards. The second tool offered is yourself. The author suggested that everyone have a one minute elevator speech where they can tell others about themselves, their values, as well as what their professional interests are, expertise, and what services they can offer. The speech should be tested out and revamped as necessary. The author also denotes that in your networking arsenal, you need a current resume or vitae. Websites and online networking tools can help advertise your interests and expertise. One particular website Mabrouk suggested using was LinkedIn. Finally, she says that when you meet someone you should take a very common sense approach and introduce yourself, shake their hand, exchange business cards, listen to them, tell them about yourself, and follow up with them as soon as you can.

Advancing Career through Networking

Kandra, Aquino, and Brandt (2004) adhere to the old adage that it's not what you know, but who you know that gets you where you want to be. The authors suggested that the wider your social circle is the better chance you have of finding someone who can help you in your career search. These authors suggested joining a social networking site and creating a professional profile that you want to share. The next step is to email all of your friends and associates and ask them to set up profiles. Each person who joins is then a member of your personal network and each person they solicit then grows your network as do your chances of finding the job you want or a candidate you are looking to hire for a job, or a useful contact. Networking "lets people build an international network without flying all over the globe" (p. 45).

However, most of these social networking sites are also in the beginning stages, so it is important to read the fine print in relation to the site's privacy statement and user agreements.

Farnsley (2009) gave insight into her life experiences of using networking to help her grow in her career. She used peer networking and contends that through the formal networking the group met regularly and provided an excellent way to make contacts in the industry. Farnsley suggested that connecting with other females (as a female) through networking also offers added benefits such as exploring topics from another female's point of view. "Subjects such as how best to create a work/life balance if you're a 70-hour-a-week CIO often take on an entirely different meaning for women than they do for men" (p. 30). Four types of networking are discussed in her article including formal networking, informal networking, affinity networking, and mentoring.

Farnsley (2009) also discusses opportunities to work informally with networking. Informal networking can work on a schedule that members can choose and may form unexpectedly. These types of sessions may happen over dinner and members may come and go in the group. There are no formal agendas and anything goes in the conversation. The author says these types of networking groups are beneficial because everyone can feel comfortable sharing ideas and getting advice because they have all "been in the trenches and can understand the challenges, frustrations, and rewards" (p. 30).

The third type of networking opportunity may come in affinity groups. These groups are made up of people who share a common interest but not necessarily the same job. This is beneficial because it gives you the opportunity to connect with people that you might not otherwise ever meet. Another benefit of affinity groups is that you are making more contacts and sharing ideas, and getting things done. The final networking opportunity mentioned was a

mentoring relationship. Farnsley says that this isn't necessarily a peer network, but she highly recommends having or being a mentor because it is rewarding both personally and professionally.

Growth through Networking

Greg (2012) offers an often overlooked aspect of why networking is important; we expect students to use networking, so why shouldn't administrators? The author used Eric Sheninger, the principal at New Milford High School in New Jersey, as an example for social networking at its best. The author said that the principal used Facebook to communicate with students and parents, and students used social networking tools in their lessons. The principal encouraged the teachers to utilize social networking tools to "encourage students to research, write, edit, perform and publish their work online" (p. 2). The principal felt that the tools encouraged learning and pushed the students to do better work because they were interested. The networking opportunities created allowed students to broaden the discussion and test their work in the real world. The author suggested that being literate in the 21st century meant being digitally literate. Administrators need to be connected in a meaningful way and learn how to use the tools in real time on the Web. Learning and leading in this way enabled the school to teach children how to use the Internet and networking in a safe way and left students with the skills necessary to learn how to protect themselves as well as their privacy.

For this dissertation, networking is defined as connecting with others in a meaningful way in order to open doors, increase contacts, knowledge and resources create opportunity, advancement, and mentoring opportunities. Some ways to network include meeting with the district principals and assistant principals to discuss school related issues, attending webinars or workshops with other administrators, or online in discussion boards. In the survey, what types of

networking opportunities specifically are provided and what types of networking opportunities assistant principals would like to be provided with will be explored.

Another method to prepare assistant principals for the principalship is through everyday experiences.

Assistant Principalship is not Preparation for the Principalship

In this section, I will look at what the literature says about how the assistant principalship is not currently preparing assistant principals for the principalship. One way that the assistant principalship is not preparing assistant principals for the principalship is through their experience on the job. Another way that the assistant principalship may not prepare assistant principals is that the assistant principal may not aspire to become a principal. The lack of aspiration may be present before assuming the role they are in or they may find over the course of their career as an assistant principal that the desire to assume the responsibilities of the principal is not there due to matters such as time and money or a feeling of not being prepared to lead as a principal. This section also includes information on the importance of recruitment and what the characteristics of a future principal would be. Once someone has been recruited for the principalship, the literature looks at what role duties and responsibilities play in the development of the future principal and what role the assistant principals plays in advocating for their own growth opportunities.

Experience

Assistant principals need experience in all realms of the principalship and do not need to be trained only in the management of day-to-day school operations (Celico, 2007). Most assistant principals spend their days on discipline referrals and monitoring the lunch waves at school. As Barnett, et al. (2012) suggested, “The role of assistant principals must evolve from

the traditional perspective of disciplinarian and manager to a perspective in which enhancing the instructional program of a school is at the forefront” (p. 92–93). Assistant principals need exposure to many different facets of becoming an instructional leader. Participation in assessing professional development needs of the faculty as well as offering tips on teaching and delivering instruction would be beneficial to their growth (Barnett, et al., 2012; Kwan & Walker, 2012; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010).

It is important to note that not all experiences of assistant principals or future school administrators should be learned in books because some experiences are emotional ones (Kelchtermans, Piot, & Ballet, 2011). The authors argued that principals ultimately spent their career as a gatekeeper between the outside of the school and the inside school world and offered insight into the emotional experiences of administrators and their working conditions. Two themes emerged from their research: first, principals are caught in conflicting loyalties and second, there is a struggle in loneliness and belonging. The article reported that principals must learn to face and deal with emotions while doing their job in a professional manner. This means exhibiting “personal and emotional stamina, the ability to read and interpret situations micro politically (e.g. in terms of different professional interests and agendas), a reflective attitude as a basis for proper judgment and skillful interaction with others inside and outside school” (p. 104).

The authors stated that future principles must learn what is important and where their responsibility ends which means administrators need experience in prioritizing and negotiation. The article offered consequences for curriculum and pedagogy of training for administrators which included providing future principals with the theoretical frameworks to help them analyze their position in the organization. This awareness does not provide answers for what to do in certain situations, but instead requires the administrators to become more reflective in their

experiences and provides more professional judgment on when to take action. The author suggested that this type of design for principal training would integrate an interactive exchange with peers to network and develop professional knowledge and skills as well as a sense of self and belonging.

Celico (2007) cites the experiences and job realities of assistant principals as the most effective way to learn how to be efficient in the principalship. The author stated that college classrooms cannot prepare someone to become an administrator; instead on the job training and experiences create the outcomes. It is the personal side and common sense not organization, management capabilities, or intellectualism that makes someone an effective leader. “Principals can’t be taught humility, compassion, or concern for others: These things simply emerge as they come face to face with the reality of their students’ lives” (p. 26). The assistant principal from the article offered instances on her job where she had to make decisions from the heart and base school outcomes on what she felt was morally sound.

Gaps in Experience

According to Lynch (2012), principals today are lacking experience in knowing how to ensure learning for students with disabilities. In a group of graduates from a principal preparation program, “40% believed they lacked special education law knowledge, 28% believed they lacked confidence in their abilities to mentor and support special education staff, and 28% believed they lacked confidence in their abilities to manage special education programs” (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer , 2007, p. 43). In order to be a truly effective instructional leader, Lynch (2012) felt that administrators needed better training in how to manage special education programs because current administrators lack the knowledge needed. Lynch goes on to say that principal preparation programs need restructuring in order to focus on theoretical

foundations for special education. This is the only way to ensure that all students receive the quality instruction they are entitled to receive.

According to a report from The Wallace Foundation (2012, pp. 13–14), these changes will promote a “pipeline for effective leadership” which may include detailing the jobs of principals and assistant principals, providing better training for administrators for the realities they will face, hiring the best trained candidates, and evaluating principals more effectively in order to give them the professional development and mentoring they need based on the evaluation of each individual.

New Jersey principals were asked to rank the ISLLC 2008 standards in order of importance (Ramaswami, 2013). The perceptions of these principals would give assistant principals a hierarchy of importance for experience needed for the principalship based on leadership functions and experience of responsibilities most needed. The principals ranked instruction and learning as most important, followed by developing and implementing a vision, then managing the organization, acting in an ethical manner, collaborating with the local community, and understanding the larger global context. These findings were similar to the results from a previous article by Babo (2009) where superintendents evaluated principals. With the knowledge of what skills are most important for an instructional leader of a school, school districts should be better able to provide appropriate experiences and prepare upcoming principals for their roles.

Cultivating Leaders

Burdette and Schertzer (2005) reported on a school district in California School where there were not enough applicants for the job of principal. The district decided to begin cultivating leaders from within their school by offering experiences to potential administrators.

The program utilized was Teaching Assistant Principal (TAP) which gave teachers, who wanted to become a principals, experience with administrative duties. The teachers in the study had experiences such as supervising buses, handling referrals, contacting parents, and counseling with students. Another interesting component of the program was that the teachers were able to choose their own responsibilities and focus on how they wanted to improve instead of having meaningless duties. These teachers were also able to work closely with the site principal for mentoring.

Pak (2008) reported on the Leaders in Education Program, a six-month full-time program for specially selected vice-principals in Singapore. The program is designed to prepare the future principals for school leadership. The experience is meant to help develop knowledge through sharing and application using a social constructivism paradigm. The author offered pointers for designing a program for school leadership through this study. These components include allowing them to capitalize on their experiences, thinking, and expertise, moving beyond current experiences and discussing future possibilities for the school, generating multiple perspectives, challenging mental models, examining issues that excite for creating a future school and emphasizing reflection. The author notes that future administrators need experiences in engaging themselves in deep learning with others to explore possibilities for the future.

It is part of the principal's job to prepare their assistant principals for the principalship (Johnson & Martin, 2007). The authors said that the principals' "area of responsibility also included providing for the professional development and success of the assistant principal" (p. 23). Most new principals will serve as assistant principals as part of the careers, so logic would tell us that principals should spend time grooming the assistant principals to become instructional leaders (Kwan & Walker, 2012; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). Johnson and Martin noted that

working beside a principal each day is not enough to prepare for the principalship; instead, other opportunities should be presented in order to help assistant principals reach their potential. Some ways to do this included offering a network of support which fostered administrator development instead of narrowing their preparation by only giving assistant principals a limited amount of responsibilities (Pounder & Crow, 2005). The authors supported the idea that these future principals need to be able to see the whole picture of the school and be included in every aspect of the school in order to learn.

One component that assistant principals often do not get an opportunity to work on includes instructional leadership because they are mostly assigned to duties such as discipline and overseeing the management of the school. This narrowing of responsibility often affects personal growth and limits how others in the school look at them in terms of being instructional leaders. It also doesn't help that most assistant principals stay in their careers only short term before being promoted.

In order to gain insight into what most effectively helped to build principals, Johnson and Martin (2007) suggested the following changes in principals providing experiences for assistant principals. Principals should ask assistant principals about their career goals and aspirations when interviewing to fill positions. They recommended that only assistant principals should be hired who are looking to become principals and are solid in instruction. A participant in the survey stated that assistant principals will look on every situation from a different perspective when they know they are being prepared for the principalship. Once the principals know what the career goals of the assistant principal are, they need to give them feedback and ask them to reflect on their decisions.

Instructionally, it is suggested that assistant principals have experience analyzing test data, determining whether or not the programs used in curriculum are working, monitoring the instruction provided in the classroom, and practicing collaboration with teachers in making decisions about instruction. Being able to coach teachers and modeling, supporting, and planning with the teacher should be implemented. All of these experiences will allow for the assistant principal to be viewed as an instructional leader; it is up to the principal to present him or herself together with the assistant principal as a united front. The principal should model all of these tasks first and then ask the assistant principal to take the lead.

Other activities that assistant principals should experience included interviewing potential employees, attending PTA and board meetings, and leading in faculty meetings. The authors suggested that in order for assistant principals to learn these roles that they should walk the building with the principal the first few weeks discussing student needs, teacher observations, and facility issues. This way the assistant principal is involved in every part of the school and sees what happens in all aspects of the school. These experiences will also promote buy in from the assistant principals because they are being included in all aspects of decision making that lead to improved instruction and increasing student achievement.

Other principals in Johnson's article mentioned that assistant principals needed to know how to "handle the budget, deal with parents and the media, and how to reset the burglar alarm in the school when it goes off by accident" (p. 24). The principals noted that many activities and responsibilities of a principal could only be learned through experience and not observation. The assistant principal does have a need for the principal to get out of the way and allow them to lead at times. The principal gives the assistant principal the confidence they need when they allow them to take charge and move ahead with school business. One principal stated, "I can't be

afraid to let him go out on a limb and make some decisions alone. If I want to send him out to be a fellow principal, I have to trust him” (p. 24).

It is equally important for the principal to speak openly with their assistant principals about decisions made for the school and ask questions that will require assistant principals to think critically about decisions. Assistant principals need feedback about how they work with people, and when mistakes are made it is important that the principal explain the perceptions and negative effects that may result. The conversation should end with coaching and support from the principal.

