Developing Effective School Leaders: Perceptions of Participants in a

District-Led Academy for Aspiring Principals

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By

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APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

This capstone project, "Developing Effective School Leaders: Perceptions of Participants in a District-Led Academy for Aspiring Principals", has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Date of Defense

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growing complexity of the school principalship, coupled with high rates of national turnover in the position, has necessitated that school divisions support and develop the professional capacity of their current and aspiring building leaders. Yet as compared to research on professional learning experiences for teachers, the body of research surrounding the establishment of ongoing learning experiences for school *principals* is relatively small. That said, recent positive focus on the role of the "leadership pipeline", as well as research demonstrating correlations between leadership practices and student learning outcomes (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), make the case for improving leadership development opportunities for those transitioning into administrative roles.

The purpose of this study was to conduct a first-run program evaluation of a large school division's *Aspiring Principals Cohort (APC)*. This annual professional development sequence admitted a cohort of elementary, middle, and high school level assistant principals from within the NOVA School District and provided sustained learning experiences geared toward readiness for the principalship. Three research questions guided the study and focused inquiry on different areas of this leadership development experience. These questions were investigated using a mixed methods approach. For the first research question, a pre- and post-*APC* leadership inventory was

utilized to understand, at a macro level, the extent to which participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity changed during the experience. This inventory was aligned to the Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSEL, 2015). Surveys and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for the second research question, which sought to understand participants' perceptions of each individual learning experience in the *APC*. An observation protocol completed by the researcher collected data for the third research question, which sought to study the extent to which *APC* learning experiences were aligned to the PSEL (2015) standards.

The study's conceptual framework supposed that the effectiveness of leadership development programs like the *APC* is contingent on two primary factors; the extent to which the program's learning experiences were 1) aligned to established standards for educational leaders (PSEL, 2015), and 2) developed utilizing best practices for adult learning (Desimone & Garet, 2015). These factors formed the basis of the study's data collection procedures and instrumentation. Data analysis demonstrated that participants found great value in the *APC* and that their perceptions of their leadership capacity increased in all areas during their participation. Data additionally showed that improvement in the *APC* could be possible in several areas.

Based on the study's findings, four recommendations were presented to the school division: 1) Continue to provide staffing, resources, and time to engage aspiring principals in a cohort-based principal development program with participants from elementary, middle, and high levels; 2) Consider providing resources or conversation with *APC* facilitators that develops an understanding of best practices for participant-centered learning, and especially active, authentic, and collaborative experiences; 3)

Consider further collaboration with high school division leadership, or a sitting high school principal, to ensure that learning activities are adequately differentiated for the needs of high school administrators; 4) Consider a more authentic structure for developing participant capacity in the area of school budget and finance.

Study findings also informed three action communication products shared with school division stakeholders. They included: 1) a briefing memo for division leadership that provided a concise summation of the study, including methods, findings, and recommendations; 2) a slideshow intended for face-to-face presentation to *APC* stakeholders who are responsible for the iterative improvement of the experience and who require a more in-depth understanding of findings and recommendations; 3) a professional learning resource intended for distribution to *APC* learning experience facilitators, which is based on the leadership development research of Desimone and Garet (2015).

Keywords: leadership development, principal development, PSEL (2015)

DEDICATION

To my parents, for the unconditional love and unceasing support that have made my journey possible. Though I may never fully understand the breadth of the sacrifices you have made for me, please know how thankful I am to be your son.

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Finally, I extend my sincerest thanks to the faculty and students of the University of Virginia Curry School of Education for facilitating a life-changing program that ultimately inspired my capstone journey and professional interests. In addition to the three individuals on my committee, thank you to Drs. Denny Berry, Dan Duke, Pamela Tucker, Michelle Young, and Sandra Mitchell for your passion, humor, and willingness to give us a voice in our experience. To the eleven other individuals who comprised the self-styled "Best Cohort", I offer my appreciation for accepting me as the "junior member" of the group, and for providing me the privilege of learning something unique from each of you. Thank you Sue, Jennifer, Mark, Craig, Pamela, Christina, Chris, Jaime, Staci, Eileen, and Crystal for supporting not only my thinking, but my frickle habit, as well!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

From Preparation to Readiness: A Problem of Practice

Erica[1], a veteran elementary educator, is the newly appointed principal of a large

elementary school in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Erica served as a

classroom teacher for seven consecutive years before transitioning into the role of

assistant principal, which she held for two years. During these two years, Erica's

responsibilities included supervision of special education, state testing, custodians,

building use, substitutes, field trips, and a small amount of teacher evaluations. She was

respected within the school community as a hard worker and advocate for the needs of

children.

Erica originally planned to spend at least five years in administration before

considering a principal position. However, with a sudden relocation of her school's

principal to a central office position, Erica applied for the principal opening made

available. She was hired from a small pool of candidates and was excited to take on her

new role. Erica was determined to ensure continuity in the transitional period while also

making various small, immediate changes to school processes.

Despite her initial enthusiasm, Erica soon realized that she was unfamiliar with

many of the roles and responsibilities of the principalship. After a few weeks on the job,

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[1] Erica's story represents an aggregate perspective of several individuals transitioning
into the principalship in NOVA School District, rather than the experiences of single
school leader

she developed a list of questions reflecting leadership domains for which she felt she needed additional expertise or answers; these included:

- How do I prioritize my school's budget to ensure that distribution is equitable as well as efficient?

- What are the best ways to articulate a vision for my staff's professional learning and to plan experiences around that vision?

- How do I create a feedback loop that gives staff and community a voice in the school improvement process?

- How do I work with human resource representatives to place a struggling employee on an improvement plan, or recommend an employee for termination?

- How do I approach conferencing with an emotional staff member, parent or community member?

- How do I help to maintain a school-wide focus on equity, and ensure that all students are supported, regardless of the conditions of their background?

- How do I begin to evaluate the many processes of our school, such as technology use, use of instructional time, emergency processes, professional learning communities, etc.? How do I catalyze iterative improvement after these evaluations?

It struck Erica that, despite her completion of rigorous graduate coursework and her experience as an assistant principal, she had limited theoretical or practical knowledge or experience to draw from in facing these domains. Erica knew that each of these areas was important for the success of her school, and that her staff and students

were depending on her to provide a high-quality educational program; however, she wasn't certain where to look for assistance.

Inadequate Ongoing Development

Erica's transition, which is based on the experiences of a transitioning administrator in a local school system, is, unfortunately, not a rarity. Not only is Erica's perceived lack of preparation for the role of principal quite common in this school system, but research indicates that such feelings are common among new administrators (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). At some level, Erica benefitted from her time as an assistant principal prior to assuming her new role. Indeed, the job of vice or assistant principal is often viewed as a developmental position for aspiring administrators (Goodson, 2000). Though, as in Erica's case, the tasks assigned to the assistant principal tend to be more managerial in nature and only loosely related to the leadership responsibilities of the building principal (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001). The lack of clear connections between the responsibilities of the assistant principal and principal appear to undermine rather than support assistant principals' transition into building-level leadership positions (Davis & Darling-Hammond. 2012).

Few school systems offer professional development trainings and workshops for assistant principals who aspire to the principalship. When such opportunities are available, they rarely provide new leaders like Erica with the developmental, targeted support needed while transitioning into the principalship (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009). Nearly all principals have completed a graduate degree in school leadership, which typically includes some form of internship experience, and the majority of principals have been licensed through a state department or board of

education (Anderson & Reynolds, 2016; Young & Perrone, 2016). Unfortunately, not all programs are of similar quality (Young, 2015); however, the readiness of assistant principals can be supported by providing them with intentionally designed, school-based learning experience before individuals take on a leadership role (Odden, 2011).

"Growing" Principal Leadership

To address the gap between leadership preparation and principal readiness, a number of school systems have designed and implemented their own leadership development programs for aspiring school leaders. As a significant percentage of new principals first served as assistant principals, development programs are often focused on assistant principals who aspire to one day lead a school (Weller & Weller, 2002). While these programs vary greatly in scale, location, and design, many are founded upon empirically-sound best practices in adult learning and professional development (Odden, 2011).

In 2016, the NOVA School District, near the nation's capital, welcomed its first cohort of aspiring leaders into a newly-conceptualized *Aspiring Principal Cohort (APC)[2]*. The *APC* is designed to select, train, and mentor an experienced group of assistant principals. Specifically, the program's goal is "to give participants an in-depth look at … the skills necessary to do the job while allowing participants to interact and learn from experienced principals and district leaders" (NOVA School District).

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[2] Pseudonyms are utilized throughout the paper for all identifying information, including school division, division department names, individuals' names, and school names.

Problem of Practice

At this time, the school division views the *APC* as a promising program for developing leadership capacity in aspiring principals, but does not possess qualitative or quantitative measures that demonstrate its effectiveness, or solicit feedback from participants regarding the quality of its learning experiences. This initial program evaluation sheds light on the program's current effectiveness, and provides feedback for improvement useful for future iterations of the academy (Patton, 2011).

Purpose of Study

Ongoing leadership development, often referred to as the "leadership pipeline", remains mostly ineffective in K-12 education organizations, and principals often assume the role without adequate knowledge and experience in a variety of areas necessary for effective school leadership (Joseph, 2010). This study was designed to explore and evaluate one school system's attempt to establish an effective *Aspiring Principal Cohort.* This program was conceived to further prepare assistant principals within the school system to transition to the role of principal. The *APC*'s inception was a response by the school division to the issue of turnover in principal positions, as well as the longtime perception that assistant principals within the system move into the principalship without adequate preparation in a variety of areas (program director, personal communication, February 13, 2017).

Before this study, feedback from participants regarding the quality of their learning experiences was absent except for informal attempts by the program director to solicit post-program feedback and perceptions from "exit ticket" surveys. Patton (2011) notes that "in the simplest terms, evaluation answers three questions: What? So what?

Now what?" (p. 3). Such a leadership program that seeks to build principal capacity was ripe for evaluation, and can have meaningful extensions for similar large suburban school systems around the nation.

Research Questions

The primary goal of this research is to understand participants' perceptions of the quality and value of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort.* These perceptions may inform future iterative change in the program and assist in identifying the strengths and areas for growth of specific program components. This will allow district leadership to move closer to the "ideal" principal development program that addresses recurrent areas of concern and lack of preparation. The following research questions were examined:

- Research Question 1: *How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the Aspiring Principal Cohort?* For the purposes of this research, this question represents a macro-level view of participants' perceptions. It compared qualitative descriptions of leadership practice before the experience with the same descriptions after the completion of the entire academy sequence.

- Research Question 2: *Which experiences in the Aspiring Principal Cohort sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?* This research question represents a micro-level evaluation of each of the academy's individual learning experiences. Designers of the program have aligned these individual components with leadership standards and best practices for leadership development, but are uncertain about which experiences will be valued and perceived as effective by participants.

- Research Question 3: *In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders utilized within the APC?* Designers of the program utilized these new leadership standards to ensure the alignment of learning experiences to the competencies desired in future principals. This research question will provide descriptions that shed light on how each of the leadership standards informs aspects of the *APC* sequence.

Methodology

A mixed-methods study utilizing semi-structured interviews, an observation protocol, and surveys was used to address the research questions. The participants in the interviews and surveys served as the 2017-18 participants in the school system's *Aspiring Principal Cohort*. Primary focus was placed on these individuals' perceptions of the change in their leadership practice over the course of the academy (addressed by semi-structured interviews and surveys) and the value of the learning experiences associated with each academy meeting (survey data).

Mixed methods were used to address Research Question 1. At the beginning of the *APC*, all assistant principal participants were invited to participate in the *Administrator Preparedness Survey*. This inquiry was geared toward establishing a baseline of their perceptions of their leadership capacity, and then understanding how individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity changed over the course of the *APC*. To do so, the same survey was conducted with the same individuals at the conclusion of the experience. This cohort-based longitudinal design provides the benefit of providing data from the same individuals at multiple times (Ravid, 2011). In addition, several individuals were identified for post-program interviews, which served to further clarify

the participants' experiences and garner perceptions of the effectiveness of program components. The survey items and interview questions were aligned to the PSEL standards and the experiences within the *APC* to provide a continual frame through which to examine change in perceived capacity and to align the study to the leadership standards around which the *APC* was designed. The identification of themes and patterns across the surveys and interviews was helpful to demonstrate need for improvement (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Data was also analyzed with respect to participants' school level (elementary, middle, high), which provides some insight into how perceptions of the leadership capacity change by assistant principals at each school level. However, by no means does this represent a sample allowing generalizations to the larger population.