Finally, the authors suggested that the principal provide professional development for the assistant principals. Efficient principals would encourage assistant principals to attend and provide the means necessary for professional conferences every year. What is learned could be shared and incorporated into their jobs. Professional development could also be accomplished through sharing leadership books and discussing what was read. Likewise, district meetings allow assistant principals to grow professionally. When the assistant principal has made improvements in the school or began effective initiatives, it is important that principals recognize them, give them credit, and celebrate them. The authors suggested that it is the principal’s responsibility to let the superintendent know when the assistant principal is ready to be promoted and advocate for them.

Hull (2012) and Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) suggested that principals will become most effective as they gain experience. These authors also suggested that the years of experience as a teacher or assistant principal did not play a role in making principals more effective. New principals, who had been assistant principals in the same school, were more effective than other new principals (Clark, et al., 2009), and education had no bearing on the

effectiveness of the principal. Neither the degree nor the college attended had any correlations to their successfulness.

Principal training programs did have some bearing on the impact of principal's effectiveness. There was no clear consensus as to whether or not programs differed greatly among states but there were some programs that consistently produced effective principals: for example, "students who graduated from New York City's Aspiring Principal Program (APP) had made improvements in their school's performance relative to the improvement other principals would have made" (Clark, Martorell & Rockoff, 2009, p. 1). It was also found that professional development also helped to increase the effectiveness of future principals. The problem defined here is that professional development provided is not always of high quality (Archer, 2006). Ultimately, the author reported that the principal effectiveness had much less to do with resume qualifications and more to do with experiences learned on the job.

Aspiration

Finally, aspiring to become a principal is an important component to this particular study, because not all assistant principals have a desire to further their careers as a principal. Some people have life long careers as assistant principals and other people go on to jobs at the central office or state level completely bypassing the role of principals. "The vice-principals' level of job satisfaction not only affects how well they do their jobs presently, but also their motivation or desire to become a principal" (Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010, p. 532). The authors suggested that vice-principals who aspired to the principalship exhibited a higher degree of professional commitment, a stronger sense of efficacy, and experienced lower levels of stress associated with personal challenge than vice-principals who did not aspire to a principalship.

It was further noted that better training for the principalship would create a larger pool of applicants for the job. Some schools even plan for succession in advance. According to Thompson (2010), in business and education there is a growing call that leadership development should not be left to chance, but should be part of a planned effort at all levels from the broader organization through to the individual. This call to 'grow your own' leaders is a call to develop a strategic approach to leadership development. (p. 99)

There is a call to grow your own leaders in some school systems and schools begin preparing their leaders years before instead of leaving their school leadership to chance. Finally, aspiring to become a principal is an important component to this particular study, because not all assistant principals have a desire to further their careers as a principal.

In the review of literature, there is inconsistency in evidence that there is a lack of applicants for the principalship (Bowles, 1990; Davis, 2005; Johnson & Martin, 2007). Some studies suggested a lack of candidates while others suggested a surplus. There are immense job requirements including long hours, lack of financial incentives, stress, pressure and personnel issues, which causes a lack of interest in pursuing a career as a principal (Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). Yu-Kwong and Walker (2010) conducted a study of secondary school assistant principals in Hong Kong. The study provided information on the job satisfaction of assistant principals. The study utilized a quantitative survey and identified better ways to help assistant principals increase their effectiveness. The survey was used to determine what helped influence assistant principal's aspiration for the principalship. The study found that assistant principals who did aspire to the principalship exhibited a higher degree of professional commitment, a stronger sense of efficacy, and lower levels of stress than assistant principals who do not aspire to the principalship.

According to Gajda and Militello (2008) and Walker and Kwan (2009), more than enough educators are being certified to fill principal vacancies, but they are not applying for positions. Gajda and Militello (2008) state the reasons educators do not apply are factors such as stress, inadequate compensation, and the demands of the job. Harris (2011) also cited stress, paperwork, compensation, time commitment, accountability for achievement, and responsibility as deterrents for aspiration to the principalship. This would imply that there is not a lack of candidates, but a shrinking in the number of applicants willing to apply.

In a quantitative study, Kwan and Walker (2012) examined whether or not assistant principals' jobs are aligned with their career aspirations. The study measured the responsibilities of school leaders based on seven responsibility dimensions as key qualities in school leadership. The dimensions were "strategic direction and policy environment; teaching, learning, and curriculum; leader and teacher growth development; staff management; resource management; quality assurance and accountability; and external communication and connection" (p. 7). They pointed out that currently schools cannot attract enough applicants to the job of principal.

The authors found that people who are more satisfied in their positions tend to be the people who become principals. Their study found that there is a lack of alignment between ideal and real responsibilities. The largest negative gap for assistant principals' learning was found in resource management. This suggested that assistant principals had little opportunity to be involved in resource and financial management and that more time needed to be devoted to these types of activities in order for assistant principals to be prepared for the principalship. The authors went on to say that principals are the ones who delegate responsibilities and may be reluctant to delegate finances because they find financial resources confidential.

Adams and Hambright (2004) conducted several studies at their university regarding women who aspired to the principalship and reported the findings in an article. These authors found that most of the respondents were negative in tone when describing characteristics of their current and former administrators and their aspirations to become principals. The respondents reported their administrators as being out of touch with reality and spending too much time off campus. Other traits reported were that the administrative jobs were “difficult, thankless, and time-consuming” (p. 210). Long hours, meetings, difficult parents, students, and teachers also were reasons given as to why more candidates did not aspire to the principalship.

Another important component of Adams and Hambright’s (2004) article was that most respondents reported that female administrators made great leaders and more were needed. The respondents asserted that the female leaders were as effective as males and tended to be more “supportive, approachable, sensitive, understanding, nurturing, organized, creative, and receptive than their male counterparts” (p. 210). Added to these ideas were responses that indicated women had higher expectations, were tougher on students, and tended to understand the students better. However, it was also noted that female principals tended to not be as respected as males and could be more difficult to work with due to being emotional, unpredictable, and moody.

Interestingly, the authors found that forty-four percent of the respondents surveyed reported that nothing would encourage them to aspire to the principalship. Thirty-five percent said money would, but cited that funding would also be needed for them to pursue an advance in coursework. Others stated that knowing they could make changes and provide leadership skills would encourage them to become administrators as well as having a supportive staff. Other factors that inhibited administrators from pursuing the principalship included losing contact with children in a classroom setting and the love for teaching overriding the desire for being an

administrator. Other factors that prohibited aspiration to the principalship included time constraints because administrators are expected to spend a great deal of time on the job as well as extracurricular attendance. The third most cited factor was dealing with noncompliant teachers, staff, and students. Internal and external political issues were turn offs as well as state requirements.

The results of the study indicated that changes are needed if effective instructional leaders are going to be hired and retained. Some of the suggestions for changes include examining what roles are performed by administrators, salary issues, and countering the perceptions that exist for current administrators. One way the authors suggest to deter the negative perceptions that exist is by allowing aspiring principals to shadow principals or arranging time for principals to sit down with aspiring principals and discuss the administrator's role. The authors also suggested that principal preparation programs should be examined for requirements, admission, and evaluation of the programs offered. It was suggested that partnerships with universities would be helpful, as well as establishing a cohort of candidates to encourage each other through the process. The authors resolved that it is imperative for education instructors to take an active role in mentoring and sponsoring aspiring administrators in order for them to become great leaders. Another area that was important in the literature was recruiting effective leaders (Cohen, 2008; Walker & Kwan, 2009).

Recruitment Process

Walker and Kwan (2009) conducted a study with 164 aspiring principals who had confirmed a desire to be a principal; about half were already assistant principals. The authors wanted to determine what exactly attracted applicants to pursue the position of principal at a specific school. There were three main factors; in order of importance, "autonomy and

innovation, convenience and fit, and familiarity and status” (p. 296). This study provides findings that could be helpful in the recruitment process of principals. School systems should be aware of what qualities aspiring principals take into account when deciding to apply for a specific principal position. One major factor in the decision was whether or not the aspiring principal felt like they could make a change in the school; being aware of what the next generation of administrators is looking for is important to the schools of the future.

Aspiration for the principalship is imperative to create future school leaders (Cohen, 2008). In order to encourage and nurture future principal candidates, school systems need to make the assistant principal’s role a step toward the principalship by defining a more structured path. Cohen provided a study which showed 22 of the 43 assistant principals surveyed had no interest in pursuing a career as a principal. Four reasons people cited for wanting to become the principal were: 1) They would be an instructional leader, 2) They would enjoy a leadership role, 3) They would enjoy being responsible for decision-making that would impact a lot of people, and 4) They would enjoy working with a diverse community. Cohen surmised that a key factor in ascendancy of an assistant principal to the principalship was job satisfaction in their current position. The author also reports that poor preparation for the transition will set up the future administrator for failure. Currently, the job that most assistant principals do is “crisis oriented and professionally dissatisfying” (p. 36) and the assistant principals’ direct supervisor, the principal, is the most important person to change that perception. If the principal believes the assistant principals’ job is to manage the school, then that is what is learned. If the principal values the assistant principal and their growth, they will provide experiences that are meaningful and make their job rewarding to prepare them for their future responsibilities. It stands to reason

that assistant principals who are given the opportunities to serve in a principal leadership capacity will be more satisfied in their jobs and offer greater leadership potential in the future.

In Maryland, the education department is grooming assistant principals to take the principal job (Mitchell, 2015). They have created a model program, Promising Principals Academy (PPA), to support, network, and provide training necessary to develop future principals. The program also provides assistant principals with a former principal who serves as a mentor. There are a range of topics that the aspiring assistant principals learn in their professional development including managing staff, how to be instructional leaders, and how to evaluate teachers.

Aspiration to leadership positions can also begin with teacher leaders (Rogers, 2005). In his article, Rogers explored how the Porter/Mazlow need priority and the Herzberg maintenance-motivation model applied to the challenge of locating people who aspired to leadership positions. The Porter/Maslow need priority states that people are driven from within themselves to grow to their full potential and that all lower needs must be met before one can move on to a higher need. Herzberg's two-factor theory describes maintenance factors, such as "salary, fringe benefits, type of supervision, working conditions, climate of the work group, and attitudes and policies of the administration" (p. 629) as possible sources of being dissatisfied in a job, but not as motivation for a job; however, Herzberg's theory is a prerequisite to motivation. In recruiting future principals, the literature also suggested it would be helpful to search for characteristics of aspiring principals.

Characteristics of Aspiring Principals

The need for autonomy and achievement distinguished leaders as well as affiliation and esteem. The author expressed a need for teacher leaders to be identified and recruited in all

schools and encouraged to self-reflect on their needs and motivation in order to realize their leadership aspiration. Through his article, the author found that there was no evidence to support that security and working conditions played a role in leadership aspiration. It was observed that affiliation and interpersonal relations motivated people to aspire to the leadership positions. Esteem and recognition were reported to play a role as well as autonomy and responsibility, and self-actualization and achievement. It was also noted that typically people who wanted autonomy did not aspire to leadership positions because they do not enjoy working with people. Further, the author offered that dominance does play a role in aspiring to the leadership position.

People who did aspire to leadership roles were willing to venture outside of their normal work assignments and take risks emotionally and career wise. They were people who would take stands, contribute, and speak up. Other characteristics included being vulnerable and driven from inside, which should be helpful for schools in identifying potential leaders. Rogers (2005) suggested that it is not only up to senior leaders to identify aspiring leaders, but also up to the junior members of a profession to identify their own needs and motivations in comparisons to leaders.

It was further found that leaders are not being developed in professions because people are currently not satisfied in the jobs. The unfulfilled needs they have made them focus on their lower-level needs and made them avoid higher level needs such as aspiring to leadership positions. As the author pointed out, if job satisfaction is hampered, it would be difficult to cultivate anyone to become a leader. It was also suggested that mentoring and peer coaching would help in the development of future leaders. Once future principals have been recruited and identified, the literature supports it is important to look at what duties and responsibilities are

given to them in the assistant principalship in order to prepare them for the principalship (Barnett, et al., 2012).

Current Duties and Responsibilities of Assistant Principals

Whether or not current assistant principals' duties align with the prospect to be effective future principals is up for debate. Barnett, et al. (2012) examined the perceptions of new and experienced assistant principals regarding their current jobs. Findings indicated that the challenges faced by new and veteran assistant principals included workload, task management, conflicts with adults and students, curriculum and instructional issues. Implications from this study were raised for how leadership preparation and professional development programs can help prepare aspiring and practicing assistant principals to become more competent in dealing with persistent job realities.

Mixed methods were used in this study where quantitative students used researcher developed validated questionnaires and inventories, and smaller quantitative students were conducted with focus-group interviews, questionnaires, case studies, observations, and document analysis. The assistant principals in the study found that the length they worked on a job did not change the duties they were assigned. The qualities that were necessary for success as an assistant principal were also presented.

The assistant principals' job is to aid the principal in the administration of the school; however, this is not at all an accurate reflection of what an assistant principal does in a day (The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008). Some tasks that are likely assigned to assistant principals include "scheduling classes, ordering textbooks and supplies, and coordinating transportation, custodial, cafeteria, and other support services" (p. 9). Most jobs fall into one of two categories, instructional or organizational, but most times there is not enough time in the day for instruction.

Unfortunately, the authors report that the assistant principal's job is overwhelmed with daily problems that demand their time. The Role of the Assistant Principal also notes that some assistant principals have the career of an assistant principal for life, while others become principals within a few years.

Johnson (2004) offered an article with insight into the daily life of an assistant principal and detailed a typical day. The author mentioned that assistant principals find themselves in charge of discipline, supervision, formal observations, assemblies, scheduling, accommodation plans, listening to parents, filling in for the principal, sporting events, dances, council/club meetings, and sitting in on committees. In a separate article about high school assistant principals, Steve Gibson (2003) stated, "if a school ran an employment ad describing the job of vice principal...there would be no applicants" (p. 3). The job is stressful and they spend many hours supporting their principal and helping to create a positive school climate.