Mixed methods were used to address Research Question 2. These took the form of "exit ticket" surveys (short questionnaires) that participants were invited to complete by email at the conclusion of each academy meeting were used to evaluate individuals' learning experiences in APC. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the questionnaire data (Ravid, 2011) to support the analysis and comparison of sessions, as well as to look for differences in responses between elementary, middle, and high school level administrators.

For Research Question 3, the researcher utilized an observation protocol which allowed for the monitoring of the inclusion of the PSEL (2015) standards within the *APC*'s learning activities, as well as the activity's content and pedagogical features, time allotment, and participants.

Limitations & Delimitations

The researcher acknowledges that several limitations and delimitations are present in the study.

Limitations. This research study is limited in the following ways:

1. Data for this study are primarily self-reported by participants. Due to self-reporting, the study utilizes individuals' perceptions of leadership capacity.

2. Due to the nature of the program and number of assistant principals accepted into the *APC*, the population of the study was relatively small.

3. Participants in the *APC* were drawn from a single school system.

4. The study's findings do not consider change in leadership capacity due to factors outside of the *APC*.

Delimitations. This research study is delimited in the following ways:

1. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) served as a broad definition of leadership skills and competency needed by present-day school leaders.

2. This framework was chosen due to its alignment to the *APC* and its acceptance within the research community.

Conceptual Framework

Educators recognize that effective *teaching* requires a sound understanding of the content to be taught, as well as how to most effectively present the content to one's audience. In a similar fashion, the development of *leaders* requires programmatic design that incorporates critical content as well as the use of best practices for facilitating participants' learning. One conceptual framework (Figure 1 - adapted from Hester, 2016)

through which to study a leadership cohort unites widely adopted national standards for school leadership (in the case of this study, PSEL) with empirically established "design elements" common to effective adult development (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Darling-Hammond, et al, 2010; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Joseph, 2010; Joseph & Roach, 2014). These elements include:

- Learning that is 1) adequately aligned to needed content, 2) authentic to needs of participants, 3) learned actively instead of passively, and 4) featuring collective participation of learners.

- Learning within a collaborative or cohort-based model

- Entrance standards aligned with the expectations of the principalship
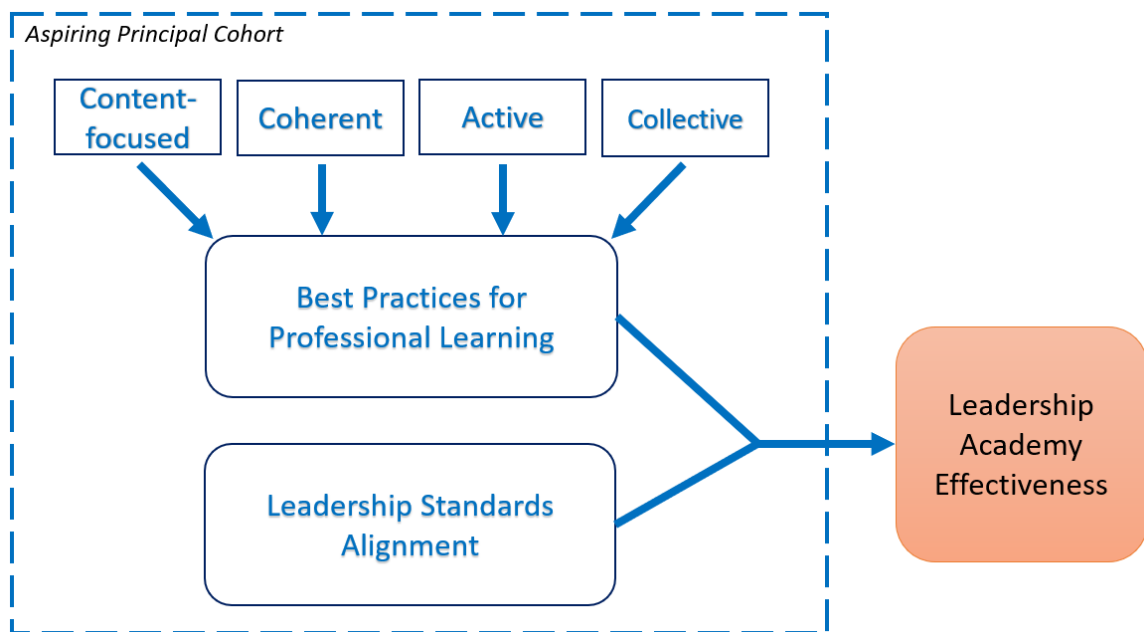
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for this study integrates leadership standards with effective program elements

This study was framed by considering a combination of these standards and practices, and how they result in conditions that either support or impede the effectiveness of the academy in developing leaders.

Research Site

This research was conducted within a large, suburban school system that educates over 75,000 students. Due to its geographic proximity to both urban and rural areas near the eastern seaboard, the county and school system is characterized by a great deal of diversity in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, political perspectives, and land use. As with most school systems in this area, the last decade has been marked by a significant shift in the racial makeup of the county's students. Once primarily white and African-American, the county has seen a rapid growth of students of Asian and Hispanic descent entering its schools. This rapid population growth has accelerated the building of new schools. In turn, this has led to the expedited advancement of administrators in the school system, calling further attention to the issue of leadership preparation.

Summary

This capstone project addressed a problem of practice related to a lack of sustained, formal program evaluation around ongoing, effective professional learning experiences for school leaders transitioning into the principalship. Specifically, it explored how experienced assistant principals in a large school system perceived their learning within a locally developed *Aspiring Principal Cohort.* This inquiry sought to evaluate the *APC* at the macro level (How did participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity change after completing the sequence?) as well as the micro level (Which experiences in the sequence were valuable, and why?). It also sought to

understand the extent to which leadership standards were incorporated into the *APC*'s learning experiences. Data was collected through pre- and post-academy surveys and interviews as well as short surveys after each session of the academy. An observational protocol was utilized to align learning experiences to leadership standards. Data collection and analysis generated recommendations to inform further iterations of program planning. In turn, it is hoped that the study will contribute to more effective principal preparation both locally as well as in similar school systems.

The next chapter reviews relevant literature that informed this study. This includes research pertaining to the role of the principal, the principal's impact on instruction, current approaches to training aspiring principals, districts' recent approaches to "growing" principals, recommended elements of principal development programs, and the empirical assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). This research is then situated within the study's conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of practice in this research study is a school system's lack of data about how aspiring principals perceive its professional learning cohort. This chapter presents relevant and foundational literature that informs the professional development of aspiring principals to provide a frame through which to study this problem of practice. Initial scholarly inquiry proceeded using articles located within academic databases (ERIC, Academic Search Complete, Educational Full Text). The references utilized in these works provided a secondary avenue for locating additional research. This initial surveying of the research sought to clarify the following questions:

- What factors help to explain the growing district-level desire to provide professional learning opportunities for aspiring principals?

- What does the research say about how leadership standards and adult learning inform K-12 leadership development?

- What do we know about the ways in which large school systems have attempted to develop aspiring principals?

- How have leadership development programs for aspiring principals been evaluated?

The resulting research findings were synthesized and structured to lend support to this study's approach to evaluate an aspiring principal development program. The review begins by discussing research that describes factors that have influenced the growing desire to develop aspiring building leaders. Next, the literature review situates ongoing

leadership development for practicing school administrators within a sequence of leadership development often referred to as the "leadership pipeline". From there, the review examines the body of research pertaining to the two primary constructs that inform this study's conceptual framework: the PSEL standards for school leadership, and research-based effective program elements for inclusion in leadership development program. After a brief review of novel approaches taken by large school systems across the nation to further develop aspiring administrators, the review concludes with research on program evaluation of district-based school leadership programs and its applicability to this study.

The Principal's Impact on Student Achievement: Creating the Imperative

A number of studies have established links, both direct and indirect, between school leadership practices and student learning outcomes. It follows logically that the development of leadership expertise as a precursor to expanding student learning is an imperative. This section discusses some of these studies, many of them meta-analyses, which describe the effects of school leadership on student learning.

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) conducted a review of three decades of research and found a substantial relationship between leadership practices and student achievement. The noted average effect size of leadership on student learning of 0.25 suggests that quality leadership can raise student test scores, for example, from the 50th to 60th percentile. Poor leadership can have the opposite effect. A similar meta-analysis in the same year by Witziers, Bosker and Kruger (2003) confirmed these results by finding that principal leadership can directly produce modest changes in student learning outcomes. They did find, however, that principals affect learning more powerfully in an

14

indirect fashion. They note that conceptualizations of leadership have changed, perhaps due to results seen in the study. Previous views of leadership as "direct" (supervising teachers, coordinating curricula, etc.) have given way to perspectives emphasizing principals' more efficacious "indirect" effect on student learning. Waters et al. (2003) describe that they do this by "taking the school context into account. The principal's routine behaviors create links between characteristics of school organization and instructional climate, which in turn affect student achievement" (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 401). These conclusions align closely with an earlier study by Hallinger and Heck (1998), who also found that principals' effects on student learning were statistically significant.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) analyzed research on the effects of educational leadership on student learning and concluded that "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 3). They further note that the primary influences that leaders have on the organization are indirect, such as when they build capacity within collaborative learning teams, which subsequently leads to an enrichment of teacher practice across the school. In their 2010 follow-up study (comprised primarily of case studies and surveys), they further underscored the importance of school leadership in student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Anderson, Michlin, & Mascall, 2010). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that school divisions in which principals perceived a great deal of collective efficacy between one another within the school district generally utilized high-leverage leadership practices. These results are particularly valuable to this study, as they emphasize the effect that principals can have on student

15

learning and thus provide rationale for leadership development programs that strive to improve leadership practice.

Another set of studies compare the differing conceptions of leadership known as instructional leadership and transformative leadership in an effort to understand which might produce a greater effect on student learning. Marks and Printy (2003) defined instructional leadership as relating and referring specifically to the principal's role in the day-to-day managing of processes involving, primarily, teaching and learning, and transformational leadership as leading change processes. The study's results suggest that *integrated leadership,* the uniting of transformational and instructional, may have the most significant effects on learning (Marks and Printy, 2003). A later study by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) alternatively concluded through meta-analysis that the average effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was three to four times that of transformational leadership. Though the research does not necessarily agree on which conception of leadership might be viewed as most efficacious in terms of student learning, these studies do nevertheless continue to demonstrate the importance of effective leadership and also provide rationale for programs that strive to further develop it.

"Growing" Principal Leadership – The Leadership Pipeline

Research on current practices in leadership development in education remains somewhat skeptical that "traditional" administrative preparation and certification programs are enough to completely prepare individuals to assume the role of school principal (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Mendels, 2016). In order to develop more robust processes for providing the knowledge and experiences necessary to navigate the

principalship, many have advocated for a developmental sequence of learning

experiences. This is often referred to as the "professional pipeline" or the "leadership

pipeline". This sequence begins with recruitment and selection for pre-service training

before individuals become school leaders, continues by providing in-service training for

those moving into the principalship, and concludes by providing ongoing learning for

late-career leaders (Hitt, Tucker, & Young, 2012). The *Aspiring Principal Cohort*

evaluated by this study is situated in the middle of this pipeline. It was designed to

facilitate further professional learning for individuals who already serve as assistant

principals, but have not yet assumed the role of principal. Joseph (2010) noted that a

continuum of training opportunities *beyond* initial licensure can provide significant

benefits for all stakeholders and, most importantly, the students who benefit from more

effective school leadership.

Research indicates that leadership development targeted at individuals

transitioning into the role of principal is critical to their growth. Spillane and Lee (2013)

as well as Bloom and Krovetz (2001) pointed to the dissimilar job responsibilities of the

principal and assistant principal, noting that the assistant principalship is not truly an

effective training experience for the principalship. Other researchers pointed to a majority

of traditional, university-based leadership licensure programs as inadequate or unable to

teach the skills and competencies needed for the job in a traditional classroom setting

(Gentilluci, Denti & Guaglianone, 2013; Grogen & Andrews, 2002; Jackson & Kelley,

2002; Lashway, 2003). Browne-Ferrigno (2003) described the transition into the

principalship as a time of self-doubt, noting that the completion of graduate coursework

did little to assuage these feelings. Compounding these issues, Peterson (2002) and

Goldring and Taie (2014) point to principal retirements and attrition as factors that accelerate the need for well-trained individuals who can quickly step into these roles. Research by Winter, Rinehart, and Muñoz (2002) demonstrated that individuals perceive that their job satisfaction will drop if they assume the principalship, which may also exacerbate candidate shortages and the need for more comprehensive training.