Katz, et al. (2014) explained that the role of assistant principals has changed in the past decade because of accountability measures and political pressure for an increase in the achievement of all students. Assistant principals are expected to develop into instructional leaders in schools, especially in reading, writing, and math, but are given the management tasks of running the building that inhibit their learning and involvement in the instructional program. Katz, et al. cites "scheduling, crisis drills, bus and lunchroom supervision, and student discipline" (p. 1) as typical duties for assistant principals which causes them to become "pigeonholed" and prevents them from experiencing activities that are needed in order for them to advance in their careers. It is also the assistant principals' duty to advocate for their own growth and request experiences to help them in becoming a principal (Changing Role, 2014; Weller & Weller, 2002).

Advocating for Growth

Assistant principals do have the ability to create a personal empowerment to seek out learning experiences (Weller & Weller, 2002). Instead of engaging in routine assignments only, assistant principals should look for new components of their job to practice. Weller and Weller suggest that assistant principals take it upon themselves to gain knowledge of trends in education and use research to guide themselves. NASSP (2014) suggested that assistant principals become proactive in their duties and become their own advocate in advancing their careers. Some ways the authors suggested accomplishing this goal was by conducting action research for school improvement, beginning a new program and documenting results, enrolling in professional organizations to stay informed on best practices and network, volunteer to serve on committees, work outside of their comfort zone, and do summer work, stay informed on district initiatives, and ask for new responsibilities from the principal, help others with organizational issues, locate a mentor, and be visible to the community. The authors suggested that assistant principals' job is all consuming and that sometimes doing important work means doing additional work that you are not compensated for in order to be promoted.

For this dissertation, aspiration is defined as having a hope or ambition of becoming a principal. There are several factors that seem to deter assistant principals from developing an aspiration to the principalship and also several ways for school systems to overcome those obstacles. The core concepts that will relate to aspiration in the survey include questions to help determine ideally and realistically what causes assistant principals to aspire to the principalship as well as how many actually do aspire to the principalship.

Summary

In summary, the principal of a school is expected to be a leader of the teachers, instructional leader of the school capable of changing climate and culture through professional learning communities, able to work with people of all backgrounds, and be community leaders (Kantravitz, 2007; Lazaridou, et al., 2011; Militello, et al., 2015; Samuel, 2008; Seashore, et al., 2011). Today's principal must also be able to think towards the future of the school and anticipate tomorrow's problems and solutions (Leone, et al., 2009; Tirozzi, 2001). In order for that to happen there are a number of improvements that can be made for school systems. The first is improving admission requirements for administrators (Bottoms, 2007). Secondly administrators need the opportunity to be continually developed in their position (Gardner, 2007; Powell, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2007), and they must continue their learning (Rethinking Principal Evaluation, 2013; Yan, 2012). The pipeline for school administration needs strengthening and this can be done by planning for the future, improving pay, and making the job more desirable through system support (Ash, et al., 2013; Mendel et al., 2013; Tirozzi, 2001).

In some ways the assistant principalship can be an effective preparation for the principalship. One way is through the offering of purposeful professional development (Barnett, et al., 2012; Briggs, et al., 2012; Christie, et al., 2009; Gajda, et al., 2008; Garrison, et al., 2007; Hoffman, et al., 2005; Lynch, 2012; Mendels, et al., 2013; Portin, 2009; Pounder, et al., 2005; Thompson, 2010; Yan, 2012; Zepeda, et al., 2014; Zimmerman, 2011). Another suggestion is through continuing education (Rooney, 2008) and through improvement in graduation requirements for administrators (Archer, 2006; Briggs, et al., 2012; Brown, 2006; Christie, et al., 2009; Pak, 2008).

Mentoring has been used for teachers for many years and has now also been recognized as beneficial for principals (Aarons, 2010; Bossi, 2009; Christie, et al., 2009; Getting Principal Mentoring Right, 2007; Garrison, et al., 2007; Holloway, 2004; Hall, 2008; McBride, 2008; Portin, 2009; Mendels, et al., 2013; Pak, 2008; Olson, 2007; Washoe, 2012; Zepeda, et al., 2014). Mentoring has the potential to provide for growth for principals and help them in the steep learning curve they may experience in their first years (Bossi, 2009; Hall, 2008; McBride, 2008), and the struggle of a new career with new challenges (Holloway, 2004). Mentoring not only benefits the mentee, but has also been found to benefit the mentor (Dunbar, et al., 2011; Peter, 2010).

Networking for assistant principals is a way to advance to the principalship (Barnett, et al., 2012; Beachboard, et al., 2011; Campanetta, 2010; Farnsely, 2009; Greg, et al., n.d.; Grissom, et al., 2010; Holloway, 2004; Mabrouk, 2009; Peterson, 2002; Purcell, 2012). Networking can provide professional development (Grissom, et al., 2010; Principals, 2010) as well as link principals to professional organizations (Mabrouk, 2009; Peterson, 2002). It removes the isolation that administrators can feel (Neale, et al., 2013; Whitaker, 1996) and can help with job searching (Mabrouk, 2009; Purcell, 2012) and opening doors (Kandra, et al., 2004). Networking can also encourage growth in principals where they can become more digitally literate (Farnsley, 2009; Greg, et al., n.d.).

Experience for assistant principals can prepare them for the principalship (Barnett, et al., 2012; Bossi, 2009; Celico, 2007; Garrison, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2004; Katz, et al., n.d.; Kelchtermans, et al., 2011; Kwan & Walker, 2012; NASSP, 2014; Peters, 2010; The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008; Weller, et al., 2002; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). Some of these experiences can be emotional ones (Kelchtermans, et al., 2011), while others are experiences

where assistant principals learn what is important and where their responsibility ends (Barnett, et al., 2012). Through job realities and hands on learning (Celico, 2007) future leaders are cultivated (Burdette, et al., 2005), and assistant principals are trained in helping teachers teach and deliver instruction (Kwan, 2012; Yu-Kwong; 2010), and learn the functions and responsibilities needed to become principals (Pounder, et al., 2005; Ramaswami, 2013). There are gaps in experiences needed for assistant principals including knowledge in special education (Garrison, et al., 2007; Lynch 2012), and items that are not important for experience including where you went to college and how many years you have been on the job (Clark, et al., 2009; Hull, 2012).

Aspiring and adequate principals are not easy to find (Adams, et al., 2004; Bowles 1990; Cohen, 2008; Davis, 2005; Gajda, et al., 2008; Harris, 2011; Johnson, et al., 2007; Kwan, 2012; Rogers, 2005; Rooney 2008; Pak, 2008; Walker, et al., 2009; Yu-Kwong, et al., 2010). It is sometimes difficult to find people to fill the position (Bowles 1990; Davis, 2005; Gajda, et al., 2008; Johnson, et al., 2007; Walker, et al., 2009) because of immense job requirements (Gajda, et al., 2008; Harris, 2011; Kwan, 2012; YuKwong, 2010). There are ways for systems to recruit more principals with a more structured path (Cohen, 2008; Walker, et al., 2009), one of which is looking at their own teacher leaders (Rogers, 2005). Another way is finding people with the characteristics of a leader including people who want to affect change, will speak up, and are driven (Adams, et al., 2004). School systems should also align current duties with the responsibilities principals will face (Militello, et al., 2015). Currently, more assistant principals' jobs are more organizational than instructional (Barnett, et al., 2012; Gibson, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Katz, n.d.; The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008). However, assistant principals can also advocate for themselves for growth (NASSP, 2014; Weller, et al., 2002).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The literature review provided in this study offered five main components, based on the literature, that provide a framework for how to best develop assistant principals for the principalship. Effective methods for preparing principals include mentoring opportunities, professional development geared towards the specific needs of the assistant principal's growth, networking opportunities provided, on the job experiences that a future principal would need to experience, and an aspiration for the principalship. This particular study is important as it can provide information for those in Alabama's schools and perhaps in other states on how to best provide training and development necessary for assistant principals to make them successful principals (Taylor & Martin, 2007). It may also create a new path for school leadership by allowing assistant principals more opportunity to do the work "they were trained and want to do" (Militello, et al., 2015).

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent assistant principals report they are prepared for the principalship and to what degree assistant principals in Alabama report receiving development for the principalship consistent with the Assistant Principal Development Framework. This information about how assistant principals believe they are prepared for the principalship, could aid school systems in evaluating the needs of assistant principals in their systems and consider how to better support them. This study will also add to the literature on this important topic.

This chapter outlines in detail the research methodology used in this descriptive study. The descriptive statistics used in this study allowed me to “describe information contained in many, many scores with just a few indices, such as the mean and median” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 189). The first section includes the research questions, followed by the participants used, and the research instrument. The next section includes data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

Two research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship?
2. How does their reported ideal development compare to reported actual development across each of the five domains in the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study?

Methods

Participants

The unit of analysis for the study was assistant principals in Alabama. One hundred forty-one (141) assistant principals participated in the study with 130 responses being completed; this resulted in a 92% completion rate. There is no specific number of assistant principals in Alabama available, but this seems to be a low response rate. This could be due to assistant principals having a cumbersome work load and not enough time to participate in answering surveys. Participants identified their racial/ethnic group as White/Caucasian, 91, (71%); Black, 32, (25%); Hispanic, 2 (2%); Asian, 0, (0%); and Other, 3, (2%), respectively. The majority of the respondents were female at 75 (58%), 54 (41%) were males, and 1 (1%) for other, of the

respondents. The age of respondents varied greatly from 28 to 71, with a mean of 43.88, a mode of 42, and a standard deviation of 8.98. Assistant principals were from rural schools and city schools. All superintendents and principals in Alabama were contacted from a distribution list via email and asked to forward the survey on to their assistant principal.

Research Instrument

The instrument I designed is a survey called *Assistant Principal Development Survey* (see Appendix B). Current assistant principals in Alabama were surveyed regarding their real job experiences and what they believed would be ideal experiences to become effective principals. The first section of the survey followed the five areas supported by the literature review as ways to best prepare assistant principals for the principalship. There were 51 questions in this section. More specifically, the questions in the survey followed the conceptual framework of the literature review: (a) mentoring, (b) professional development, (c) experience, (d) networking, and (e) aspiration. The survey questions in Section II contained 12 questions that collected demographic information about the assistant principals such as years of experience, number of assistant principals, and size of school, and if they were a male or female participant. I developed the survey items based on the literature review to address the specific research questions of this study (see Appendix C for Analysis Chart). The participants answered the survey questions through five and six-point Likert-type responses. The scores from the participants explained whether or not assistant principals in Alabama believe they are prepared for the principalship as well as whether or not the real and ideal experiences for assistant principals are preparing them to become effective principals. The higher scores indicate that the assistant principals are receiving the necessary training and feel prepared and the low scores

indicate the assistant principals are not receiving the necessary training and do not feel as prepared.

Content Validity

The validity of a survey refers to “the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences a research makes” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 150). A 63-item survey was used to obtain responses from assistant school principals. For this study, a pilot of the instrument was performed with 20 teachers. Each of the secondary school principals agreed to complete the survey to help the researcher determine the length of time it would take to answer the survey and to determine any needed modifications in language, format, or length.

Secondly, feedback and suggestions were requested for how to make the questionnaire clearer to the reader. The survey respondents and four professors of educational leadership helped to redesign the questionnaire. The results were that two questions were changed for clarity, the number scale was changed, two questions were omitted, and more demographic questions were added. The questions changed for clarity asked the respondent to select the top three choices and the respondents felt it was better to rank all of the choices. The two questions omitted were questions the respondents felt were redundant. The demographic questions added were questions concerning gender, age, and ethnicity.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results “should be replicable by any person similarly placed” (Stringer, 2007, p. 192). Using the survey, I analyzed if current assistant principals feel they are being prepared for the principalship consistent with the Assistant Principal Development Framework used in this study.

Generally, many quantities of interest are impossible to measure explicitly, so using a series of questions in a survey will allow combining the answers into a numerical value (Explorable.com, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha is the most commonly used measure of reliability and it measures how well a set of variables measures an aspect of individuals (Explorable.com, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha values range from 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating a greater degree of reliability. A commonly accepted practice is that alpha should be .70 or higher.

I ran a reliability test for all five components of the conceptual framework. Professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking had appropriate Cronbach’s alpha coefficients; experience did not with a score of 0.284 for real experience and 0.484 for ideal experience. The scores that did meet Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .665 to .960, indicating a strong internal consistency.

Table 1

Internal Consistency Reliability Test (Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients)

Domains	Reality	Ideal
Professional Development	.882	.960
Mentoring	.710	.905
Aspiration	.713	.856
Experience	.284	.484
Networking	.737	.665

Data Collection Procedures

Following approval from my committee, I submitted the survey instrument and a proposed cover letter to Auburn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for its approval (see Appendix D). Following IRB approval, the online software Qualtrics was used to distribute potential participants an e-mail which included the letter of consent to participate, and a link to the survey. The letter of consent to participate explained the purpose of the study and guaranteed confidentiality to all respondents. The letter also affirmed that participation was imperative to the success of the survey. On April 1, 2015, the survey was sent to all principals in Alabama ($n = 1474$) via e-mail. This study took place over the course of one year, with the bulk of the research being conducted in April, 2015. Survey questions were designed to understand what development opportunities are currently offered to assistant principals at many different schools and what growth opportunities assistant principals believe they were lacking to prepare them for the principalship. The questions also asked how prepared aspiring assistant principals believe they were to take on the principalship.

The email requested that the principals forward the survey to their assistant principals. At the end of a two-week period, the survey was redistributed in a reminder email to non-respondents to encourage their completion and return of the survey. To avoid duplication of responses, questionnaires were monitored through Qualtrics and were not re-delivered to those who had responded. The survey was distributed to 1474 principals. The units of analysis for the study were assistant principals in Alabama. One hundred forty-one (141) assistant principals participated in the study with 130 responses being completed; this resulted in a 92% completion rate. Participants identified their racial/ethnic group as White/Caucasian, 91, (71%); Black, 32, (25%); Hispanic, 2 (2%); Asian, 0, (0%); and Other, 3, (2%), respectively. The majority of the

respondents were female at 75 (58%), 54 (41%) were males, and 1 (1%) for other, of the respondents. The age of respondents varied greatly from 28 to 71, with a mean of 43.88, a mode of 42, and a standard deviation of 8.98.

Data Analysis

After the data was collected from the questionnaire, I was responsible for effectively analyzing the data and used the computer software program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine descriptive data for my sample and to determine to what degree assistant principals feel prepared for the principalship, as well as to determine how ideal development compares to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study. I first conducted statistical analysis using descriptive information to describe my sample and to discover to what degree assistant principals feel prepared for the principalship. Then, statistical tests were run to determine the degree to which the assumptions for an ANOVA had been met. Table 2 presents a list of ANOVA assumptions, an explanation of each assumption, and my strategy for addressing each assumption.

Table 2

ANOVA Assumptions

ANOVA Assumptions	Explanation	Tested by
1. Independence	Participants' scores are not influenced by the scores of other participants in the groups.	Assistant principals took the survey independently.
2. Interval or ratio measurement for the dependent variable	Data must be a specific level	5 or 6 point Likert scale questions used for each question.
3. Normality	Each groups' patterns of scores should reflect the shape of the normal distribution	Omnibus Test for skewness and kurtosis
4. Homogeneity	Equal variance between groups	Levene Test Statistic

For the first research question, I conducted statistical analysis using ANOVA to learn if there was a statistically significant difference in assistant principals who feel prepared for the principalship among the three groups (disagree, neutral, and agree). According to Ross and Shannon (2008), analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures are used “to assess differences across groups based on means” (p. 57). The one-way ANOVA determined if there was a statistically significant difference among the three groups. An alpha rate of .05 was selected since this is the standard for educational research (Ross & Shannon, 2008). Finally, LSD post hoc test was used to determine if there were differences among the assistant principals who considered themselves well prepared, neutral, and unprepared. A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

was used to determine the significance of the research question which addressed whether assistant principals spend their time doing what research supports they should spend their time doing in order to become principals (community relations, curriculum and instruction) or if they spend more time completing managerial tasks (discipline, buildings and grounds).

I conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test for research question one for experience, the one component of the Assistant Principal Development Framework that had a reliability coefficient of 0.284 for real experience and 0.484 for ideal experience for research question one. The Kruskal-Wallis nonparametric test was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the three groups (disagree, neutral, and agree) and the two questions on the survey (Fields, 2013).

For the second research question, paired sample t-test was chosen because two dependent scores (real and ideal) are being compared on five related variables (mentoring, professional development, aspiration, and networking). Prior to the paired sample t-tests procedure, statistical tests were run to determine the degree to which the assumptions of the paired sample t-test had been met. Table 3 presents a list of Paired sample t-test assumptions, an explanation of each assumption, and my strategy for addressing each assumption.

Table 3

Paired Sample t-test

<i>Paired Sample T-Test</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Tested by:</i>
<i>Assumptions</i>		
1. No significant outliers	Observation point distant from other observation points	Researcher assures
2. Continuous Interval	Data must be a specific level	5 or 6 point Likert scale questions used for each question.
3. Normality	Each groups' patterns of scores should reflect the shape of the normal distribution	Omnibus Test for skewness and kurtosis
4. Must contain two related groups		Real and Ideal experiences are compared

Due to the low reliability for the experience questions, the questions for experience were analyzed by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to compare whether or not assistant principals spend more time managing the school than they do on curriculum and instruction, and whether or not assistant principals are provided the opportunities to lead meetings, complete instructional observations, and balance the budget in order to prepare them for the principalship.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess to what degree assistant principals believe they are prepared for the principalship and if the development opportunities assistant principals receive are consistent with the Assistant Principal Conceptual Framework. I designed the *Assistant Principal Development Survey* to collect data about how assistant principals are currently developed and what development would be ideal. The items in my survey reflected the themes identified through the literature review and the conceptual framework. I established content validity of the instrument through a field test with individuals similar to my target population.

I electronically sent the instrument to 1474 principals. Participants completed the surveys electronically and the data was electronically collected through Qualtrics. I analyzed the data by using SPSS and aligning the two research questions. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree assistant principals believe they are prepared for the principalship as well as to determine how their ideal development compares to their reported development as defined by the *Assistant Principal Development Framework* created through the literature review in this study. The framework supported the idea that assistant principals are best developed through formal and informal mentoring, meaningful professional development, experiences, networking, and an aspiration to the principalship.

This study sought to contribute to the existing research regarding how to best prepare assistant principals for the principalship. While the concern of the lack of preparation is consistent throughout the United States, with research spanning various states throughout the country, this research is significant in that it focuses specifically on assistant principals in the state of Alabama, with suggestions of how to improve at the school and district level.

This chapter presents the results of the study. It begins with demographic information gathered from descriptive statistics. This is followed by information about testing the assumptions of paired-sample t-test. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the results related to each research question.

Descriptive Statistics

Tables 4–7 provide a summary of descriptive statistics for the respondents of the *Assistant Principals Survey*. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics results for the respondents' ethnicity, gender, age, and highest level of education received.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics by Respondents' Ethnicity (N=128), Respondents' Gender (N=130), Respondents' Age (N=128), and Respondents' Highest Level of Education Received (N=129)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Ethnicity	White	91 (71)
	Black	32 (25)
	Hispanic	2 (2)
	Other	3 (2)
Gender	Female	75 (58)
	Male	54 (41)
	Other	1 (1)
Highest Level of Education	Ph.D.	5 (4)
	Ed.S.	68 (53)
	Master	47 (36)
	Bachelor	9 (7)

The mean number of years as a classroom teacher was 12 years, with a standard deviation of 6.044. The mean number for years as an assistant principal was 4 years with a standard

deviation of 3.843. The mean number of years spent as an educator was 17 with a standard deviation of 7.703. Shown in Table 5 are descriptive statistics for respondents' career roles. It describes number of years as a classroom teacher, as an assistant principal, and years in education.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics by Respondents' Number of Years as a Classroom Teacher (N=130), Years as an Assistant Principal (N=128), Years in Education (N=128) and Age (N=128).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Years as Teacher	130	1	32	12.02	6.044
Years as AP	128	0	17	4.36	3.843
Years as Educator	128	2	48	17.73	7.703
Age	128	28	71	43.88	8.98

The approximate enrollment of the schools in which the responding assistant principals worked varied greatly from 50 to 2800 students. The building organization of these schools varied also. Most of the respondents worked in high schools, 48 (38%), 22 (17%) worked in elementary, 14 (11%) worked in middle school, six (5%) worked in primary, four (3%) worked in K-12, three (2%) worked in intermediate, and two (2%) worked in a ninth grade academy. Twenty-nine (23%) of the respondents had different building organizations than the choices offered in the survey. These included: three assistant principals who worked in K-6 (2%), two assistant principals who worked in 5-8 school (2%), two assistant principals who worked in alternative schools (2%), two assistant principals who worked in K-8 school (2%), two assistant

principals who worked in 7-12 school (2%), two assistant principals who worked in a 3-5 school (2%), two assistant principals who worked in 6-12 school (2%), two assistant principals who worked in 7-8 school (2%), one assistant principal who worked in a 5-6 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a Preschool-3 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a K-4 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a Preschool-4 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a Preschool-5 school (1%), one assistant principals who worked in a Preschool-6 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a 10-12 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a Preschool-8 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a Preschool-12 school (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a 2-6 school, (1%), one assistant principal who worked in a 4-8 school (1%), and one assistant principal who worked in a 6-7 school (1%).

The reported number of assistant principals in the same buildings also varied from one assistant principal with 71 (55%) respondents, to two assistant principals from 19 (15%) respondents, and three or more assistant principals from 39 (30%) respondents. Shown in Table 6 are descriptive statistics for approximate enrollment of the school, the building organization, and the number of assistant principals in the building.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics by Approximate Enrollment of the School (N=126), Building Organization (N=129), and Number of Assistant Principals in Building (N=129)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
School Enrollment	0–500	27 (21)
	501–1000	63 (50)
	1001–1500	27 (21)
	1501–2000	5 (4)
	2001–2500	1 (1)
	2500–2800	3 (2)
Building Organization	Primary (K–2)	6 (5)
	Elementary School (K–5)	22 (17)
	Intermediate (4–6)	3 (2)
	Middle School (6–8)	14 (11)
	Ninth grade academy (9)	2 (2)
	High School (9–12)	48 (37)
	K–12	4 (3)
	Other	30 (23)
Number of Assistant Principals	One Assistant Principal	71 (55)
	Two Assistant Principals	19 (15)
	Three or more Assistant Principals	39 (30)

Prior to becoming assistant principals for the schools they now work in, 12 (10%) of the respondents had been assistant principals, three (2%) had been counselors, one (1%) had worked in the central office, 71 (56%) had been classroom teachers, and 16 (13%) had been teacher leaders. Twenty-three participants (18%) answered that they had held other positions. Some of those positions included seven who had served as instructional coaches, six as reading coaches, four as principals, two as media specialists, one as a physical education teacher, one as a special education teacher, one as an academic coach, and one as an interventionist.

Prior to becoming assistant principals, the respondents held a variety of leadership positions. Other leadership positions the assistant principal held before becoming assistant principals included 18 (15%) who had served as department head, 19 (16%) who had served as an instructional coach, seven (6%) who had served as athletic director, 45 (38%) as a teacher leader, and 28 (24%) who had served in other leadership capacities. Some examples included three (3%) administrative assistants to principal, five (4%) head coach/varsity coach, three (3%) principals, two (2%) grade chairs, one (1%) truancy director, one (1%) military, one (1%) curriculum coordinator, one (1%) day care director, and one (1%) corporate job. Table 7 shows descriptive statistics for respondents' positions prior to becoming assistant principals as well as any leadership position held before becoming assistant principals.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Respondents' Positions Prior to becoming an Assistant Principal (N=126), Respondents' Leadership Position Held Prior to Becoming an Assistant Principal (N=117)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Position Prior to Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal	12 (10)
	Counselor	3 (2)
	Central office staff	1 (1)
	Classroom teacher	71 (56)
	Teacher Leader	16 (13)
	Other	23 (18)
Leadership Position Prior to Assistant Principal	Department Head	18 (15)
	Instructional Coach	19 (16)
	Athletic Director	7 (6)
	Teacher Leader	45 (38)
	Other	23 (18)

Findings Related to Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study. The first research question sought to understand assistant principals' perceptions of being prepared for the principalship.

Research Question 1: To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship?

Two approaches were used to answer this research question. The first approach was to group all assistant principals into categories based on how prepared they believed they were for the assistant principalship. One question on the survey asked respondents specifically if they felt prepared for the principalship. From the results, two (1.4%) strongly disagreed about being prepared, ten (7.1%) disagreed about being prepared, 29 (20.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed about being prepared, 64 (45.4%) agreed they were prepared, and 30 (21.3%) strongly agreed they were prepared for the principalship. Table 8 shows descriptive statistics for assistant principal who feel prepared for the principalship.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics on Assistant Principals Perceived Preparation for the Principalship
(N=135)

Variable	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly disagree	2	1.4
Disagree	10	7.1
Neither agree or disagree	29	20.6
Agree	64	45.4
Strongly agree	30	21.3

The second approach to answer research question one was to use the assistant principals responses to group assistant principals into three groups. The three groups combined strongly

agree and agree into the group of assistant principals who agreed they were prepared for the principalship (well prepared), used neither agree nor disagree for the assistant principals who were neutral (neutral), and combined disagree and strongly disagree for the assistant principals who disagree about being prepared for the principalship (not prepared) in order to explore their experiences as assistant principals. A one-way ANOVA was used to so we could further explore to what extent the level of preparedness (well prepared, neutral, not prepared) differed across the Assistant Principal Development Framework categories (professional development, mentoring, networking, aspiration, experiences) and better understand to what degree assistant principals believe their preparation is preparing them to be principals.

ANOVA

ANOVA statistical procedures were also used to answer the research question. Before employing ANOVA, I addressed the assumptions associated with ANOVA. Independence of scores was assured. Because the survey was sent out to assistant principals across the state, they would not take the surveys together. The ANOVA assumptions of normality in distribution and homogeneity of variances were tested on the dependent variables (professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking).

To test the assumption of normality, the Shapiro-Wilks test was used. The test will be significant if $p < .05$ and the distribution in question is significantly different from a normal distribution. If the test is non-significant, $p > .05$, it tells us that the distribution of the sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution (Field, 2013).

Professional Development

For professional development, the Shapiro-Wilks test resulted in scores for the not prepared group, $p = .089$, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the neutral

group, $p = .089$, which did not deviate significantly from normal, and for the well prepared group, $p < .001$, which is significantly non-normal.

For professional development, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances is statistically significant, $p < .001$ indicating that the three variances are significantly different, thus the assumption of equal variance across population groups has not been met based on professional development.