When candidates for the principalship *are* exposed to high-quality ongoing learning opportunities that precede their transition to building leader, the results are promising. Orr and Orphanos (2011) found that leaders who participated in such programs were more likely to engage in positive leadership practices, which had a positive effect on school improvement processes and school climate. Similarly, Orphanos and Orr (2014) found that schools that had a leader who participated in an exemplary leadership development program had more satisfied, collaborative teachers. Turnbull, Riley, and MacFarlane (2013) evaluated the ongoing progress of the Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative and found that the support of grants had helped school divisions to implement these types of programs. The following sections will detail which developmental approaches, program elements, and leadership standards assist in ensuring that leadership development programs are of high quality.

Approaches to Leadership Development

Research demonstrates that a variety of approaches are used for leadership development to best fit the perceived needs of learners (Korach & Cosner, 2017). This section communicates three approaches to leadership development documented in the literature.

Professional development approach. Recent research into high-quality professional learning has focused much on professional development and the pedagogy used to transfer new knowledge into practice. Korach and Cosner (2017) note that "Pedagogy that cultivates practices (a) engages participants with application-based activities, (b) creates conditions for making leader practice of application-based work public, and (c) provides candidates feedback on their practice" (p. 271). While specific pedagogical elements of professional development approaches will be addressed later in this paper, it is important to mention now that this approach often dominates discussion of what constitutes ongoing professional learning, to the point that the terms are at times used interchangeably. However, there are more approaches to developing leaders than simply utilizing traditional professional development. Additionally, professional development approaches are not without critique. For example, Grissom and Harrington (2010) discuss several limitations of this approach, including a lack of relevancy to job responsibilities as well as the negative effect of prioritizing professional development over time with school staff. Korach and Cosner (2017) and Grissom and Harrington (2010) concluded that the research body is weak in providing empirical evidence for professional development that is application-based, as well as how to best provide candidates with feedback within the structures of professional learning.

Mentoring and coaching approach. A second developmental approach is for adult learners to have ongoing mentoring and coaching to promote leadership development. Crow (2012) states that mentoring and coaching for leaders serve to support and develop practice, achieve organizational goals, and to improve schools. James-Ward and Potter (2011) expressed that both mentoring and coaching can be

accomplished in a variety of ways based on organizational need, including formal or informal structures. Mentoring and coaching appear to be utilized and encouraged most during the first two to three years of a new principal's tenure (Hitt, Tucker, & Young, 2012), and are useful for providing the types of differentiated supports to principals that otherwise would not be possible within the confines of traditional professional learning approaches offered by school divisions (Korach & Cosner, 2017). In a study of teachers' perceptions of their principals' job performance after mentoring and coaching, Grissom and Harrington (2010) found that principals who engaged in a formal mentoring program were rated more highly than those who participated in more traditional professional development, such as college courses or engaging in principal networks.

Though mentoring and coaching approaches can provide some benefit to adult learners pursuing leadership development, further studies might be focused on the extent to which these approaches have been integrated into existing district-based leadership development programs. Little research currently addresses this.

Ongoing leadership supports approach. Other types of leadership development support for adult learners do not fit neatly into what might be considered "professional development" or "mentoring/coaching". However, these approaches are increasingly documented in academic literature as elements that enhance leadership practice for adult learners. These often come in the form of supports that central office leaders tasked with leadership development provide to school-based leaders, yet fall outside of the scope of traditional mentoring and coaching approaches (Korach & Cosner, 2017). Gill (2013) and Honig (2012) both describe the process by which certain "job-embedded" supports are often offered to principals. Honig, in particular, focused on exchange between the

central office and school leaders, detailing several factors for success that included joint work completed collaboratively between principals and central office, differentiated support based on school leaders' individual needs, and the extent to which central office administrators took a teaching rather than evaluative approach to their interactions with developing adult learners. Further research would be needed to better understand what functions and/or activities are frequently engaged in and best develop leader capacity.

Recommended Elements of Principal Preparation Programs

We know that program elements, structures, and approaches to pedagogy can enhance district-based leadership development programs for adult learners. This section will provide insight into the most common elements examined by the literature.

Cohorts. We know that perhaps the most consistent recommendation across research points to the value of placing adult learners in leadership development programs into cohort-based learning structures with their peers (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). Such structures support and promote learning in a variety of ways and can leverage the experience and expertise of a cohort leader along with powerful interactions with peers who are at similar stages of their leadership development (Hitt et al., 2012). They note that the cohort allows leaders "a safe yet authentic place to practice the skills in organizational and individual development that preparation programs' curriculum should reflect" (p. 6).

Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr (2009) provide several accounts from educational leaders that demonstrate the value of continuing to develop through a cohort. Here, one speaks to the development of perspective:

> I will say that one of the things I really enjoyed … was the cohort that we
> had. In my case, there were twelve of us who went through it together.
> You had different people from all different backgrounds. I think one of the
> biggest things that came out of that is how much you can learn from
> somebody who may be coming from a different point of view … it was a
> lot of those debates that got me to an understanding of how I want a
> school to look (p. 75-76).

Another described the value of creating a collaborative learning culture that will be valuable as school leaders:

> I think one of the real strengths is the cohort model … It's amazing how
> these people function as a team and help one another … And I think that's
> important because if you're going to be an educational leader in this day
> and age, you can't function in isolation. The only way you can operate and
> do a good job is to function as a team" (p. 76).

Finally, another emphasized the value of developing networks of expertise through interactions within the cohort:

> I do call a lot on the cohort friends … We bounce frustrations as well as
> successes and questions off each other. And I'll have colleagues call me
> back [with] a question when they need an answer to something. Hopefully
> we can provide it. When there are new principals, I try to reach out in that
> sense of my responsibility (p. 77).

Clearly the networking and perspective-building aspects of cohorts allow the sharing of best-practices and the building of strong professional networks.

22

The flexibility of cohorts is a further consideration when weighing which practices a school system might employ. Research has demonstrated that they can be utilized for purposes of pre-service training or "Emerging Leadership Academies" (Odden, 2011), for novice administrator induction programs (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013), or for ongoing development of experienced leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2001) caution program planners to consider the "baggage" that adult learners can bring them and how this can affect the cohort experience. Similar cautions regarding group dynamics, roles, and norms were advanced by Scribner and Donaldson (2001). Altogether, the discussion of this element of design is in terms of participants' and faculty preferences for it, with no research located about its impact on leader performance.

Mentoring. Researchers have also begun to examine the role of mentoring in principal preparation programs. Odden (2011) notes that mentoring is "critical for new leaders to manage their new workload, face competing demands, and develop competencies to meet the challenges of the role … These elements can help principals develop leadership competencies, learn about district expectations for school leadership, communicate performance evaluation processes, and initiate goal setting for the school's improvement plan" (p. 142). Darling-Hammond et. al (2009) identified mentoring as one of the primary components found in recent conceptions of leadership development programs and note that mentoring appears in "virtually all the programs" (p. 49-50). Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006) compared three leadership development programs offered through the same university, and found that the support and encouragement of mentoring relationships and subsequent perceptions of personal competence were linked

to a candidate's self-reported readiness for the principalship. Members of the cohort that did not feature formalized mentoring structures even independently sought out their own mentors to supplement their experiences.

One critique of mentors within public school systems is that mentors are insufficiently prepared to assume that role, and that the mentor-mentee relationship becomes "forced" or only pursued due to administrative or programmatic mandate. A study by Crocker and Harris (2002) examined the extent to which mentors in public schools are prepared and effective in their role. Results of the study demonstrated that a great deal of improvement could be made, and that some roadblocks to successful mentorship include 1) lack of familiarity with mentoring roles, 2) time, 3) ability to involve mentee in authentic experiences, and 4) difficulty in providing genuine feedback for mentees (Crocker & Harris, 2002). The study also further recommends that mentors should be provided specific times for mentoring, specific guidelines should facilitate the role, and formal mentoring training that emphasizes the building of relationships should be conducted for all new mentors (Crocker & Harris, 2002; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

A number of the studies also point to positive outcomes for mentors. Bloom and Krovetz (2001), Hobson and Sharp (2005), and Peel (1998) document and describe the positive effect on mentors themselves that can come about from experiences in mentoring. They find that principals who invest time in building the capacity of novice administrators become more effective administrators themselves. In short, the presence of a mentor can provide practicing or prospective administrators a "real-world" colleague who can speak to practical solutions needed in a certain situation or give guidance on a potential course of action. However, more quantitative research that illuminates

24

mentoring's effects on individuals transitioning into the principalship would enhance understanding of its value.

High-quality professional learning. Though not specifically geared toward the development of adult *leaders*, research examining features of effective professional development as a whole is worth examining. To aid organizations that desire to ensure that these learning experiences are effective, Desimone and Garet (2015) provide a research-based framework for improvement that highlights features of professional development that, when utilized in tandem, can lead to effective learning. These include *aligned content, active learning, coherence, sustained duration,* and *collective participation*. The researchers point to a variety of recent studies with various methodologies that support this framework. These include a cross-section study (Garet. Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001), a longitudinal study (Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2013), and a review of literature focusing on quasi-experimental and qualitative studies (Desimone, 2009).

Table 1 provides descriptions of the five features presented by Desimone and Garet (2015), with an additional juxtaposition of these features with what is often common practice in professional development. The alignment of the *APC* to these five features will be discussed later in this paper.

Table 1

Professional Development Features Presented by Desimone and Garet (2015)

Feature	Description	What it is Not
Aligned Content	Activities that are focused on subject matter content (leadership standards) and how students learn that content	Focus on content unrelated to leadership practice
Active Learning	Opportunities to observe, receive feedback, analyze work, or make presentations	Participants passively participating, such as listening to lecture
Coherence	Content, goals, and activities that are consistent with the needs of students and the school, as well as state policy	Learning activities that are not aligned to the needs of the broader school community or school division vision
Sustained Duration	Activities that are ongoing throughout the year and include 20 hours or more of contact time	"One and done" professional development workshops
Collective Participation	Groups of individuals from the same school or division that participate in professional development together as an interactive learning community	Interaction between individuals with dissimilar roles who are unable to contribute to others' learning

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)

Leadership standards are often utilized to inform what learners in leadership preparation programs should know and be able to do. One of the most recognized frameworks for leadership development comes in the form of the Professional Standards

for Educational Leaders (PSEL) (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015), which represents a newer iteration of what were formerly the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). These standards rose to national prominence in the last decade (Hitt et al., 2012). Canole and Young (2013) noted that the goals of standards alignment included increasing expectations for student achievement by laying out a common vision for school leaders. The incorporation of these foundational leadership standards into the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) and principal evaluation systems speaks to their influence (Canole & Young, 2013), and the *APC* utilized the PSEL standards (as well as the ISLLC standards in the last iteration of the *APC*) as the foundation for its planned learning experiences. Each of the standards that comprise the Professional Standards for Education Leaders will be further discussed later in this paper.

Current Approaches to Leadership Development

A traditional state licensure program is the most concentrated program of professional learning for a majority of administrators, and Levine (2005) found that these are likely be of variable quality around the nation. While exemplary university-based programs exist, Levine utilized survey research to detail how a variety of roadblocks exist in many schools of education, including a dated curriculum, low admissions standards, inappropriate degrees, and inadequate clinical experiences. Odden (2011), however, details a variety of approaches being taken by large school systems across the country to break this mold and better prepare aspiring principals. While these systems vary greatly in scale, location, and design, nearly all embody the research-based notions of quality

mentoring, and professional development discussed earlier. A relevant selection of these

novel approaches referenced by Odden (2011) are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Novel Pre-Service Program Elements for Administrators by School System

School System	Approach / Novel Elements
Jefferson County, KY	Multiple leadership pipelines with links to higher education Rigorous selection process for pipeline Internship or fellowship with district principal Networking opportunities with other pipeline members
Long Beach, CA	Prep. programs and district reach out to promising teacher leaders, instead of vice-versa Workshops for identified potential administrators Accelerated licensure programs for members of pipeline
Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans, New York systems	Rigorous, data-driven selection process for licensure programs Intensive summer training with stipend Internship with experienced principal
Pittsburgh, PA	Emerging Leadership Academy – a pipeline to recruit, train, and support prospective administrators. Yearlong, paid internship with experienced principal Action research project and community "civic" mentor
New York, Atlanta, Pittsburgh Public Schools	Developed standards-based in-district pre-service training Highly selective and cohort-based Ongoing support as candidate transitions to leadership

Turnbull, Riley, and MacFarlane (2013) also discuss novel support structures for
novice school leaders. Many of the implemented practices they observed align with the
discussed research, and are captured in Table 3.