A one-way ANOVA was used in analyzing professional development mean scores for assistant principals who agreed, were neutral, or disagreed about being prepared for the principalship. The analysis was statistically significant, $F(2,132) = 8.98, p < 0.001$. The effect size was medium, ($\eta^2 = 0.12$). The results indicated that assistant principals who believed they were well prepared for the principalship reported participating in professional development ($M = 4.12, SD = 0.55$). Assistant principals who were in the neutral group reported participating ($M = 3.75, SD = 0.74$) and assistant principals who were in the not prepared group reported participating ($M = 3.37, SD = 1.15$). The results of the post-hoc LSD test indicated there was a significant difference between well prepared and not prepared assistant principals (mean difference $-0.70, p < .001$) and a significant difference between assistant principals who were neutral and well prepared (mean difference $-0.52, p = .01$). Furthermore, there was not a significant difference between the not prepared and neutral assistant principals (mean difference $-0.18, p = .09$). Assistant principals who reported feeling prepared for the principalship also reported participating in professional development activities significantly more than both the neutral and not prepared groups.

Mentoring

For mentoring, the Shapiro-Wilks test resulted in scores the not prepared group, $p = .330$ for real mentoring, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the neutral group, $p = .197$ for real mentoring, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the well-prepared group, $p < .001$ for real mentoring, which is significantly non-normal.

For mentoring, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances is not statistically significant, $p = .148$ indicating that the three variances are not significantly different, thus the assumption of equal variance across population groups has been met based on mentoring.

A one-way ANOVA was calculated on mentoring for assistant principals who agreed, were neutral, or disagreed about being prepared for the principalship. The analysis was statistically significant $F(2,132) = 4.46, p = .013$. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = 0.06$). The mean and standard deviation score in the mentoring domain for assistant principals who felt they were well prepared were ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.01$); for the neutral group were ($M = 3.22, SD = 0.97$) and the not prepared group were ($M = 3.04, SD = 1.41$). The results of the post-hoc LSD test indicated that there was a significant difference between not prepared and well-prepared assistant principals (mean difference = $-0.70, p = .03$) and a significant difference between neutral and well-prepared (mean difference = $0.52, p = .02$). Furthermore, there was not a significant difference between not prepared and neutral assistant principals (mean difference = $0.18, p = .61$). Assistant principals who reported feeling prepared for the principalship also reported participating in mentoring significantly more than both the neutral and not prepared groups.

Aspiration

For aspiration, the Shapiro-Wilks test resulted in scores for the not prepared group, $p = .518$ for real aspiration, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the neutral group, $p = .367$ for real aspiration, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the well-prepared group, $p = .002$ for real aspiration, which is significantly non-normal. For aspiration, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances is not statistically significant, $p = .861$, indicating that the three variances are not significantly different, thus the assumption of equal variance across population groups has been met based on aspiration.

A one-way ANOVA was calculated on aspiration for assistant principals who agreed, were neutral, or disagreed about being prepared for the principalship. The analysis was statistically significant $F(2,132) = 23.82, p < .001$. The effect size was large ($\eta^2 = 0.26$). The mean score in aspiration domain for assistant principals who believe they were well prepared were ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.69$); for the neutral group were ($M = 3.37, SD = 0.61$) and for the not prepared group were ($M = 2.52, SD = 0.75$). The results of the LSD post hoc test indicated a significant difference between not prepared and neutral (mean difference = $-0.84, p < .001$), a significant difference between not prepared and well prepared (mean difference = $-1.35, p < .001$) and a significant difference between neutral and well prepared (mean difference = $-0.51, p < .001$). Assistant principals, who reported believing they were more prepared for the principalship, also reported an aspiration for the principalship more than the neutral and not prepared groups.

Networking

For networking, the Shapiro-Wilks test resulted in score for the not prepared group, $p = .165$ for real networking, which did not deviate significantly from normal. For the neutral group,

$p = .267$ for real networking did not deviate significantly from normal. For the well-prepared group, $p = .030$ for real networking for the well prepared group, which is significantly non-normal. For networking, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances is not statistically significant, $p = .739$, indicating that the variances across three groups are not significantly different, thus the assumption of equal variance across population groups has been met based on networking.

A one-way ANOVA was used in analyzing networking mean scores for assistant principals who agreed, were neutral, or disagreed about being prepared for the principalship. The scores of perceptions in networking among these three groups were statistically significant, $F(2,132) = 8.23, p < .001$. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = 0.11$). The mean score in the networking domain for assistant principals who believed they were well prepared reported networking ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.82$) the assistant principals in the neutral group were ($M = 2.78, SD = 0.86$) and the assistant principals in the not prepared group were ($M = 2.19, SD = 0.73$). The results of the LSD post hoc test indicated a significant difference between not prepared and neutral (mean difference = $-0.59, p = .04$), a significant difference between not prepared and well prepared (mean difference = $-0.95, p < .001$), and a significant difference between neutral and well prepared (mean difference = $-0.37, p = .04$). Assistant principals who believe they were well-prepared for the principalship also reported networking significantly more than both the neutral and not prepared groups.

Table 9 shows a one-way ANOVA comparing assistant principals who agree, are neutral, and disagree on four components of the Assistant Principal Development Framework of professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking.

Table 9

One-Way ANOVA comparing Agree, Neutral, and Disagree on Professional Development, Mentoring, Aspiration, and Networking (N = 135)

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	F	P	η^2
	N =12	N = 29	N = 94	(2,132)		
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)			
PD	3.37 (1.15)	3.75 (0.74)	4.12 (0.55)	8.98	< 0.001***	0.12
Mentoring	3.04 (1.41)	3.22 (0.97)	3.74 (1.01)	4.46	= 0.013*	0.06
Aspiration	2.52 (0.75)	3.37 (0.61)	3.88 (0.69)	23.82	< 0.001***	0.27
Networking	2.19 (0.73)	2.78 (0.86)	3.14 (0.82)	8.23	< 0.001***	0.11

Experience

A reliability test was run to test for all five components of the conceptual framework. Professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking had appropriate Cronbach's alpha coefficients in the Assistant Principal Development Framework. The scores in component of experience were not reliable; the consistency Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.284 for real experience and 0.484 for ideal experience. As a result, an independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test was used. This nonparametric test was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the three groups (disagree, neutral, and agree) on two experience questions on the survey (Field, 2013). The level of significance was set at .05.

There were two questions in the reality set of questions which answered what type of experiences assistant principals received to prepare them for the principalship. Both questions were Likert type questions where assistant principals were asked to choose among Strongly

agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, or Strongly disagree. For the first question, assistant principals were asked about their real experiences and if most of their time was spent on management of the school. For this question we retain the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no difference in real experience for assistant principals (and, hence, managing the school) among the three groups of assistant principals who feel prepared, are neutral, or feel unprepared for the principalship, $p = .323$

The second question asked if assistant principals spent most of their time leading meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget. The p -value $< .001$, so we reject the null hypothesis. At $\alpha = .05$ level of significance, there exists enough evidence to conclude there is a difference in real experience for assistant principals in leading meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget, who feel prepared, are neutral, or feel unprepared for the principalship.

Experience: Assistant Principal Perception of Ideal vs. Reality

Another way experience was explored for research question one was through a series of reality versus ideal Likert type questions on the survey. The independent variables were the real and ideal development provided to assistant principals. The dependent variables were curriculum and instruction, budget and finance, discipline, community relations, management of the school, and buildings and grounds.

The assistant principals were asked to select choices on a Likert-type scale with options such as Never, Once Every Few Months, Once per Month, Twice per Month, or Daily. The first pair of questions asked in reality how much time was spent on community relations with a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 1.502 and ideally how much time should you spend on community relations with a mean score of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 0.765. The second

pair of questions asked in reality how much time do you spend on curriculum and instruction with a mean of 4.71 and a standard deviation of 1.273 and how much should you spend ideally on curriculum and instruction with a mean of 4.59 and a standard deviation of 0.735. The third pair of questions asked in reality how much time do you spend on discipline with a mean score of 5.72 and standard deviation of 0.832 and ideally how much time should you spend on discipline with a mean score of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.815. The fourth pair of questions asked in reality how much time was spent on building and grounds with a mean score of 4.76 and a standard deviation of 1.49 and ideally how much time should be spent on buildings and grounds with a mean score of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.870.

As indicated in Table 10, most respondents had experience with community relations weekly, curriculum and instruction weekly, discipline daily, buildings and grounds daily, budget and finance never, and management of the school daily. For Table 11, assistant principals reported ideal experience with community relations, curriculum and instruction, discipline, buildings and grounds, budget and finance, and management of the school more than five times a semester. In Table 12, assistant principals would ideally like to spend more time in community relations, and less time in discipline and buildings and grounds. Assistant principals reported spending more time in curriculum and instruction in reality than is ideal.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics by Respondents' Perception of Real Experience in Community Relations (N=136), Curriculum and Instruction (N=134), Discipline (N=136), Buildings and Grounds (N=136), Budget and Finance (N=136), and Management of School (N=136).

	Never n (%)	Once Every Few Months n (%)	Once per Month n (%)	Twice per Month n (%)	Weekly n (%)	Daily n (%)
Community Relations	5 (3.5)	19 (13.5)	20 (14.2)	15 (10.6)	45 (31.9)	32 (22.7)
Curriculum and Instruction	2 (1.4)	9 (6.4)	17 (12.1)	8 (5.7)	60 (42.6)	38 (27)
Discipline	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	16 (11.3)	114 (80.9)
Buildings and Grounds	6 (4.3)	9 (6.4)	15 (10.6)	11 (7.8)	35 (24.8)	60 (42.6)
Budget and Finance	40 (28.4)	39 (27.7)	13 (9.2)	23 (16.3)	17 (12.1)	4 (2.8)
Management of School	3 (2.1)	4 (2.8)	4 (2.8)	3 (2.1)	28 (19.9)	94 (66.7)

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics by Respondents' Perception of Ideal Experience in Community Relations (N=129), Curriculum and Instruction (N=129), Discipline (N=126), Buildings and Grounds (N=127), Budget and Finance (N=129), and Management of School (N=127).

	Never	Once per year	Twice per year	2-5 times per semester	More than 5 times a semester
Community Relations	0	3 (2.1)	14 (9.9)	48 (34)	64 (45)
Curriculum and Instruction	2 (1.4)	0	7 (5)	31 (11)	89 (63)
Discipline	1 (.7)	2 (1.4)	14 (9.9)	33 (23.4)	76 (53.9)
Buildings and Grounds	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)	18 (12.8)	46 (32.6)	59 (41.8)
Budget and Finance	1 (.7)	6 (4.3)	20 (14.2)	45 (31.9)	57 (40.4)
Management of School	1 (.7)	1 (.7)	12 (8.5)	29 (20.6)	86 (61)

Table 12

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and p-Value for Real and Ideal Time Spent

Variable	Ideal		Real		<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Community Relations	4.34	.765	4.26	1.502	0.819
Curriculum and Instruction	4.59	.735	4.71	1.273	0.487
Discipline	4.44	.815	5.72	.832	< 0.001***
Buildings and Grounds	4.24	.870	4.76	1.49	< 0.001***
Management of the School	4.53	.761	5.43	1.12	< 0.001***
Budget and Finance	4.17	.911	2.63	1.5	< 0.001***

Data were analyzed by a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test in order to determine whether participants' responses differed significantly across the conditions of community relations, curriculum and instruction, discipline, and buildings and grounds. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was chosen because the individuals who answered the survey had scores on two variables (real and ideal) (Field, 2013). The goal is to determine whether participants' responses differed significantly across the conditions of community relations, curriculum and instruction, discipline, and buildings and grounds.

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, which evaluated differences between how much time was actually spent on curriculum and instruction and how much time assistant principals would like to spend on curriculum and instruction was not significant, $z = -.696$, $p = .487$, so we retain the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicate no significant difference between real and ideal time spent on curriculum and instruction. In evaluating the difference between in reality how

much time was spent on budget and finance and ideally how much time assistant principals should spend on budget and finance was significant, $z = -7.77, p < .001$, so we reject the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicate a significant difference in how much time assistant principals would ideally spend on budget and finance and how much time they spend in reality. In evaluating the difference between in reality how much time assistant principals spend on discipline and how much time assistant principals would ideally spend on discipline, the result was significant, $z = -0.8.59, p < .001$, so we reject the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicated that the amount of time assistant principals spend on discipline and how much time they would ideally spend on discipline are significantly different. In evaluating the difference between in reality how much time is spent on the community relations and how much time assistant principals would ideally spend on community relations, the result was not significant, $z = -0.229, p = .819$, so we retain the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicate there is not a significant difference between how much is ideally spent and how much time is spent in reality on community relations. In evaluating the difference between in reality how much time assistant principals spend on management of the school and ideally how much time on management of the school, the result was significant, $z = -7.92, p < .001$, so we reject the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicated that the amount of time assistant principals spend on management of the school and how much time they ideally spend are significantly different. For the final question of in reality how much time assistant principals spend on buildings and grounds and how much time assistant principals spend in reality on buildings and grounds, the results were significant, $z = -4.316, p < .001$, so we reject the null hypothesis. That is, the results indicate there is a significant difference between ideally how much time is spent on buildings and grounds and how much time is actually spent on buildings and grounds.

Research Question 2: How does ideal development compare to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal conceptual framework?

The main analysis used to answer this research question was Paired sample t-tests. The survey asked participants to report their perceived developmental experiences and their ideal developmental experiences. This study sought to understand to what extent assistant principals reported real and ideal development opportunities for the five components developed in the Assistant Principal Development Framework of professional development, mentoring, experience, aspiration, and networking. The paired sample t-test allowed real and ideal comparisons for the components of the Assistant Principal Development Framework (dependent variables of mentoring, professional development, aspiration, and networking). Paired sample t-test was chosen because two related scores (real and ideal) are being compared on five dependent variables (mentoring, professional development, aspiration, experience, and networking).

The assumptions of paired sample t-test include: the dependent variable must be continuous/interval and normally distributed, the independent variable must contain two related groups, and there should be no significant outliers (Field, 2013). All of the questions in the survey were five or six point Likert-type to measure the ideal and reality in professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking. Of the eight dependent variables, reality professional development, had a skewness of -1.44 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of 4.08 (SE = .414). Ideal professional development, had a skewness of -2.79 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of 13.23 (SE = .42). Reality mentoring had a skewness of -.53 (SE=.21) and kurtosis of -.234 (SE =.41). Ideal mentoring had a skewness of -1.9 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of 5.36 (SE = .42). Reality aspiration had a skewness of -.531 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of .337 (SE = .41). Ideal aspiration had a

skewness of -1.44 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of 3.6 (SE = 4.2). Reality networking had a skewness of -.2 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of .34 (SE = .41) and ideal networking has skewness of .632 (SE = .21) and kurtosis of 1.12 (SE = .42). However, these are not critical findings as in paired sample t-tests small violations may have little practical effect on the analysis and are reasonably robust (Fields, 2013). There were no significant outliers.

Mean and standard deviations are presented in Table 13 for the real and ideal categories for variables of professional development, mentoring, aspiration, and networking. For professional development, assistant principals reported how they spent their time (reality) mean was 3.96 with a standard deviation of 0.69 and what they believe they should spend their time doing to prepare them for the principalship (ideal) had a mean of 4.50 with a standard deviation of 0.63; for mentoring assistant principals reported a real mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.06 and an ideal mean of 4.41 with a standard deviation of 0.77; aspiration had a real mean of 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.79 and an ideal mean of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.71; finally networking had a real mean of 2.94 with a standard deviation of 0.87 and an ideal mean of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 0.57.

Table 13

Paired Sample t-test for Real/Ideal Professional Development (N = 128), Mentoring (N = 128), Aspiration (N = 128), and Networking (N = 129)

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Paired Sample t- test	df	<i>P</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
PD	Reality	3.99	.69	-7.15	127	< .001***	7.29
	Ideal	4.50	.62				
Mentoring	Reality	3.56	1.08	-7.42	127	< .001***	2.71
	Ideal	4.40	.77				
Aspiration	Reality	3.64	.81	-8.85	127	< .001***	5.82
	Ideal	4.28	.70				
Networking	Real	2.98	.88	-1.98	128	.051	0.55
	Ideal	3.14	.59				

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the ideal professional development with real professional development. Scores were significantly higher for the ideal professional development ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.62$) conditions than for the real professional development ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .69$); $t(127) = -7.16$, $p < .001$. Further, Cohen's effect size value ($d = 7.29$) suggests a large effect size.

For the second set of questions assistant principals compared real and ideal mentoring experiences. Scores were significantly higher for ideal ($M = 4.40$, $SD = .77$) conditions than for

the real ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.08$) and $t(127) = -7.42$, $p < .001$. Further, Cohen's effect size value ($d = 2.71$) suggests a large effect size.

For the third set of questions, assistant principals compared real and ideal aspiration experiences. Scores were significantly higher for ideal ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .70$) conditions than for real ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .81$) conditions, and $t(127) = 8.85$, $p < .001$.

For the fourth set of questions, assistant principals compared real and ideal networking experiences. Scores were similar between ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .88$) and ideal ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .59$) conditions; $t(128) = -1.98$, $p = .051$.

Due to the low reliability for the experience questions, the questions were analyzed by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to compare whether or not assistant principals spend more time managing the school than they do on curriculum and instruction, and whether or not assistant principals are provided the opportunities to lead meetings, complete instructional observations, and balance the budget in order to prepare them for the principalship. The test indicated that assistant principals spend more time managing the school than they do on curriculum and instruction ($z = -1.99$, $p = .046$). It also indicated that assistant principals are not provided the opportunities to lead meetings, complete instructional observations, and balance the budget in order to prepare them for the principalship ($z = -4.92$, $p < .001$). Table 14 shows the experience mean, standard deviation, z-score, and p value for the experience questions.

Table 14

Experience Mean, Standard Deviation, z-Score, and p value (N=128)

		Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Most of my time is spent on management of the school.	Real	3.89	.947	-1.99	.046*
Most of my time is spent on curriculum and instruction	Ideal	3.61	1.172		
My employer provides experiences for becoming a principal such as allowing me to lead meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget.	Real	3.94	1.049	-4.92	< 0.001***
My employer should provide me with experiences for becoming a principal such as allowing me to lead meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget.	Ideal	4.44	.749		

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore to what extent assistant principals believe they are prepared for the principalship as well as to discover how ideal development compares to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study.

Chapter 4 provided the results of the quantitative research questions. Descriptive statistics, one way ANOVA, LSD post hoc, Kruskal-Wallis test, paired sample t-tests, and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests were provided. The results confirmed that there is a significant difference between the real and ideal development opportunities provided to assistant principals in Alabama. The paired sample t-tests results confirmed that professional development opportunities contained the largest difference in real and ideal opportunities. The study also revealed networking contained the smallest difference. Chapter 5 will present a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss findings and conclusions that were drawn based on the analysis of data accumulated throughout this study. The need to examine the perceptions of Alabama assistant principal on what extent assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship and how does ideal development compare to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal Development Framework is reviewed. Interpretations and conclusions are then provided. A summary of the demographics provided by all of the participants in the study is provided along with an analysis of each research question being addressed in the study. Recommendations to improve assistant principal preparation in Alabama schools are provided, and suggestions for future research, based on the findings in this study are also addressed.

Introduction

Sisyphus, a character from Greek mythology, tricked and killed travelers and guests and was given punishment from the gods: he had to spend his eternity rolling a boulder up a mountain. When he got halfway up the mountain, the boulder would roll back down and he would have to begin again (Conway, 2015). For assistant principals who would someday like to fill the principal position, Sisyphus's tale is strong in comparison. Sisyphus, who struggled to conquer the boulder and never got the results he was looking for, is an example of how assistant principals feel in schools today.

If educational reformers were at the bottom of the mountain watching Sisyphus climb, they could advise him on how to get to the top of the mountain. They might say, “Invest in professional development,” “Find a mentor you trust,” “Network whenever possible,” “Participate in experiences you have not had,” and “Determine if the principalship is truly something you aspire to do.” No matter how useful this advice, we have not mentioned the main dilemma – the assistant principal is rolling a boulder up a mountain.

While the nation increases the accountability of the principals in schools as the instructional leader and change agent, there are very few resources to help assistant principals prepare to improve (Ash, et al., 2013; Bottoms, 2007; Gardner, 2007; Mendel et al., 2013; Powell, 2005; Rethinking Principal Evaluation, 2013; Sergiovanni, 2007; Tirozzi, 2001; Yan 2012). If every school spent time training their assistant principals for school leadership, the payback could only be greater as an end result. The payback for training would mean the assistant principals who become principals would be better trained and equipped to deal with the job they are required to perform.

The intensive training that is needed for assistant principals isn't a sign of them being unsuitable for the position; it is sign that their skills are worth developing. The cost of developing future principals for the school far outweighs the costs associated with training them through professional development (Mitgang, 2012). The professional growth of the leaders of our schools and future leaders of our schools is worth the gift of an experienced leader's time through mentoring. Assistant principals should be included in a meaningful way with meaningful experiences in the leadership of the school and not always burdened with the management tasks of the school (Barnett, et al., 2012; Johnson, 2004; Katz, et al., n.d.; NASSP, 2014; The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008; Weller & Weller, 2002). Assistant principals

are most regularly dealing with the daily operation of the school including bus and lunchroom supervision, severe weather and fire drills, student discipline, and attendance issues (Barnett, et al., 2012; Kwan & Walker, 2012; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). One key area of research includes how assistant principals can turn the challenges of the day to day management into professional growth opportunities (Pounder & Crow, 2005). Daily management is beneficial in order to develop specific expertise in one area, but it prevents more broad experiences, especially for those assistant principals who are looking for advancement in their career and have an aspiration to the principalship.

Assistant principals are in need of a more shared leadership structure that compliments monitoring teaching and learning in order to become instructional leaders (Barnett, et al., 2012; Kwan & Walker, 2012; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). In order to continue to grow, assistant principals need to develop leadership skills and knowledge of current methods. Assistant principals have struggled to avoid the pitfall of daily routine and advocate for themselves in growth (Pounder & Crow, 2005; *The Role of the Assistant Principal*, 2008; Thompson, 2010). This study is meant to help clarify how to better prepare assistant principals for the principalship and identify best practices for what experiences are needed to become an effective principal.

Principals have the opportunity to groom aspiring assistant principals for the principalship and that relationship enables them to leave an even bigger mark behind them. The preparation for assistant principals to lead their own schools means giving them opportunities to see how all aspects of the school are run, professional development that can make a difference and a mentoring relationship where feedback makes a difference. Assistant principals can learn how to lead through their principals and although their leadership methods may be quite different, the lessons that are learned as an assistant principal hold true anywhere.

It is assumed within this research that the Assistant Principal Development Framework provided is a starting point for best practices towards improving assistant principals for the principalship. It is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is a culmination of best practices found through the literature review.

Through this study, it is assumed that assistant principals are aspiring for the principalship role. To assure that the survey created for this study would work in answering the research questions, a pilot study was conducted with aspiring assistant principals.

Restatement of Study Procedures

In order to study the perceptions of Alabama assistant principals and to discover to what extent assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship and how ideal development compared to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal Development Framework, it was determined that a survey would be the best method in which to conduct this study. Names and addresses of superintendents and principals serving in county and city school systems were obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education. The superintendents and principals were contacted via electronic mail in order for the researcher to receive permission to send the survey instrument to principals who could then forward the survey to their assistant principals. Several attempts were made in order to obtain permission to conduct the study in the respective school districts via electronic mail. At the time of the study, there were 131 public school districts in Alabama. A listing of each public school district, along with the names of the current superintendent was obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education.

Prior to sending the survey to the participants in the study, the researcher submitted a Research Protocol Review Form to the Office of Human Subjects Research at Auburn

University. After submitting the proposed study to the Institutional Review board, approval was given to utilize human subjects in conducting this study. A survey was sent to every public superintendent (N = 131) and principal (N = 1,474) in the state of Alabama. The names and email addresses of each public school district and all principals were obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education.

Each prospective participant was emailed a letter of consent and the survey. The consent form informed each prospective participant that their information would remain confidential. Prospective participants were given three weeks to complete the survey. Surveys were emailed on April 1, 2015 and the survey ended on April 22, 2015. All data was entered into SPSS where the descriptive data was generated. It was determined that ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was the appropriate statistical technique to use in order to analyze the differences among group means and their associated procedures (Fields, 2013). A paired sample t-test was then used to determine the relationship between real and ideal experiences.

Interpretations and Conclusions

The descriptive statistics produced from the data collected in this study resulted in the following. The units of analysis for the study were assistant principals in Alabama. One hundred forty-one (141) assistant principals participated in the study with 130 responses being completed; this resulted in a 92% completion rate. The majority of participants were white/Caucasian and female; there is no data for the state to indicate whether or not there are more assistant principals in Alabama of a certain race and gender. The age of respondents varied greatly from 28 to 71, which means that there are some assistant principals throughout the state beginning their administrative careers at a very young age with only a few years of experience as teachers as the state requires three years of teaching experience before becoming

an administrator. Assistant principals who participated in the study were from rural schools and city schools.

The highest degree earned varied among the participants who returned the survey. With regard to the highest level of education received, five (4%) had received a doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.), 68 (53%) respondents had received an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree, 47 (36 %) had received a master's degree, and 9 (7%) reported receiving a bachelor's degree. Each participant reported their school size in following manner: The approximate enrollment of the schools surveyed varied greatly from 50 to 2800 students. The building organization of these schools varied also. The largest percentage was 48 (37%) for high school, 22 (17%) for elementary, 14 (11%) for middle school, six (5%) for primary, four (3%) for K-12, three (2%) for intermediate, and two (2%) for ninth grade academy. Thirty (23%) of the respondents had different building organizations than the choices offered in the survey.

Two main research questions were analyzed in this study. This section includes the findings from the data analysis for each question.

Research Question 1: To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship?

Research Question 2: How does their reported ideal development compare to reported actual development across each of the five domains in the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study?

Discussion of Conclusions

The first research question was to what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship? For this question, I looked specifically at how prepared assistant principals believed they were for the principalship and asked them to rank their belief

on a Likert scale. Then I asked specific questions to the assistant principals concerning what development is needed to be prepared for the principalship according to the literature and compared their real and ideal development.

Research Question 1

Statistically significant differences were found between how prepared assistant principals believed they were for the principalship and what the literature indicates is necessary for being prepared for the principalship. This suggests that there is a need to help better prepare assistant principals in Alabama for the principalship.

Based on what the literature reports as the supporting factors important for assistant principals to be prepared for the principalship, it was expected that assistant principals would not feel prepared for the principalship; however, that was not the case. Some studies indicated that assistant principals were not prepared for the principalship because they were not being offered specific experiences as assistant principals that were necessary to become effective principals (Taylor & Martin, 2007). Thus, the outcome that was expected was for assistant principals to not feel prepared for the principalship; however, more assistant principals reported believing they were prepared for the principalship.