Table 3

Current Approaches to Supporting Novice School Leaders

School System	Approach
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	5-year sequence including work with consultant coaches (yr. 1), completion of School Administration Manager process (yr. 2), participation in a variety of institutes (yrs. 3-4) and a capstone project (yr. 5)
Denver Public School	Retired principal mentors for first-year school leaders, executive coaches to develop leadership competencies; monthly PD on content-specific instructional leadership
Gwinnett County Public Schools	Regular interaction between first-year leaders and retired principals; ongoing coaching support for some leaders
Hillsborough County Public Schools	2-year principal induction program featuring weekly coaching (yr. 1) or bi-weekly coaching (yr. 2), summer institutes, and required courses of study. District worked to closely align professional development for assistant principal to principal competency development
New York City DOE	Required coaching for first year administrators, which became optional in year two. This was supplemented by self-selected support networks
Prince George's County Public Schools	First-year principals work with mentor who was trained by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, while second-year were given the option to continue.

Large school systems clearly seem to be embracing administrative mentoring as a structure through which to improve leadership capacity. Absent from this analysis is an examination of whether these schools are also integrating professional learning that would be considered "high quality" when measured against the discussed research, or if these schools utilize cooperative or cohort-based and ongoing learning experiences that allow for reflective practice. These programs lack "outcome studies" that would give us a better sense of the strength of the programs and the change of practice that they elicit in participants. Future research and efforts at program evaluation may shed more light on these.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) studied a variety of programs based in school systems to determine features associated with exemplary leadership development programs. The researched defined "exemplary" as programs that "offer visible evidence that they affect principals' knowledge, skills, and practices, as well as success in their challenging jobs" (p. 24). To accomplish this, the researchers primarily utilized case studies geared at assessing individual programs. These case studies examined program descriptions, syllabi, course materials, assessments, and then interviewed and surveyed students and faculty. Some of the notable features of the programs studied are shown below in Table 4.

Table 4

School-based Programs Studied by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009)

School Program	Notable Elements
Hartford Public Schools: Paving Pathways for Stronger Leadership	In-house state licensure program Ongoing PD aimed at instructional leadership "Principles of Learning" Workshops – ongoing with 8 sessions per year.
San Diego Unified School District	Focus on instructional leadership and planning effective PD for teachers "Web of supports" including mentor, peer coaching Strong university-district partnership
New York City, Region 1	Yearlong new principal support program PD learning series for new assistant principals, aspiring principals, and experienced principals Thematically-focused professional development
Jefferson Co. Public Schools	Comprehensive "classroom to principalship" pipeline Retirees provide mentorship

The researchers identified several similarities in these programs. They include:

- Recruitment of strong candidates to participate in leadership development

- Cohort structures used not for grouping, but to provide opportunities to "teach teamwork and model distributed leadership" (p. 97)

- Mentoring that supports "modeling, questioning, observation of practice, and feedback" (p. 42)

- Strong focus on instructional leadership

Evaluation Studies of Leadership Development

The research evaluating school systems' efforts at developing adult learners is sparse. In recent years, evaluation has become increasingly important not only with deepening desires to understand the outcomes of leadership development programs, but also as a response to policy mandates that require evaluation for accreditation (Orr & Barber, 2009). Weiss (1998) notes that program evaluation "may aim to provide good information to practitioners so that they can re-consider what they are doing and improve their individual practice" (p. 470).

Studies that evaluate school leadership development programs can largely be grouped into two broad categories – implementation studies and outcome studies. In their review of research, Ni, Hollingworth, Rorrer, & Pounder (2017) set out practical definitions for each of these. They assert that the goals of implementation studies are to identify the factors that facilitate and hinder the implementation of the program, to document and describe the effect of specific programmatic features, and to provide recommendations for future iterative improvement. In contrast, they define outcomes studies as focused on whether the program has contributed to the desired expectations of the program, so as to validate existing programs, or serve as an avenue through which to recommend program improvements if the program is found to not be facilitating expected outcomes (Ni et al., 2017). Despite inherent differences in approach, both types of studies have proven valuable, and a closer examination was necessary to aid in determining which would be most appropriate for this program evaluation.

Implementation studies. The majority of the evaluation studies located by Ni et al. (2017) are implementation studies, as large school systems around the country have

begun to implement leadership development programs for current and prospective leaders in their systems. Ni et al. (2017) were able to highlight two primary focuses of these evaluation studies. The first was "specific program features" (p. 290) such as cohort models (Pemberton & Akkary, 2010), seminars (Bowers & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010) and collaborative inquiry (Black, 2011; Schecter, 2008).

A second primary focus concerned specific types of instructional content, knowledge, or dispositions. These studies sought to evaluate, for example, approaches to supporting certain types of students (Young & Brooks, 2008), developing capacity in the area of special education (McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, Terry, & Farmer, 2010), and social justice (Diem & Carpenter, 2013). Across all implementation studies, research tends to be descriptive, using "content analysis of documents or self-reported perceptions from the faculty, current students, and graduates through surveys, interviews, or course evaluations (Ni et al., 2017, p. 291).

Outcome studies. As with implementation studies, outcome studies also provide us with valuable insight into adult learners in leadership development programs. Orr and Barber's (2009) review of literature noted that most outcome studies related to leadership development focused more on the self-reported career outcomes of recent graduates from leadership development programs and less on how leadership development programs changed leader practice. Ni et al.'s (2017) more recent review demonstrates that this trend mostly continues, with only a small increase in the examining of school outcomes. As with implementation studies, these researchers could group the located outcome studies based on type of outcome examined. These include initial learning outcomes,

career outcomes, and leadership practices/school outcomes (Ni et al., 2017). Each of these help us to understand programs' effects on the adult learners within them.

Out of all studies that evaluated leadership development program outcomes, the richest descriptions seem to be provided by studies that focused on measuring *initial learning outcomes*. While many of these studies focus on the evaluation of traditional, university-based initial leadership preparation, several others are more relevant to understanding adult learning within district-led leadership development programs. Greenlee and Karanxha (2010), for example, compared perceptions of students who enrolled in the cohort and non-cohort versions of the same preparation experience. They found that students who learned through the cohort reported significantly higher levels of trust, cohesiveness, and satisfaction than students who did not learn within a cohort format (Ni et al., 2017). Another outcome study by Salazar, Pazey, and Zembik (2013) similarly found the cohort model to be well perceived and influential. A final example of an outcome study located in the research is that of Korach and Agans, (2011) who found that students in a blended online program noted similar perceptions of the quality of the program as those in a classroom-based program. Though such research is limited, these studies do indicate that researchers are interested in examining small-scale outcomes.

Two relevant studies focused on *career outcomes* following participation in district-based leadership development programs. Corcoran, Schwartz, and Weinstein (2012) conducted a program evaluation of the New York City Leadership Academy's *Aspiring Principals Program.* In this study, longitudinal data was used to track career movement of "graduates" of this 14-month program. Results showed that participants in the program were more likely to leave their school than principals who were non-

participants (Corcoran et al., 2012), suggesting that perhaps the program did not promote principal tenure that might allow leaders to stay "long enough to oversee substantive changes in achievement" (Ni et al., 2017, p. 293). In contrast, Gates et al. (2014) found, through an evaluation of the "New Leaders Program", that participants in this program were *more* likely to stay in their schools for three or more years than principals who did not participate.

A final branch of outcome studies focuses on evidence of *leadership practices and school outcomes* resulting from leadership development programs. Unfortunately, nearly all of these studies focus on evaluating the effects of traditional, university-based leadership development programs instead of district-based programs. However, several of these studies provide insight into how participating in a high-quality program can translate into better leadership practices, such as hiring exemplary teachers and developing a positive school climate (Ni et al., 2017; Donmoyer, Yennie-Donmoyer, & Galloway, 2012; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2011). These studies and others would provide a blueprint for examining whether district-led leadership development facilitated similar leadership and school-based outcomes.

The *Aspiring Principal Cohort*

The *Aspiring Principal Cohort* of a large Northern Virginia school system seeks to provide leaders with a district-led leadership development sequence. The stakeholders that collaborated on the structure of this sequence included many elements that this paper has documented as efficacious. This section will identify how the program conforms to a variety of research-based recommendations. It is informed by analyzing program materials and personal communication with the program director.

First, the academy experience is steeped in several of the developmental approaches discussed (Korach & Cosner, 2017). These include:

- The professional development approach. The academy was created as a sustained, monthly meeting day during which aspiring principals participate in a variety of learning experiences related to personnel management, novel approaches to instruction, community relations, and other areas. These experiences are created to be authentic and application-based.

- The mentoring/coaching approach. The program director serves as an informal mentor for the duration of the experience.

- The ongoing leadership supports approach. During the course of the program, participants come into contact with a variety of central office administrators and form connections that will be beneficial as forms of support.
Second, the academy makes use of many of the research-based effective program elements discussed, which include:

- A cohort approach (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) that allows for ongoing, sustained collaboration with peers in similar positions as assistant principals.

- Activities that align to *structural* recommendations (Birman et al., 2000) of form ("reform PD", job-embedded), duration (sustained, yearlong) and participation (active, team-based, collaborative).

- Activities that align to *core* recommendations (Birman et al., 2000) of content (directly related to daily practice), active learning (application-based with feedback), and coherence (aligned to school system's vision for leadership).

- Alignment to professional educational leadership standards for leadership development (Hitt et al., 2012).

The *Aspiring Principal Cohort* clearly incorporates a variety of developmental approaches, effective program elements, and per the program director has been "well received" by its first cohorts of learners. However, a lack of understanding of the program's effect on the school system's aspiring leaders looms large. As a first-run evaluation of the program has yet to be completed, it is difficult for stakeholders to truly justify the program's ability to better prepare assistant principals to face the challenges of the principalship.

Summary

This review of literature has demonstrated the importance of leadership in fulfilling the learning missions of our schools, provided descriptions of the program elements and leadership standards that facilitate successful development programs for aspiring principals, briefed the reader on current novel approaches being taken by large school systems, described the NOVA School District's *Aspiring Principal Cohort*, and identified two potential approaches to program evaluation. This evaluation will provide recommendations for ongoing programmatic improvement. The following section of this capstone will explore the conceptual framework that supports this study, as well as the methodology that will be utilized to provide insight into the study's research questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In order to tailor feedback that will inform the iterative improvement of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*, it was necessary to develop an understanding of the participants' perceptions of the program and how it affected their perceived leadership capacity. This section will outline the methodology developed to do so. It will begin by briefly reviewing the study's conceptual framework, and will subsequently discuss the utilized methods for data collection and analysis.

Conceptual Framework

The preceding review of literature discussed two primary constructs that play significant roles in contributing to the effectiveness of learning experiences for adult learners and leaders. These include the program's alignment to leadership standards, as well as the use of effective program elements for professional learning. Their inclusion in this study's conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

Effective program elements. The review of literature unearthed several program elements that have been shown to contribute positively to adult learning and the success of leadership development programs. Several were selected as high-leverage indicators and were examined throughout the study:

- The extent to which **cohort structures** and **learning from peers** are integrated into the academy and valued by participants (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009; Odden, 2011; Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013).

- The extent to which formal and/or informal **mentoring** opportunities are integrated into the academy and valuable to participants (Bloom and Krovetz, 2001; Crocker and Harris, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

- The extent to which academy meetings integrate activities that involve **content aligned to daily practice**, **active engagement of participants,** and **form/duration** appropriate for the learning of adult leaders (Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet, 2000; Perez, Uline, Johnson, James-Ward, & Basom, 2011).