It is surprising that participating assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship because the experiences they report receiving do not support their preparation. Assistant principals indicated through the survey that they were not receiving the ideal amount of experiences deemed necessary to become effective principals, i.e., experiences in community relations, budget and finance, and curriculum and instruction. Assistant principals reported spending most of their time in discipline, school management, and buildings and grounds which

the literature indicates is not preparing them to become instructional leaders and change agents for the school.

In an attempt to account for the assistant principals' perceptions of their preparedness, an explanation is offered that might explain the discrepancy. Assistant principals may believe that the experiences and opportunities they are given are what is needed to become effective principals or, as the literature indicates, they may just fulfill the jobs they are assigned because they know that is what is expected and not necessarily what is best for them in advancing their career (Militello, et al., 2015). Assistant principals may also seek the principalship knowing they are not prepared in experience, but prepared to begin a new job. It is plausible that assistant principals' perceptions of being prepared for the principalship are solely based on being prepared for a move in positions. Another reason in these results might be explained by the survey instrument itself. The questions of being prepared for the principalship did not indicate that certain experiences had to be attained in order to be prepared for the principalship. In other words, assistant principals were not told that the questions in the survey were based on what the literature indicates is necessary to become a highly effective instructional leader as a principal.

The second research question was how does their reported ideal development compare to reported actual development across each of the five domains in the Assistant Principal Development Framework created through the literature review in this study? For this question, I asked mirror questions of reported and ideal development based on the five domains in the Assistant Principal Development Framework. I did this so that I could compare what the participating assistant principals actually did and what they believed they should be doing in order to become effective principals.

Research Question 2

Statistically significant relationships were detected among the independent variables (real and ideal opportunities) except for networking. This suggests that there exists a difference in the real and ideal experiences of assistant principals in the areas of the Assistant Principal Development Framework components (professional development, mentoring, experience, and aspiration). In addition, the largest differences of these four domains existed in professional development. Assistant principals reported the largest difference between what their real experiences in professional development were and what their ideal experiences in professional development would be.

While assistant principals' responses varied, the major themes were consistent with research on the elements in the Assistant Principal Development Framework (professional development, mentoring, experience, aspiration, and networking). The assistant principals reported wanting more opportunities for professional development than they are given which supports the literature detailing the need for assistant principals to have specific growth experiences tailored to what they need growth in (Barnett, et al., 2012; Briggs, et al., 2012; Christie, et al., 2009; Gajda, et al., 2008; Garrison, et al., 2007; Hoffman, et al., 2005; Lynch, 2012; Mendels, et al., 2013; Portin, 2009; Pounder, et al., 2005; Thompson, 2010; Yan, 2012; Zepeda, et al., 2014; Zimmerman, 2011).

Assistant principals also reported a difference in real and ideal experiences with mentoring, which supports the literature in detailing the need for principals or school leaders to serve as assistant principals' advisors or offer them mentoring opportunities to aide in their growth (Aarons, 2010; Bossi, 2009; Christie, et al., 2009; Getting Principal Mentoring Right,

2007; Garrison, et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Holloway, 2004; McBride, 2008; Mendels, et al., 2013; Olson, 2007; Pak, 2008; Portin, 2009; Washoe, 2012; Zepeda, et al., 2014).

The survey results supports having measures in place to support assistant principals in the types of experiences needed to become effective principals (Barnett, et al, 2012; Bossi, 2009; Celico, 2007; Garrison, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2004; Katz, et al., n.d.; Kelchtermans, et al., 2011; Kwan & Walker, 2012; NASSP, 2014; Peters, 2010; The Role of the Assistant Principal, 2008; Weller, et al., 2002; Yu-Kwong & Walker, 2010). Assistant principals reported needing experience in all realms of the principalship and not only in management. The majority of assistant principals revealed that they had little experience in budget and finance and community relations. Surprisingly, assistant principals reported spending more time on curriculum and instruction than was expected. The outcome that was expected was for assistant principals to report not receiving enough experience with curriculum and instruction. In an attempt to account for the assistant principals' perceptions of spending more time in curriculum and instruction, an explanation is offered that might explain the discrepancy. Assistant principals may be spending more time in reality helping teachers learn how to teach and what to teach through formal walk-throughs and observations than they feel is necessarily ideal.

Assistant principals did not recognize the need to network with other administrators. In networking, there was no difference indicated between what is ideal and what is actually received. The literature suggests that networking and building strong professional relationships will help in the administrators' success (Grissom & Harrington, 2010). The reason for this could be because the assistant principals have not been in the position long enough to realize the importance of networking. Networking not only provides the opportunity for career advancement it can also provide opportunities for assistant principals to discuss school issues and concerns

with other school leaders to find solutions to problems or provide an opportunity to ask questions externally that you may not be comfortable discussing internally.

Finally, the assistant principals expressed having a need for an aspiration to the principalship which was consistent with the literature (Adams, et al., 2004; Bowles 1990; Cohen, 2008; Davis, 2005; Gajda, et al., 2008; Harris, 2011; Johnson, et al., 2007; Kwan, 2012; Pak, 2008; Rogers, 2005; Rooney 2008; Walker, et al., 2009; Yu-Kwong, et al., 2010). The survey results indicated that assistant principals don't always aspire to the principalship because of their experience as assistant principals and because the pay does not cover the immense job requirements.

Suggestions for Actions

- Professional development for assistant principals should be aligned to what areas the assistant principals needs to improve in order to become effective principals. The school district should spend time determining what areas need grooming and then help grow the assistant principals into the principalship.
- Each assistant principal should be assigned a mentor and have meaningful conversations and time to develop their skills with the mentor. This should be someone who has been successful in the field of administration and is willing to take the time to help teach the mentee.
- Assistant principals should be offered experiences that are required of principals. For example, assistant principals should attend principal meetings, board meetings, and lead discussions at the school level and not always be assigned to the duties of discipline and management.

- In order to create a strong pipeline of administrators, assistant principals need to have a strong foundation in order for them to aspire to the principalship. This requires a salary that is beneficial to their time spent at work as well as support needed to do the job necessary.
- States and districts should provide meaningful networking opportunities for their assistant principals to aide in their growth and ability to develop professional relationships with other administrators.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the researcher's review of literature, assistant principals feel prepared for the principalship, but are not participating in the experiences that the literature indicates would most prepare them to become principals. This is a unique finding in this study. The researcher suggests that further investigation should be conducted to determine why assistant principals report feeling prepared for the principalship, but are not necessarily receiving the training necessary to become effective principals. Research indicates that meaningful experiences being offered to assistant principals to prepare them for the principalship will improve their preparedness (Allen & Weaver, 2014). Principals are key players and have a major role in preparing assistant principals for the principalship (Portin, 2009). Assistant principals are most often associated with being the managers of the school who oversee discipline and keep the building operation under control (Ash, Hodge, & Connell, 2013; Militello, et al., 2015), and need to have more meaningful experiences provided by the principal and school district to enhance his/her performance beyond being a manager. This implies that more experienced and more meaningfully trained assistant principals will be more successful than assistant principals with less experience and training; therefore, supporting the need for further research into the

experiences provided to the assistant principals is a factor in the success of these future principals. Areas of further research are as follows and reasons indicated in the literature are offered below the areas of further research. A study could be conducted to measure types of training offered to assistant principals to prepare them to become principals. A study could be conducted to examine what types of experiences improve effectiveness of Alabama's principals and assistant principals. Finally, a study could be conducted to examine how the areas of professional development, mentoring, experiences, networking, and aspiration are most effective for assistant principals who become or aspire to become principals.

Based on the researcher's review of the literature, the influence of combining professional development, mentoring, experiences, networking, and aspiration are unique findings in this study in that these five components make up the Assistant Principal Development Framework and are consistently found as best practices to create effective future administrators. The researcher suggests that further investigation should be conducted to determine what school districts are offering for effective preparation programs for assistant principals in Alabama in order to grow their own leaders. A qualitative study could be conducted to determine why there was no significant difference between the real and actual time spent on curriculum and instruction. Also, the one component of the framework that was not reliable was experience. So it is recommended that if this study is used for further research a factor analysis for validity be conducted to further analyze the psychometrics of the instrument in order to determine whether the theoretical elements of the framework are an accurate portrayal of the AP's responses. The research from this study indicates that ongoing, meaningful professional development activities are necessary, formal and informal mentoring, experiences as a principal, networking opportunities, and for assistant principals to have an aspiration to the principalship in order for

them to become effective principals. These five components are what made up the Assistant Principal Development Framework for this study.

Research that has been done in other states suggests that the assistant principal position does not provide the training necessary for assistant principals to become principals (Taylor & Martin, 2007). The principal or future principal needs to understand how to focus on teaching and learning, how to plan for the future, respond to the ever changing educational climate, how to lead the symbolic and cultural aspects of the school, and how to promote a positive school culture therefore supporting the need for further research of the Assistant Principal Development Framework. Areas of further research include additional data utilizing qualitative methods could be collected from Alabama's principals and assistant principals to strengthen a study of what opportunities are offered and which are most effective in order to become a principal. Another would be additional quantitative and qualitative data could be collected from assistant principals to determine how many assistant principals continue on to the principalship and what factors most influence their successfulness. Finally, a study could be replicated to measure Alabama's assistant principals in different building organizations and how their preparation compares.

Conclusion

Assistant principal preparation for the principalship is a complex matter in the field of education that lacks research. Schools today are looking for principals who can be team builders, cultivators of leadership, shape the vision of the school, help teachers upgrade their skills, and use data for school improvement (Portin, 2009). Assistant principals may not enter into the principalship prepared and the assistant principalship is a training ground that can be designed to prepare them to become effective instructional leaders and change agents.

Assistant principals who are provided with more purposeful professional development, mentoring, meaningful experiences, networking, and aspiration have a higher degree of competency for the principalship. Many schools and districts may offer parts of the Assistant Principal Development Framework, but the individual components vary depending on the individual needs of school districts and local schools.

It is extremely important for school leaders to develop ways to recruit, support, and retain assistant principals in the field of education in order to prepare them to become effective principals. It is the researcher's desire that this study may open further investigation on the topic of assistant principal development and the researcher hopes that this study will further the body of knowledge in the field of education.

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APPENDIX A

COURSES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY ALABAMA UNIVERSITIES

Alabama A & M University <http://www.aamu.edu/education/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EAS 630 Management of Instructional Programs
EAS 631 School Organization for Personnel Development
EAS 632 Federal, State, and Local Legislation & Policy Development
EAS 633 Management of Educational Support Services
EAS 634 Organizational Leadership for Operations
EAS 635 Mentoring for Educational Leaders

Alabama State University <http://www.alasu.edu/Education/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

ADM 601 Advanced School Personnel
ADM 605 School-Based Administration
ADM 675 Educational Leadership: Superintendent
ADM 680 Advanced School Law
ADM 691 Mentoring in Administration
ADM 697 Field Study I
ADM 698 Field Study II

Doctoral Courses

LPL 700 Leadership Studies
LPL 705 Administrative Theory
LPL 715 Fiscal Leadership
LPL 750 Constitutional Law
LPL 755 Personnel & Liability Issues
LPL 800 Field Applications I
LPL 805 Field Applications II

Auburn University <http://www.education.auburn.edu/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDLD 8220 Personal & Professional Development
EDLD 8230 Systematic Planning & Budgeting
EDLD 8240 Trends & Issues in Educational Administration
EDLD 8250 Organizational Power, Politics & Policy Formation
EDLD 8270 Leadership in Finance & Management
EDLD 8300 Curriculum Theory & Practice
EDLD 8480 Institutional Research & Decision Support
EDLD 8940 Directed Field Experience

Doctoral Courses

EDLD 7210 Multi-professional Leadership
EDLD 7330 Introduction to Curriculum & Instructional Leadership
EDLD 8200 Assessment and Evaluation in Learning Organizations
EDLD 8210 Educational Leadership Theory & Practice
EDLD 8260 Theory & Development of Organizations
EDLD 8310 Leadership in the Development & Application of Curriculum & Theory Design
EDLD 8320 Curriculum Leadership for Organizations
EDLD 8340 Transformational Processes & Organizational Change
EDLD 8400 Ethics for Leaders
EDLD 8950 Seminar

Auburn Montgomery <http://www.aum.edu/indexm.aspx?id=950>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDAL 7000 Organizational Behavior in Schools
EDAL 7100 Educational Finance
EDAL 7200 Educational Facilities Planning & Management
EDAL 7300 Mentoring in Educational Leadership
EDAL 7400 Educational Policy Development
EDAL 7500 Research in Educational Leadership
EDAL 7902 Studies in Educational Leadership
EDAL 7984 Problem Analysis Project
EDAL 8972 Current Issues in Educational Leadership

Jacksonville State University <http://www.jsu.edu/edprof/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EAD 622 Effective School Research
EAD 636 School Plant Planning
EAD 655 Supervision & Staff Development
EAD 637 School Personnel Administration
EAD 648 Curriculum Issues in Administration
EFD 615 Leadership in Education
EFD 632 Assessment
EFD 633 Funding for School Improvement

Samford University <http://www.samford.edu/education.aspx>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDUC 621 Educational Business Management
EDUC 622 Seminar in Instructional Leadership
EDUC 623 Leading Change in Educational Organizations
EDUC 624 Learning Theories
EDUC 625 Legal & Policy Issues in Education
EDUC 626 Social Problems of Children & Youth
EDUC 627 Mentor Training & Professional Development
EDUC 628 Advanced Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