Leadership standards alignment. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015) were utilized by program developers as the basis for the learning experiences within the *APC*. The PSEL (2015) standards include ten domains with associated functions, which include:

Standard 1 of PSEL (2015) – "Mission, Vision, and Core Values" notes that "Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student" (p. 27). This standard stresses the development of an educational mission, promoting a school vision for student success, the articulation of core values, and the imperative for a child-centered education (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 2 of PSEL (2015) – "Ethics and Professional Norms" notes that "Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 27). This standard stresses the promotion of norms of integrity, fairness, and transparency, the importance of interpersonal communication, and the providing of moral direction in the school (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 3 of PSEL (2015) – "Equity and Cultural Responsiveness" notes that "Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 27). This standard stresses fair treatment of students, the recognition of strengths in all employees, the confrontation of institutional bias, and a commitment to equity and cultural responsiveness (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 4 of PSEL (2015) – "Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment" notes that "Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 27). This standard stresses coherent and aligned systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the importance of authentic student experiences, the effective use of technology, and the embodiment of high expectations for all students (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 5 of PSEL (2015) – "Community of Care and Support for Students" notes that "Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student" (p. 27). This standard stresses the maintenance of a safe, caring, and healthy school environment, a leader's promotion of adult learning, and the cultivation of active student engagement in the school learning community (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 6 of PSEL (2015) – "Professional Capacity of School Personnel" notes that "Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p. 27). This standard stresses the recruitment of an effective staff, the development of

instructional capacity in staff, the delivering of actionable feedback, and the empowerment of the professional learning community to the highest levels of professional practice (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 7 of PSEL (2015) – "Professional Community for Teachers and Staff" notes that "Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p.27). This standard stresses the development of open, caring, productive working relationships, the implementation of embedded professional learning experiences, and the promotion of mutual accountability for student success (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 8 of PSEL (2015) – "Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community" notes that "Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p.27). This standard stresses the sustaining of a positive, collaborative, and productive family relationships, productive partnerships with public and private entities to enhance the school mission, and the maintenance of a presence within the community (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 9 of PSEL (2015) – "Operations and Management" notes that "Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (p.27) and focuses on the management of school operations. This includes, but is not limited to, managing the budget and fiscal resources, protecting staff from interruption of work, equitably and fairly managing conflict, and managing government processes related to the school's mission (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 10 of PSEL (2015) – "School Improvement" notes that "Effective

educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's

academic success and well-being" (p.27). Contained within this standard are such

competencies as the ability to engage others in evidence-based inquiry, strategic goal

setting, planning, as well as developing effective feedback and data collection processes

(NPBEA, 2015).

The study's conceptual framework uniting effective program elements with

leadership standards serves as one lens through which to study the effectiveness of this

leadership development program. It supposes that programmatic effectiveness stems from

activities that incorporate effective professional learning practices with research-based

standards for leadership development. A full listing of all threads related to each PSEL

standard can be found in Appendix G.

Background on Site and Participants

The *APC* is administered by the school system's Department of Personnel and

overseen by the current Supervisor of Principal Development. It was conceived in 2016.

Purpose. At the core of this program's design is the desire to adequately prepare

assistant principals who aspire to the principalship. As noted by recent program

documentation (2016):

> The role of the principal is a key factor in student success and [the school
>
> system] is making it a priority to have a deep and dynamic pool of
>
> principal candidates. By selecting, training, and mentoring a cohort of
>
> current assistant principals, we will encourage this group to reach their
>
> potential and gain the confidence to aspire to a principal position in the

future. Our goal is to give participants an in-depth look at the human

resources and skills necessary to do the job while allowing participants to

interact and learn from experienced principals and district leaders. (NOVA

School District, 2016, p. 1).

Personal communication with the program director (2017) unearthed that the

growing complexity of the principalship, as well as increasing principal attrition, also

contributed to the decision to develop this type of leadership development program.

Admission. Admission into the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* is competitive, and

requires applicants meeting the qualifying criteria as well as the submission of a paper-

based application. In order to qualify for admission, a candidate must meet entrance

criteria. First, they must be a current assistant principal within the school system with at

least two years of experience in this position. The two years need not have been

completed within the school system. They must also have the support of their current

supervisor, and agree to complete all aspects of the program, which includes attending all

program meeting dates, completing required readings, shadowing principals, and the

completion of a final project.

The paper-based application for admission asks applicants a series of questions

and scenarios centered around administrative practice, and requires the attachment of a

current resume and two letters of recommendation. Applications are scored according to

a rubric by a cross-departmental selection committee, and efforts are made to ensure a

similar number of accepted individuals from the elementary and secondary levels

(NOVA School District, 2016).

Structure and activities. The structures and activities that allow for participants'

learning in the academy were varied. Program documentation (2016) states that:

> Our Aspiring Principals will be active learners in a face to face program
>
> that will meet for six full days during the academic year with one
>
> additional day to shadow an experienced principal at a different location.
>
> Cohort members will participate in readings, simulations, reflections,
>
> lectures, school visits and activities designed to increase their school
>
> leadership capacity. Additionally, cohort members will be expected to
>
> complete a job embedded leadership project during the spring of the
>
> cohort year and present project findings to district leaders. Leadership
>
> coaching feedback will also be provided upon request with a real-time
>
> observation of the cohort member engaged in a leadership activity (NOVA
>
> School District, 2016, p. 1).

Learning experiences included sessions on building trust and capacity, equity, school

innovation, navigating the change process, inclusive practices, communication strategies,

teacher feedback, candidate selection, interview strategies, legal guidelines, financial

guidelines, family engagement and data analysis. Two of the full day sessions featured

the Fierce Conversations workshop model which included information on coaching,

delegation and conflict conversations (NOVA School District, 2017, p. 1).

Examination of meeting agendas (NOVA School District, 2017) from the 2017-18

Aspiring Principal Cohort points to the following as the *primary* learning topics and

activities provided during each meeting of the academy:

Session 1:

- Program Overview
- Core Values, Reflective Leadership and Emotional Intelligence
- Family Engagement w/ Principal Share
- Establishing Equitable Practices

Session 2:

- PSEL Standards Review
- Resume Design and Mock Interview Workshop
- School Support Department Presentation
- Recognizing Red Flags in the Hiring Process
- Legal Issues Awareness
- New Principal Panel Discussion and Q&A

Session 3:

- Visits to two schools to view STEM and Personalized Learning approaches
- What Does the "Whole Child Approach" Look Like? Presentation
- Digital Innovation Presentation
- Public Information/Communication Presentation

Session 4:

- "Fierce Conversations" Workshop: Day 1
- Program Updates / Book Study and Discussion

Session 5:

- "Fierce Conversations" Workshop: Day 2
- Program Updates

Session 6:

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment Presentation
- Budget and Finance Workshop
- Security Infrastructure Update
- Leadership Project Presentation with Superintendent

Final "leadership project". Each program participant was required to select a high-leverage issue or problem within their school and complete a yearlong "Leadership Project" to address the issue. Ongoing support was provided to participants through structured feedback time during the academy sessions. Projects were presented to senior school division leadership at the final program session. Leadership projects completed during the 2017-18 *APC* included:

- "Working with staff within year 1 of computer science immersion pilot: Creating opportunities to connect coding into the curriculum standards"
- "PBL Reboot: Use of a PBL self-assessment tool to unpack data and create learning cohorts to provide differentiated, targeted staff development in the area of PBL"
- "Fostering opportunities for teacher collaboration to improve the use of technology and differentiation strategies in the classroom"
- "Creation of a school-wide advisory program to support student mental health needs"

Research Design and Questions

As of the beginning of the 2017-18 *APC* and according to program administrators, program administrators did not have a sound understanding of its effects on participants, or participants' perceptions of its learning experiences. This seemed to be an ideal time to conduct an evaluative implementation study to generate recommendations for iterative improvement on later iterations of the program.

Research questions. The primary goal of this research was to develop an informed understanding of participants' perceptions of the quality and value of the

Aspiring Principal Cohort. These perceptions may inform future iterative change in the program and assist in identifying specific program strengths and areas for growth. This will allow district leadership to move closer to the "ideal" principal development program that addresses recurrent areas of concern and lack of preparation.

The first research question, *How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the APC?* pursued a macro-level view of participants' perceptions. It compared quantitative representations of leadership practice before the academy with the same measures after the completion of the entire academy sequence.

The second research question, *Which experiences in the APC sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?* investigated a micro-level evaluation of each of the academy's individual learning experiences. Designers of the program have aligned these individual components with leadership standards and best practices for leadership development, but were uncertain of which experiences would be valued and perceived as effective by participants.

The third research question, *In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders utilized within the APC?* examines how designers of the program utilized leadership standards to ensure the alignment of learning experiences to the competencies desired in future principals. This research question provides qualitative descriptions that shed light on how each of the leadership standards informs aspects of the *APC* sequence.

Data collection and instruments. The methods for data collection in this study included the use of survey instruments, semi-structured interviews, and an observation

protocol. As depicted in Figure 2, the pre- and post-*APC Administrator Preparedness Survey* informed understanding around Research Question 1, while data collection for Research Question 2 was derived from a second survey instrument administered throughout the academy sequence. An observation protocol captured data for Research Question 3.
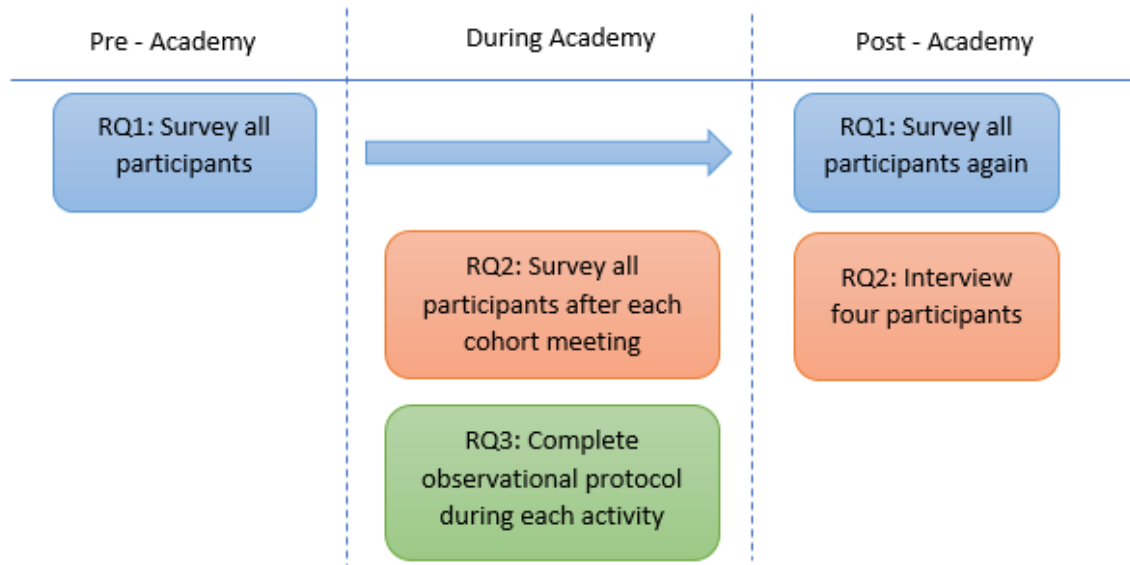
Figure 2. Data collection sequence of this research study demonstrating timing of research methods throughout the academy sequence.

Pre-post Academy. A survey was used to investigate Research Question 1 and study pre-post changes in participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity as a result of participation in the *APC*. After participants' admission into the program, participants were asked to complete the *Administrator Preparedness Survey* (adapted from Gagliardi, 2011). This survey was split into two sections; the first collected demographic information. This included gender, age, number of years in administration, and in which school level the participant works. The second section consisted of a 47-question survey instrument organized into ten sections that corresponded to the PSEL (2015) standards.

Participants rated their perceptions of their preparation for the principalship in each area using a 5-point Likert Scale. For each item in this section, the scale ranged from "not prepared" to "very prepared". For example, one question asked participants to rate their preparation in the area of incorporating diverse perspectives about vision, mission, and goals that are high and achievable for every student. At the conclusion of the *APC*, participants again completed the *School Administrator Preparedness Survey*. For a complete list of these questions, see Appendix A.

After completion of the academy, the researcher selected four assistant principals in the *APC* to complete semi-structured interviews for Research Question 2. A primary selection criterion was school level, so as to identify two individuals each at the elementary and secondary level. Additional criteria were gender and number of years of service in education, so as to gain diversity of participants. Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C for protocol) were utilized to probe more deeply into participants' perceptions of major components of the *APC*'s experiences. Two interviews were held with elementary assistant principals, and an additional two interviews were held with secondary assistant principals. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix C. To facilitate a discussion regarding perceptions of *APC* activities, the researcher developed nine encompassing types of activities or themes that were embedded in the *APC*. These included:

- Readings / Book Discussions
- Principal Shadow Days
- Principal Shares / Site Visits
- Department Presentations

- "Fire Conversations" Workshop

- Mock Interview / Resume Workshop

- Leadership Project

- Interactions with *APC* Peers

- Interactions with Program Director

During the interviews, participants were asked to place nine cards that represented these constructs onto a 1-10 spectrum, with one (the left end of the spectrum) representing an activity that had little value to the participant, and ten (the right end of the spectrum) an activity with significant value. After placing each card, participants were asked to explain why they assigned the value rating that they choose. The interviewer then asked additional probing questions for clarification or additional perspective. Participants could change the rating of each score as they advanced sequentially through the interview before settling on a final rating for each. Though only a small sample of the *APC* participated in interviews, this placement of activities on a spectrum allowed for additional quantitative data to be explored through significant discussion.

During. A survey was used to address Research Question 2 regarding participants' individual learning experiences during the *APC*. A survey instrument (see Appendix B) functioned as an "exit ticket" that was be completed by participants at the conclusion of each academy meeting. Within these surveys, which were developed by the researcher, the participating assistant principals rated on a scale of 1-5 the extent to which each major learning experience aligned to four research-based tenets of leadership development and adult learning discussed in Chapter 2 and integral to the study's conceptual framework. These included:

1) *Content Focus* – the extent to which the activity focused on leadership standards and the competencies necessary for the role of principal.

2) *Coherence* – the extent to which the activities are aligned with the participants' daily job responsibilities and the vision of the school system.

3) *Active Learning* - the extent to which applicants were *actively* involved in their learning (discussing, synthesizing, presenting, etc.).

4) *Collective Participation* – the extent to which applicants had the opportunity to engage and learn from their professional learning community of fellow participants during the activity.

To address Research Question 3, the researcher completed an observation protocol that recorded the pedagogical elements of each learning experience, and determined which leadership standard(s) was targeted by each activity (see Appendix H). This, combined with the program director's articulated alignment of learning experiences to standards (as provided in *APC* meeting agendas) formed the basis for standards alignment data.

Data Analysis

A variety of data analysis methods were utilized for each of the research questions.

Quantitative Data. By matching participants' responses via employee number, their survey data from the *Administrator Preparedness Survey* were analyzed using mean data, to look for change in perceived preparedness. This was accomplished across each of the ten PSEL (2015) standard areas and three school levels, allowing for a more rigorous analysis of growth.

51

The "exit ticket" surveys completed by participants at the conclusion of each academy meeting were analyzed using means and standard deviation. This allowed for a better understanding of which activities were valued among participants, as well as the extent to which each activity was aligned to research-based best practices for leadership development. Trends across the *APC* became evident and will be discussed.

Qualitative data. At the end of the *APC* experience, the researcher grouped learning experiences. Interviewees were asked to rate the value of each group of activities and to describe why they had assigned a certain value. Though this approach did provide a quantitative rating element, the purpose of the interviews was to garner more significant feedback about the nuances of what made a learning experience valuable or not. With the participants' permission, the interview data were recorded and transcribed. This supported an analysis of participant perceptions of each of the groups of activities identified.

Time frame. The timeframe for data collection was November 2017 – May 2018. Initial surveys were conducted after participants were selected for admission into the academy in November, 2017. Additional survey data were collected after each monthly meeting day of the *APC* through May, 2018, at which point the post-academy surveys and interviews were completed. Data analysis was completed in the months of June and July, 2018, with recommendations for programmatic improvement presented shortly thereafter.

November 2017:   Initial pre-academy surveys distributed; survey distributed
                   after academy meeting

January 2018:   Survey distributed after academy meeting

February 2018:   Survey distributed after academy meeting

March 2018:   Survey distributed after academy meeting

April 2018:   Survey distributed after academy meeting

May 2018:   Survey distributed after academy meeting; post-academy

surveys and interviews

June -July 2018:   Data analysis

October 2018:   Presentation of recommendations

Reporting. Results of this study are intended for use in informing iterative improvement efforts. To this end, the Department of Personnel of the NOVA School District will be provided a written report summarizing data pertinent to the study's research questions. This will include recommendations that may be useful for programmatic improvement. Findings will be personally presented to the Supervisor of Principal Development, who serves as the coordinator for the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*. It is hoped that this will catalyze further conversation about the school system's program offerings in the area of leadership development, and how these might be improved. Finally, this study will contribute to the growing research body focusing on the development of school leaders, and, in particular, aspiring principals.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Purpose

The development of school leaders who are adequately prepared for the rigors of the principalship is a persistent issue of paramount importance for school systems, especially as the landscape of education continues to change. Accordingly, some school divisions have implemented professional learning opportunities that seek to develop and refine leadership competencies in aspiring principals. This study completed an initial evaluation of one such program by examining the learning and perceptions of participants in the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*, and collected data to make recommendations for iterative improvement of the program. Three primary research questions guided the study:

- Research Question 1: *How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the APC?* This question represents a macro-level view of participants' perceptions. The quantitative data analysis from the pre-post *Administrator Preparedness Survey* compared perceptions of leadership capacity before the experience with the same perceptions after the completion of the entire academy sequence.

- Research Question 2: *Which experiences in the APC sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?* This research question represents a more micro-level evaluation of each of the academy's individual learning experiences. The data analysis to address it reviewed exit slip answers to support how designers of the

program can focus on experiences that are valued and perceived as effective by participants.

- Research Question 3: *In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders utilized within the APC?* This research question focuses on the design of the program and its alignment to leadership standards to ensure learning experiences promote the competencies desired in future principals. The data analysis of filed notes from observations of the institute sessions provide qualitative descriptions that shed light on how each of the leadership standards informs aspects of the *APC* sequence.

While the response rates on the exit slips varied due to absenteeism among participants, overall the survey response rates remained high across the study.

Results

Demographics. The 2017-2018 iteration of the *APC* admitted eleven assistant principals. This was a departure from the larger selection of the previous year, and was an attempt by the program director to provide a more personalized, intimate, and tailored experience for participants (personal communication, November 2017). The eleven assistant principals were distributed relatively evenly across the three school levels. Four assistant principals were selected from elementary school and high school applicants, with an additional three assistant principals being drawn from those serving in middle schools. Demographic information is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Participant Demographics

Characteristic		*n*	%
School Level			
	Elementary	4	36.4%
	Middle	3	27.3%
	High	4	36.4%
Gender	Female	8	72.7%
	Male	3	27.3%

Note: n = 11

Research question 1. How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*?

The following ten tables aggregate data from the *Administrator Preparedness Survey* by each of the PSEL standards. The values shown first show the participants' *final* perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- *APC* administration of the survey to the post-*APC* administration. Nine of eleven participants completed either the pre- or post-*APC* survey, and seven of eleven participants (64%) completed both. This included two elementary assistant principals, three middle level assistant principals, and two high school level assistant principals. For data reporting purposes, the data for the two participants who did not complete both administrations were not utilized. Analysis of Research Question 3 will extend understanding of learning around each standard by documenting the extent to which each standard was utilized through *APC* experiences.

Standard 1 data are presented in Table 6 (see Appendix J), and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Mission and Vision".

Survey results for Standard 1 indicate perceived growth in capacity in all strands with an overall growth average of .57. As of the end of the *APC* experience, participants' overall perceptions of their leadership abilities in this area were 4.74, which suggest a high level of confidence in this standard, though this value is the lowest of the ten standards. In particular, the assistant principals in the *APC* showed high growth in the areas of core values and developing a school vision.

Standard 2 data are presented in Table 7 (see Appendix J) and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Ethics and Norms". Participants' perceptions in this area are similarly high. Data suggest that the assistant principals in the *APC* felt completely confident in their abilities in this area, with a post-institute average value of 4.98. This represents an average growth of .32 across the standard over the course of the *APC* experience. Though a relatively small value as compared to other standards assessed, this is much in part to the high level of confidence that participants expressed in this area before the *APC* even began. In particular, elementary and high school participants rated their confidence in several areas at 5.0 on the pre- *APC* administration of the survey, which left no potential for showing growth due to the *APC* experiences.

Standard 3 data are presented in Table 8 (see Appendix J) and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Equity and Cultural Responsiveness". Data for Standard 3 demonstrate an average increase in participants' perceptions in the area of .74, which represents the second highest growth in a standard measured in this survey. Average growth of greater than .50 was indicated in each of the

strands, with particularly high increases in perceptions of confidence from elementary

participants. Participants also finished the *APC* experience with high levels of confidence

in this area, with an average final value of 4.88.

Standard 4 data are presented in Table 9 (see Appendix J) and encompass

participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Curriculum,

Instruction, and Assessment". Survey data also supports growth in perceptions of

leadership capacity in this area. In particular, high levels of growth are demonstrated in

the areas of effective technology use for teaching and learning, the use of valid

assessments, and monitoring student progress through appropriate use of assessment data.

This was especially true for elementary and secondary participants. The overall

perception of capacity value (4.78) and change in perception value (.63) suggest that the

APC experience was effective for Standard 4.

Standard 5 data are presented in Table 10 (see Appendix J), and encompass

participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Community of Care

and Support". Data for this standard demonstrate a high level of perceived leadership

capacity in care and support for students with an average value of 4.88. A moderate

average growth value of .43 is indicative of an increase in perceived capacity after the

APC experience, and this may be an underestimate of the change in perceptions as many

of the values provided by participants are capped at 5.0 due to the scale used.

Standard 6 data are presented in Table 11 (see Appendix J) and encompass

participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Professional Capacity

of School Personnel". Data for Standard 6 demonstrate significant levels of confidence in

this area (4.86), as well as a high level of growth in confidence across the *APC*

experience (.63). Elementary and high school participants expressed more confidence in their capacity in this area than middle school participants.

Standard 7 data are presented in Table 12 (see Appendix J) and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Professional Community for Teachers and Staff". Data suggest high levels of positive growth in perception (.57) and average perceptions of confidence (4.88) in this area. Significant positive changes are especially apparent in the final two strands, which include establishing positive relationships that promote professional capacity, as well as encouraging faculty-initiated improvement practices.

Standard 8 data are presented in Table 13 (see Appendix J), and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community". Though overall perceptions of capacity in the area of family and community engagement are high (4.80), data show a low level of growth in participants' perceptions of their capacity in two strands. Elementary and middle school participants indicated that they had the same or less confidence after the *APC*, respectively, in the area of approachability to the community. The same participants also indicated no growth in confidence in the area of maintaining regular two-way communication with families. Moderate positive changes in perception are shown in the other two strands within this standard.

Standard 9 data are presented in Table 14 (see Appendix J) and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "Operations and Management". Data for this standard continued the trend of demonstrating moderate positive growth in participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity (.50) and overall

perceptions of capacity in this area (4.77). A relatively low value assigned to the responsible, ethical, and accountable stewardship of monetary and nonmonetary resources may indicate a need for more effective approaches to addressing this area. In particular, high school principals did not indicate growth in this area as a result of their participation in the program.

Standard 10 data are presented in Table 15 (see Appendix J) and encompass participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity in the area of "School Improvement". Standard 10 data show the highest average growth value (.80) of any of the ten standards measured. Positive changes in perceptions of capacity are particularly notable in the areas of using methods of continuous improvement as well as engaging others in an ongoing process of goal setting, planning, and evaluating school improvement. An overall perception of confidence value of 4.86 indicates that participants feel well-prepared in this area.

Summary. Data from Research Question 1, which represent participants' perceptions of their leadership in each of the ten PSEL (2015) areas, demonstrate that participants emerged from the *APC* feeling confident about their leadership capacity. Data also show a growth in leadership confidence from the pre-*APC* administration of the survey instrument to the post-administration, which may indicate that the *APC* played a role in catalyzing this increase in perceived ability. This finding is synthesized along with others and discussed in the following chapter, along with the implications for practice.

Research question 2. *Which experiences in the Aspiring Principal Cohort sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?*

Exit ticket data. In order to investigate Research Questions 2, participants in the *APC* were asked to complete an "exit ticket" survey after each *APC* meeting day. Data below are organized in order of the meeting day, with each day's activities listed in sequential order. Note that activities contained within the academy are described in richer detail during discussion of Research Question 3. The day-long meetings occurred about every month. For each activity, mean and standard deviation for each of these four indicators were calculated and compared across elementary, middle, and high school participants. Green, yellow, and red highlight value ratings greater than four, between three and four, and below three, respectively.

Meeting Day 1. Participants' perceived values of activities from the first day of the *APC* are shown in Table 16 and were informed by a 90% response rate.