Doctoral Courses

EDLD 731 Educational Policy
EDLD 734 Strategic Planning
EDLD 735 Ethical Issues in Education
EDLD 737 Organizational Dynamics
EDLD 744 The Emerging School Superintendency
EDLD 745 Negotiation

Troy University <http://www.troy.edu/education/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EAL 7710 Administration of Special Education
EAL 7705 School Finance & Taxation
EAL 7710 Supervision in Education
EAL 7714 School Law
EAL 7717 Mentoring Methods and Techniques

EAL 7735 Development & Operation of Education Plant Facilities
EAL 7746 Personnel Relations & Processes in Educational Leadership
EAL 7758 Cultural Diversity
EAL 7790 Trends, Issues & Policy Studies in Educational Leadership
EAL 7791 Organizational and Administrative Behavior
EAL 7794 Thesis: Field Problem Analysis
EAL 7795 Thesis: Problem Analysis Implementation

University of Alabama <http://education.ua.edu/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

AEL 602 Educational Leadership & School Restructuring
AEL 608 Educational Finance: Theory & Practice
AEL 610 Personnel Administration: Theory & Practice
AEL 612 Instructional Supervision & Mentoring
AEL 618 Advanced Educational Law
AEL 620 Curriculum: Theory & Practice
AEL 636 School Business Management
AEL 624 Practicum in Educational Leadership

Doctoral Courses

AEL 611 Superintendency & the Leadership Team
AEL 616 Planning
AEL 645 Interpersonal Communication & Collaboration
AEL 650 Organizational Theory
AEL 671 Instructional Supervision
AEL 675 Advanced Organizational Theory
AEL 682 Leadership Theory & Practice
AEL 683 Political & Economic Issues

University of Alabama at Birmingham <http://www.ed.uab.edu/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDL 701 Organizational Leadership & Decision Making I
EDL 702 Organizational Leadership & Decision Making II
EDL 703 Theories & Practices for Supervision Leadership
EDL 704 Education Law and Policy Development
EDL 705 Management of Educational Programs & Services
EDL 710 Mentoring for School Leaders
EDL 750 Issues & Problems in School Finance
EDL 720 Field Project in Education Leadership

Doctoral Courses

AEL 602 Educational Leadership and School Restructuring
AEL 650 Organizational Theory

University of Montevallo <http://www.montevallo.edu/coe/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDL 605 School Finance & Business Administration
EDL 606 Leadership & Mentor Training
EDL 612 Public Relations & Community Resources
EDL 641 Seminar in Public School Administration
EDL 642 School Facility Planning
EDL 650 Fieldwork in School Administration
EDL 651 Fieldwork in School Administration

University of North Alabama <http://www.una.edu/education/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDL 701 Leadership Development
EDL 703 Law, Policy & Governance
EDL 704 Organizational Behavior
EDL 705 Fiscal & Physical Resource Management
EDL 706 Social/Cultural Environment of Education
EDL 707 Mentoring Strategies for Workplace Learning
EDL 708 Instruction & Learning Environment
EDL 709 Advanced Curriculum Design & Evaluation

University of South Alabama <http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/>

Class AA/Education Specialist Courses

EDL 603 Curriculum Problems & Issues in Educational Administration
EDL 611 Seminar in Educational Human Relations Skills
EDL 621 Seminar in Program & Curriculum Development
EDL 631 Seminar in Educational Management Skills
EDL 695 Mentoring Leadership

APPENDIX B

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Q1 For this section of questions, I would like to know about your real experience as an assistant principal. Please answer the following questions as to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My employer allows me to take time away from my job for professional development. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer provides funding to support my professional development. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive (or have received) informal mentoring. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive (or have received) formal mentoring. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to attend networking meetings such as: principal affiliation conferences, regional or state principal meetings, or industry meetings. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development is readily accessible to me. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of my time is spent on management of the school (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree or disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My employer provides experiences for becoming a principal such as allowing me to lead meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive professional development in student achievement. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive professional development in instructional leadership. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive professional development in organizational leadership. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive professional development in professional and ethical behavior. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have opportunities for advancement in my district which helps me aspire to the principalship. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The financial reward/compensation helps me aspire to the principalship. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The assistant principalship experience helps me aspire to the principalship. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am well prepared for the principalship. (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I aspire to the principalship (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 In REALITY, how much of your time do you spend on the following areas?

	Never (1)	Once Every Few Months (2)	Once Per Month (3)	Twice Per Month (4)	Weekly (5) Daily (6)
Curriculum and Instruction (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budget and Finance (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Relations (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management of the School (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buildings and Grounds (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 In REALITY, have you been offered the opportunity to attend the following networking opportunities?

	Never (1)	Once Per Year (2)	Twice Per Year (3)	2-5 per semester (4)	More than 5 times per semester (5)
Workshops for principals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conferences for professional principal organizations (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal meetings (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Now we would like to ask you similar questions. However, this time we are interested in your perception about IDEAL situations. IDEALLY, to what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
My employer should allow me to take time away from my job for professional development. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer should provide funding to support my professional development. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would benefit from informal mentoring. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would benefit from formal mentoring. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would/do benefit from attending networking meetings such as: principal affiliation conferences, regional or state principal meetings, or industry meetings. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development should be readily accessible to me. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most of my time is spent on curriculum and instruction. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer should provide me with experiences for becoming a principal such as allowing me to lead meetings, completing instructional observations, and balancing the budget. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Assistant principals should receive professional development in student achievement. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistant principals should receive professional development in instructional leadership. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistant principals should receive professional development in organizational leadership. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistant principals should receive professional development in professional and ethical behavior. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for advancement in my district would encourage my aspiration to the principalship. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The financial reward/compensation would encourage my aspiration to the principalship. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The assistant principal experience has proven to me I would want to be a principal. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I should be well-prepared for the principalship (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 IDEALLY, would the following networking opportunities help prepare you for the principalship?

	Never (1)	Once every few months (2)	Once per month (3)	Twice per month (4)	Weekly (5) Daily (6)
Workshops for principals (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conferences for professional principal organizations. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principal meetings (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 IDEALLY, how much of your time should you spend on the following areas in order to prepare you for the principalship?

	Never (1)	Once Per Year (2)	Twice Per Year (3)	2-5 times per semester (4)	More than five times a semester (5)
Curriculum and Instruction (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budget and Finance (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discipline (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Relations (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management of the School (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buildings and Grounds (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 What is your age?

Q8 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

Q9 What is your race?

- Caucasian (1)
- Black (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Asian (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q10 What is your highest degree earned?

- BA or BS (1)
- MA or MS (2)
- Ed.S. (Specialist) (3)
- Ed.D or Ph.D (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q11 How many years have you been a classroom teacher?

Q12 How many years have you been an assistant principal?

Q13 How many years have you been an educator?

Q14 What is the approximate enrollment of your school?

Q15 What is your building organization?

- Primary (k-2) (1)
- Elementary School (K-5) (2)
- Intermediate (4-6) (3)
- Middle School (6-8) (4)
- Ninth grade academy (9) (5)
- High School (9-12) (6)
- K-12 (7)
- Other (8) _____

Q16 How many assistant principals are in your building?

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 or more (3)

Q17 As the assistant principal, what position did you hold prior?

- Assistant Principal (1)
- Counselor (2)
- Central office staff (3)
- Classroom teacher (4)
- Teacher Leader (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q18 As an assistant principal, did you have any leadership positions prior to becoming an Assistant Principal?

- Department Head (1)
- Instructional Coach (2)
- Athletic Director (3)
- Teacher Leader (4)
- Other (5) _____

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS CHART

To what extent do assistant principals report believing they are prepared for the principalship?	Q2:16, Q5:1, Q5: 2, Q5: 3, Q5:4, Q5:6 Q3: 1.0, Q3:2.0, Q3:3.0, Q3:4.0, Q3:5.0, Q3:6.0		Descriptive (percentages) Frequencies
How does ideal development compare to reported development as defined by the Assistant Principal development framework?	Ideal PD Q3: 1, Q3:2, Q3:6, Q3: 9, Q3: 10, Q3:11 Q3:12	Reported PD Q2:1,Q2:2 Q2:,6, Q2:9, Q2:10, Q2: 11, Q2:12	One way ANOVA Paired Sample t-test
	Ideal Mentoring Q3: 3, Q3:4	Reported Mentoring Q2: 3,Q2: 4	Paired Sample t-test
	Ideal Aspiration Q3:13, Q3:14, Q3:15, Q3:16	Reported Aspiration Q2:13,Q2:14,Q2:15, Q2:17	Paired Sample t-test
	Ideal Experience Q3:7, Q3:8	Reported Experience Q2:7, Q2:8	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test
	Ideal Networking Q3:5, Q4:1, Q4:2, Q4:3	Reported Networking Q2:5, Q6:1, Q6:2, Q6:3	Paired Sample t-test

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

INFORMED CONSENT for a Research Study entitled

“The Nourishment of Assistant Principals: Effective Development for our Future School Leaders”

You are being invited to participate in a research study about how assistant principals are prepared for the principalship. This study is being conducted by Amanda Inabinett under the advisement of Lisa Kensler, an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Auburn University. The study is being conducted as part of a dissertation.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an assistant principal in a public K-12 school in Alabama.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will give the researcher more information regarding how assistant principals are prepared for the principalship. The questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits to the administrators in Alabama’s public schools for planning for development opportunities of current and future assistant principals.

This survey is anonymous. You will not be asked to submit any identifying information with your survey responses. Since this is a web-based survey, I will not collect IP addresses in order to help preserve your anonymity; however, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed over the Internet. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed; all of the data will be reported in aggregate.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Amanda Inabinett, 334-321-8572, or amanda.inabinett@opelikaschools.org. You may also contact Lisa Kensler, 334-844-3020, or lisakensler@auburn.edu.

APPENDIX E

NORMALITY TEST BY SURVEY ITEM

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
For this section of questions, I would like to know about your real experience as an assistant principal:							
My employer allows me to take time away from my job for professional development.	135	4.39	.847	-2.19	-.21	6.2	.41
My employer provides funding to support my professional development.	134	4.1	.965	-1.32	.21	1.82	.42
I receive (or have received) formal mentoring.	132	3.17	1.34	-.23	.21	-1.16	-.2
I am able to attend networking meetings such as: principal affiliation conferences, regional or state principal meetings, or industry meetings.	135	3.85	1.08	-.795	.21	-2	.41
Professional development is readily accessible to me.	134	3.99	.934	-1.04	.21	-.20	.41
I receive (or have received) informal mentoring	135	3.94	1.06	-1.3	.21	1.32	.41
I receive professional development in student achievement	135	3.81	.924	-1.23	.21	1.82	.41
I receive professional development in instructional leadership	135	3.92	.906	-1.24	.21	2	.41
I receive professional development in organizational leadership	135	3.8	.94	-.92	.21	.73	.41
I receive professional development in professional and ethical behavior	134	3.81	.88	-1.22	.21	1.97	.42
I have opportunities for advancement in my district which help me aspire to the principalship	134	3.51	1.14	-.62	.21	-.381	.42

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
The financial reward and compensation helps me aspire to the principalship	135	3.24	1.18	-.32	.21	-.65	.41
The assistant principalship helps me aspire to the principalship	134	3.84	.98	-1.05	.21	1.13	.42
I aspire to the principalship	134	4	1.03	-.95	.21	.49	.42
Now we would like to ask you similar questions; however, this time we are interested in your perception.							
My employer should allow me to take time away from my job for professional development.	129	4.42	.71	-1.89	.21	6.89	.42
My employer should provide funding to support my professional development.	128	4.4	.76	-1.79	.21	5.28	.43
I would benefit from informal mentoring.	128	4.5	.76	-2.06	.21	6.2	.43
I would benefit from formal mentoring.	129	4.34	.84	-1.6	.21	3.16	.42
I would/do benefit from attending networking meetings such as: principal affiliation conferences, regional or state principal meetings, or industry meetings	128	4.4	.75	1.48	.21	3.3	.43
Professional development should be readily accessible to me	129	4.5	.71	-2.19	.21	7.74	.42
Assistant principals should receive professional development in student achievement	129	4.5	.69	-2.23	.21	8.73	.42
Assistant principals should receive professional development in instructional leadership	129	4.5	.66	-2.46	.21	10.73	.42
Assistant principals should receive professional development in organizational leadership	129	4.5	.67	2.4	.21	10.01	.42
Assistant principals should receive professional development in professional and ethical behavior.	128	4.5	.7	-2.2	.21	8.33	.43

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Opportunities for advancement in my district would encourage my aspiration to the principalship	129	4.35	.85	-1.6	.21	3.18	.42
The financial reward/compensation would encourage my aspiration to the principalship	129	4.17	.91	-1.17	.21	3.18	.42
The assistant principal experience has proven to me I would want to be a principal.	129	4.21	.85	-1.11	.21	1.22	.42
I should be well prepared for the principalship	129	4.4	.73	-1.32	.21	2.92	.42
Ideally, would the following networking opportunities help prepare you for the principalship?							
Workshops for principals	128	2.7	.83	.64	.21	.01	.43
Conferences for professional principal organizations	128	2.44	.78	1.57	.21	1.73	.43
Principal meetings	127	3.04	1	.783	.22	.4	.43
In reality, have you been offered the opportunity to attend the following networking opportunities							
– Workshops for principals	128	2.74	1.18	-.06	.21	-1.05	.42
– Conferences for professional principal organizations	134	2.7	1.02	.02	.21	-.85	.42
– principal meetings	134	2.7	1.32	.11	.21	-1.27	.42