Table 16
Day #1 Exit Survey

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	M (SD)	
					Overall	By Level
Core Values Activity	4.22	4.56	4.33	4.22	4.33 (.573)	E: 4.67 (.573) M: 4.25 (.289) H: 4.08 (.629)
Managing Change Activity	4.00	4.00	3.89	3.67	3.89 (.849)	E: 4.33 (.849) M: 4.17 (.878) H: 3.17 (.878)
Family Engagement Pres.	4.44	4.22	3.56	3.22	3.86 (.792)	E: 4.00 (.750) M: 4.08 (.946) H: 3.50 (.866)
HS Site Visit: Equitable Practices	4.33	4.33	3.33	3.44	3.86 (.945)	E: 4.08 (.878) M: 4.00 (1.09) H: 3.50 (1.14)
Overall Meeting Day 1	4.25	4.28	3.78	3.64	3.99	E: 4.27 M: 4.13 H: 3.56

Note: N = 9; E = 3; M = 3; H = 3

Of the ten participants who attended the first day of the *APC*, nine responded to the first

exit survey. Participants responded favorably to the first day's activities, indicating

positive perceptions of the extent to which activities prepared them as leaders as well as

being aligned to daily job responsibilities. This is an emerging trend and is seen

throughout the exit surveys that were administered for each meeting. Participants also

generally expressed that the activities allowed them to participate in their own learning

while engaging with peers. This did vary somewhat from activity to activity, with the

"Core Values" activity being valued highest in the area. A general trend also emerged with elementary assistant principals perceiving more value in each activity than their secondary counterparts. This was particularly true in the "Managing Change" principal share, in which high school principals valued the activity at nearly a full point less than the elementary and middle school participants.

   Meeting Day 2. Participants' perceived values of activities from the second day of the *APC* are shown in Table 17. Response rates remained high for this survey (91%). *APC* activities on the second meeting date continued the positive trend of perceived applicability to the leadership role and preparation for the future principalship with all value ratings greater than four. Participants perceived less active participation and peer learning during this meeting day. In particular, the "Office of Support Presentation", principal share on the topic of trust, and "Legal Issues Presentation" were all rated low in these areas. These three activities were primarily presentation/lecture in format. It is worth noting, however, that despite these value ratings the participants still felt the offerings contributed to their growth and were aligned to their responsibilities. The theme of higher ratings from elementary participants than secondary participants, which was discussed in the analysis of the first meeting day, is not apparent during this meeting day.

Table 17

Day #2 Exit Survey

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
Mock Interview & Resume Workshop	4.90	4.10	4.80	3.50	4.33 (.578)	E: 4.69 (.125) M: 3.83 (.520) H: 4.33 (.764)
Office of Support Presentation	4.40	4.80	2.50	2.40	3.53 (.650)	E: 3.31 (.554) M: 3.50 (.433) H: 3.83 (1.01)
Principal Share - Trust	4.60	4.80	2.90	2.60	3.73 (.731)	E: 3.31 (.718) M: 4.00 (.500) H: 4.00 (.901)
Red Flags in Hiring Presentation	4.30	4.50	3.80	3.70	4.08 (.602)	E: 4.31 (.427) M: 3.92 (.520) H: 3.92 (.946)
Legal Issues Presentation	4.40	4.30	2.80	2.80	3.58 (.858)	E: 3.06 (.826) M: 3.83 (.620) H: 4.00 (1.00)
New Principal Panel	4.60	4.80	3.20	2.90	3.88 (.604)	E: 3.94 (.315) M: 3.75 (.433) H: 3.92 (1.12)
Overall Meeting Day 2	4.53	4.55	3.33	2.98	3.85	E: 3.77 M: 3.81 H: 4.00

Note: N = 10; E = 4; M = 3; H = 3

Meeting Day 3. Participants' perceived values of activities from the third day of

the *APC* are shown in Table 18. 64% of participants responded to this exit survey.

Table 18

Day #3 Exit Survey

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
STEM School Visit	4.71	4.71	4.29	3.29	4.25 (.707)	E: 4.42 (.144) M: 4.38 (.177) H: 3.88 (1.59)
Personalized Learning School Visit	4.71	4.86	3.86	3.43	4.21 (.668)	E: 4.17 (.382) M: 4.50 (.354) H: 4.00 (1.41)
Whole Child Approach Presentation	4.57	4.86	3.00	3.29	3.93 (.590)	E: 4.17 (.289) M: 4.13 (.530) H: 3.38 (.884)
Digital Innovation Presentation	4.57	4.71	2.29	2.43	3.50 (.540)	E: 3.67 (.382) M: 3.50 (.354) H: 3.25 (1.06)
Public Information Office Presentation	4.86	5.00	3.57	3.43	4.21 (.636)	E: 4.33 (.289) M: 3.75 (1.06) H: 4.50 (.707)
Thanks for the Feedback Discussion	4.71	5.00	4.14	4.29	4.54 (.548)	E: 4.83 (.289) M: 4.38 (.177) H: 4.25 (1.06)
Overall Meeting Day 3	4.69	4.86	3.52	3.36	4.11	E: 4.26 M: 4.10 H: 3.88

Note: N = 7; E = 3; M = 2; H = 2

The data from meeting three suggest that themes from earlier meetings in the *APC*

sequence are still applicable. Participants continued to express that all of the learning

experiences provided represented a high level of value in terms of their preparation as aspiring principals, as well as alignment to their job responsibilities as school leaders. This was true whether the *APC* engaged in an "off-site" activity (STEM and Personalized Learning School visits) or with a more traditional presentation/workshop at the administrative offices. With the exception of the "Digital Innovation" presentation, participants also expressed moderate value in their ability to actively participate and engage with their peers during the third day's meeting. In five of six activities, high school assistant principals found less overall value than their elementary and middle school counterparts. It should be noted, however, that only half (2/4) of high school participants responded to this particular exit survey.

 Meeting Days 4/5. Participants' perceived values of activities from the fourth and fifth days of the *APC* are shown in Table 19 and are informed by a participant response rate of 82%. Exit surveys from these days were combined due to the two day "Fierce Conversations" training that represented nearly all of the learning that took place during these days. Participants responded very favorably to the "Fierce Conversations" workshop across all four domains, indicating that an emphasis on difficult conversations in the workplace not only prepared them for the rigors of the principalship, but also allowed them to gain perspective from their peers and to be active in their growth. Elementary, middle, and high school participants showed little disparity in their responses and all indicated a high level of value.

Table 19

Day #4/5 Exit Survey

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
Fierce Conversations	4.89	5.00	4.22	4.44	4.64 (.397)	E: 4.83 (.397) M: 4.50 (.000) H: 4.58 (.722)
Book Study & Project Updates	4.56	4.44	4.44	4.11	4.39 (.561)	E: 4.50 (.500) M: 4.08 (.520) H: 4.58 (.722)
Overall Meeting Day 4/5	4.72	4.72	4.33	4.28	4.51	E: 4.67 M: 4.29 H: 4.58

Note: N = 9; E = 3; M = 3; H = 3

Meeting Day 6. Participants' perceived values of activities from the sixth and final day of the *APC* are shown in Table 20 and are informed by a 73% response rate from participants.

Table 20
Day #6 Exit Survey

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
School Budget / Finance Workshop	3.75	3.38	1.63	1.38	2.53 (.558)	E: 2.58 (.520) M: 2.42 (.520) H: 2.63 (1.23)
Security Infrastructure Update	4.88	4.75	3.25	2.75	3.91 (.566)	E: 4.00 (.250) M: 3.42 (.577) H: 4.50 (.000)
Comp. Needs Assessment	4.25	4.50	3.50	3.50	3.94 (1.01)	E: 4.42 (.804) M: 4.33 (.520) H: 2.63 (.884)
Leadership Project Presentations	4.75	4.50	3.50	4.38	4.28 (.633)	E: 4.33 (.629) M: 3.92 (.722) H: 4.75 (.354)
Overall Meeting Day 6	4.41	4.28	2.97	3.00	3.66	E: 3.83 M: 3.52 H: 3.63

Note: N = 8; E = 3; M = 3; H = 2

Many of the general themes seen in earlier meeting dates continued into the sixth and last meeting day for the *APC*. Participants continued to value the activities provided for their applicability to their responsibilities and how they prepared them for their ongoing leadership journey. They also continued to moderately value their ability to learn from their peers and to take an active role in their learning in most of the activities. As the culminating activity of the program, it would be expected that the "Leadership Project

Presentations" would be valuable to participants, and exit summary data bears this out. Data from this session do not indicate a large disparity in assigned value as rated by elementary, middle, or high school participants with the exception of the "Comprehensive Needs Assessment" workshop. This was rated lower by the two high school respondents. The "School Budget / Finance Workshop" is also worth examination, as it represents the lowest value rating assigned by participants across the entire academy, and in each of the individual domains rated. Participants indicated only a moderate alignment between their responsibilities and their leadership preparation, and unanimously agreed that they were not actively involved in their learning in the activity or able to develop perspective from their peers.

     Interview data. Four semi-structured interviews about the value of the various activities were held with program participants to complement the data collected through exit tickets. Table 21 showcases the nine "components" of the *APC* utilized during interviews, as well as mean data for elementary and secondary participants' ratings of each. The quantitative element was derived from participants placing each of the nine constructs (represented by a token) onto a 1-10 spectrum line. This then allowed the researcher to ask why a value was assigned.

Table 21
Summary Interview Data

How valuable was this component of the *APC* in your development as an aspiring principal? (1-10 scale)	*M* Elementary	*M* Secondary	*M (SD)*
Readings / Book Discussions	8.50	5.00	6.75(2.36)
Principal Shadow Days	9.00	7.00	8.00(1.63)
Principal Shares / Site Visits	9.50	6.50	8.00(2.16)
Department Presentations	7.50	5.50	6.50(2.38)
"Fierce Conversations" Protocol	10.00	5.50	7.75(2.63)
Mock Interview / Resume Workshop	10.00	7.00	8.50(2.38)
Leadership Project	10.00	8.50	9.25(.96)
Interactions with *APC* Peers	9.50	7.50	8.50(1.73)
Interactions with Program Director	9.50	10.00	9.75(.50)

Note: N = 4; E = 2; S = 2

The content of the interviews themselves provides additional feedback to program designers, and significant trends and insights are captured below by category.

Principal shadow days. Interviewed participants were generally appreciative of the opportunity and requirement to shadow two sitting principals sometime during their participation in the academy. The most prevalent feedback praised the shadow days as a time to gain an authentic perspective of the daily leadership of another principal. One elementary principal was thankful that the chosen principal did not change their day to accommodate her:

> … I literally shadowed him around, and he didn't change anything about his day. We did a couple evaluation meetings with teachers, but then he also had a personnel issue, that they had very specific conversations about that he let me

shadow, and it was helpful to be able to see that. I love that I now have at least a

little glimpse into the other side of things.

A secondary principal who visited a middle school also spoke highly of the shadowed

principal's willingness to involve them in an engaging way:

He brought his other assistant principals in and we had a round-table discussion.

He asked interview questions that he would ask if he were interviewing

principals. He took me to different classrooms. I saw different teachers. I was able

to supervise the hallways as if I were at the middle school. It was interesting to be

in that position.

For other assistant principals, value in shadowing principals derived from being

able to develop new perspective in a particular area. One assistant principal intentionally

visited a principal as the same school level, but at a school with significant economic

challenges:

What I found very valuable was that I went to a [Title I] school, so different from

the area that I'm … I've taught and been an administrator in for my career. I've

never taught in a school that has the needs that this school had, and to get to see

what their focus is on and how they navigate through different things was really

interesting, and to see a really strong leader interacting and engaging and being so

connected with both the staff and the students at her school was just amazing.

Another participant had an interest in developing an understanding of opening a

new school, and used the opportunity as a chance to visit the principal at a new school

within the school system:

71

I was interested in that experience of opening a new school. It gave me a lot of

background as to what that would be like because here in [our county], there are a

lot of opportunities to do that. I kind of felt like I know what it's like to be in an

existing school and to start the school year, and making change in an existing

school. But looking at the thrill and the work involved in a new school, I didn't

know. So that was valuable for me.

Finally, several participants found value in the ability to visit and learn from

principals who lead within the same cluster of schools (elementary – middle – high) but

at a different school level. One visited a school level below her own:

However, the suggestion I would make to anybody else doing this in the future

would be to go to schools in your cluster. That's where my elementary school

was, and I found that really valuable, to look at the clientele that they were

serving that is our clientele … it was interesting to see what was happening in that

building that impacted us and how things were going, and how we could forge a

partnership. So I would almost be on the line of saying [to] do all of you shadow

visits in your cluster, just so you could double dip on the experience. So that you

could see what was happening outside of your four walls that impacts your day,

and how you can impact their day.

Another assistant principal visited a cluster school in a level above her own:

I found going to another level was actually more beneficial than I thought it

would be. I don't really have any interest in going outside of elementary at this

time … but I got to go to our feeder middle school and it was a great experience,

and it really helped me to see kind of where they're going. That was awesome. I

shadowed the principal there and I also wove it into my cumulative project at the end, since they're a [Personalized Learning] school. My whole project was on PL. [The principal] let me do a lot of amazing things, like being part of a really difficult parent conversation [and to] sit on a few post-observation conferences.

One of the interviewed assistant principals was somewhat critical of the second shadow day completed, expressing the sense that it was not an authentic or valuable experience as compared to the first:

The second one [consisted of] an hour-long conversation, but I didn't feel it gave me an opportunity to really know what was going on in the building itself. And I just felt like there wasn't anything really planned for me. I wanted to shadow [the principal] and see what it was like to be in this role at that school, in that certain population. I felt like it was certainly valuable, but not … as much as I had hoped to get out of it.

This assistant principal continued and provided feedback on how potential improvements could be made in this area. One thought provided was the potential for the program director having a short meeting or phone call with potential principals interested in the shadow aspect of the program. This would allow for explanation of what might make for an engaging, authentic, and valuable shadowing experience (personal communication, May 2018).

Principal shares and site visits were spread across the *APC* experience and provided the participating assistant principals with further exposure to practicing school principals within the school system. During principal shares, leaders came to the *APC* meeting place and presented on a variety of topics. These included the change process,

integrity and trust, school-community relations, and a panel that spoke to the challenges of assuming the principalship. During site visits, the *APC* travelled to school sites to learn about unique initiatives in which the schools were partaking. These included a school with a STEM emphasis, a school involved in the division's personalized learning (PL) initiative, and the county's only Title I high school, which was experimenting with novel approaches to supporting its student body.

Overall, the four interviewees found different components of these shares and visits to be valuable, though a discrepancy existed between the perceptions of elementary assistant principals' (9.50) and secondary assistant principals' (6.50) ratings. An area agreed upon, however, by all four interviewed was that these activities brought a variety of topics and a sense of authenticity. An elementary assistant principal shared:

> The variety of what we were given [in terms of] experiences through either a
>
> share or a visit made that extremely beneficial to us … getting to go into the
>
> classrooms at [the STEM school] was just so cool, because someone can tell you
>
> all about STEM … but when you get to go into a classroom and see what that
>
> looks like, and also get to see the families and communities coming into the
>
> building, that was just really beneficial.

A secondary assistant principal also found value in site visits and hearing from principals:

> I valued the experience of toying around in the rooms and being with the kids. I
>
> don't get so much out of people presenting to me unless there's going to be an
>
> activity involved with it … I liked [the principal panel's] honesty about their
>
> challenges and what they were really feeling at that time. So that was pretty
>
> realistic, hearing where they were at that time. They seemed tired, obviously

because it was all fresh to them. And I enjoyed hearing their perspectives about

what we could do if we ever get into that role.

An elementary participant echoed these thoughts on perspectives and honesty:

I think the shares were neat because it almost seemed like the principals could be

a little bit more open with us, because it was kind of a colleague-to-colleague

conversation versus a presentation style you might get at the group visit, and I felt

like they could kind of level with us a little bit more and that part was really

helpful.

This interviewee also suggested that the principal shares and site visits often veered in

different directions. On several occasions, principals discussed their own struggles and

growth as a principal, and showed some vulnerability that led to an even more valuable

experience for the participants (personal communication, May 2018).

The secondary interviewees, who rated this group of activities lower than their

elementary counterparts, spoke to their desire for more discussion around the "hands on"

of the principalship. One assistant principal articulated this effectively, and believed more

understanding of the "nitty gritty" aspects of the job would benefit participants:

I think there could be better time spent in the principal shares by having them talk

about things that principals do. Like, for instance, there was never any talk about

hiring. There was never any talk about what is it like to get a difficult phone call

from your director, and having to work with your assistant principals on how

you're empowering them and building capacity. I felt like we were talking more

about essential values that you have to be a leader … I think everybody wanted to

have more hands on; let's talk about the real deal that we're facing as principals.

This critique was not repeated by the elementary participants who were interviewed. They did, however, point to some experiences being more valuable than others. One appreciated the "raw openness" of the principals of the Title I and PL schools, but wished that principals could relate their talks to the book studies in which the *APC* was engaged. The other found the site visit on equitable practices to be emotional and overwhelming because the *APC* had just met, and expressed that perhaps this visit would have been more valuable at the end of the sequence (personal communication, May 2018).

Department presentations, as compared to the other activity groups, were rated lowest on average by the four interviewees. Elementary assistant principals rated the value of department presentations at 7.50, with secondary assistant principals rating them at 5.50. Because this category contained so many individual presentations, some interviewees expressed difficulty in assigning an aggregate value rating. For this reason, it may be more helpful to analyze exit ticket data from individual activities to better understand how each individual activity was perceived.

Nevertheless, several interviewees articulated what made for a valuable department presentation. One elementary participant shared that two main factors influenced her perception of the presentation's value. First, the extent to which the information covered was already known to the contributor was important, with novel experiences being more valuable. A pedagogical element was also important, with engaging content that led to conversations with fellow leaders being perceived as more valuable. The participant noted that interacting with peers was so important because it allowed for new perspectives on even old understandings. They noted that "even if I

already had the knowledge, I was able to [learn] more from their experiences (personal

communication, May 2017).

Three out of four interviewees explicitly stated that some activities were more

valuable than others, and the conversations provided some insight into what made for

valuable department presentations, and what could have made presentations with less

value more effective. One high school assistant principal described their perceptions of

what separated activities, and interestingly made references to best practices for learning

and leadership development:

> Some of them were [not valuable] and some of them were good. [The presentation
>
> from the Information Office] was hands on. [The HR Hiring presentation] was
>
> hands on. [The security conversation] was hands on. When I say hands on, I mean
>
> your brain had to think and you had to do something active instead of passive.
>
> The others were not engaging. There were certain points that I thought … it's just,
>
> too much. It could have been more interactive. [It] would have been really great to
>
> have some opportunities to just dialogue … maybe do some round tables and talk
>
> to different departments.

As noted previously, exit ticket data are somewhat more helpful in analyzing the value of

individual department presentations. Insight from interviews does, however, color the

quantitative data provided by the tickets, particularly in the areas of peer interaction and

active learning. These were clearly two important components of valuable presentations

by departments.

The "Fierce Conversations" workshop occupied the duration of the day during

APC meetings four and five, and aimed to build participants' conversational toolkits

through learning about the team, coaching, delegation, and confrontation conversations that are common in schools. Elementary and secondary assistant principals assigned disparate value ratings to the workshop, with elementary participants assigning an average rating of 8.50 and secondary participants a rating of 5.00.

Both elementary assistant principals pointed to the authenticity and practical application of training in conversation, believing that these skills could be quickly incorporated into the workplace:

I think being a principal is all about the conversations. That's the vast majority almost of what we do, is have conversations with our people. And building up those skills, as to how to have those conversations the most productively and to get the outcomes that you want, is extremely valuable.

A second elementary participant had similar feedback, noting that it was something they "could implement and use immediately, and not even just professionally" (personal communication, May 2018). A secondary principal felt that the training was well-timed, especially with teacher evaluation meetings upcoming, saying "Sitting there during the school year, getting ready to do evaluation conferences … light bulbs would go off. 'This is how I am going to use this tomorrow'" (personal communication, May, 2018).

The lower value ratings given by secondary assistant principals stem from their perceptions that the training was too lengthy and occupied an inordinate amount of time within the academy sequence. One described this in detail:

[The sessions] were too long … It was just too much all at once. The same thing you wouldn't do to your students … The first day I actually thought was quite good. It was more focused and driven towards becoming a principal … the

activities we did were meaningful. The second, I don't feel like we got as much

out of that one. I felt like it wasn't as rich in terms of the quality of what we

learned.

The same participant then proceeded with a recommendation for future cohorts:

One day is plenty. Or ideally a half day and a half day. Breaks it up a little bit and

I think it gives people a fresh perspective on it, and they're more willing to have a

fearless conversation and to practice it if they're not feeling like someone has just

taken an anvil and dropped it on them and said, "There's the training. Have a

good day!"

The mock interview and resume workshop was one of the highest rated *APC*

components in terms of value to participants, with secondary assistant principals rating it

7.00 and elementary assistant principals rating it 10.0. During this morning, participants

had the opportunity to rotate through these two activities. In the resume workshop

component, participants were allotted time to sit with a human resources representative,

who provided actionable feedback and conversation on the participant's most current

resume. In the mock interview component, participants were interviewed by a school

division leader who would likely be involved in a genuine principal interview. The

questions posed by the interviewer were partially agreed upon by the *APC* themselves.

The mock interview component was well-received by participants, who

unanimously agreed that it was a valuable endeavor and further prepared them for taking

the next step in their careers. Several participants spoke to having a powerful experience

with a division leader that they viewed as authentic and directly related to what they

would face in the future, including one elementary principal who was happy with the feedback received:

> I will say, any time you get the opportunity to meet with one of the higher leaders in our county, you can't replace that with anything else. Just having that opportunity was huge. I'd never gotten to sit one-on-one and have feedback in the middle of an interview before with the people that are going to be doing the other interviews. What an incredible opportunity - incredible experience.

A secondary participant shared similar views:

> It was authentic … preparing us to become principals. ... I mean, I had an interview with the high school director! It really made me think of how I would interview from the vision of being the principal. And it was one of the few experiences I felt like we had where we were really dropped in the role. And now what are you going to do? And how are you going to respond to it from that vantage point?

The resume workshop portion of this sequence was also valued by participants, but with some reservations. An elementary participant was impressed by the individualized nature of the resume attention, and commented further on the clarity it provided to her document:

> I have my resume and I've updated it with content, but I've never looked at it from a new lens before, and to have somebody … just cut it up into pieces. She [was] like, "This, this, cross, cross this" and mine went from two pages to one page, but it's so much better. So much clearer.

While a secondary assistant principal also valued the resume feedback, they expressed concerns about not having enough time with the reviewer to truly benefit:

> We probably could've used more time for the resume … It was kind of like, "Look at my resume." And, "Oh, this, this, and this." But there was really no time for me to sit there and actually make notes or physically do some changes. So to be perfectly honest, if I picked my resume up today, I'd be thinking, "What'd that girl tell me?" She definitely had some thoughts … to help me go to the next level [and] I would have to sit down with her again to truly benefit.

Of the four interviewees, this assistant principal was the only to express that the resume review portion of the segment was rushed.

The leadership project, which functioned as the culminating activity of the *APC* experience, was the second highest value rated component of the academy, with value ratings of 10.0 and 8.50 from elementary and secondary participants, respectively. Early in the sequence, participants were required to select a school improvement project, preferably in the area of instruction or student support, in which to engage their school for the year. The participants' initial ideas for improving their schools were presented to the program director during the second *APC* meeting, who provided feedback and support as participants finalized plans. On the final day of the *APC* sequence, each participant led a short presentation on the results of their leadership project and showcased their journey to a gathering of division leaders. A complete list of leadership projects for the *APC* can be found in Appendix F.

Interestingly, though all participants rated the experience highly in terms of value to their leadership capacity, each presented a different primary reason for assigning the

experience a high value. A secondary administrator mentioned that the project's meaningful nature was a draw:

> [It was] something that was meaningful to you. It was something that was your creative approach, it was PBL basically in front of all the entire [division] administration. So I thought that was exactly what a principal should be able to do. It gives you confidence for an interview. They already know a little bit about you. They know what matters in terms of where you're thinking we need to go, educationally speaking. So, that was structured well.

An elementary participant also discussed a perception of meaning found in the project:

> That was amazing. I definitely valued that opportunity … We're leaders in buildings, but we don't generally always take [these projects] on, because we have so many tasks that we have to do. We're the testing coordinators, we're the special education contacts, and sometimes you get bogged down in just the tasks, and this is really what it's all about, being able to take something on that's more meaningful. It's about the kids. It's about making something better.

An elementary participant spoke to the project's ability to push them out of their comfort zone as a valuable aspect:

> It was a lot. It was big. It was nerve-racking, but the job that we are preparing ourselves for is big and nerve-racking, and so it makes sense that the leadership project that leads up to it would be a big deal, it wouldn't just be some talk about some old thing that you did at the school, it would be something you've been talking about since November and planning and doing and presenting to [division

leadership] … It was super valuable … I like being uncomfortable. I seek out that kind of opportunity, but it was a lot.

Another elementary assistant principal pointed to the nature of ongoing school improvement, and how the project's "never ending" nature was motivating:

It's not over. It's not like I presented and now I'm done … [It] never happens like that … it grows and it continues and it changes and then new things come up, and that was actually something I was just doing as we were looking at digital content. We're not going to be a personalized learning school, but we're looking into researching content that we can use to move in that direction. I think that having that opportunity to present to that audience was, again, who else gets to do that? Who else gets to sit in front of all these people?

Several participants noted that they would have liked additional support during the various stages of the leadership project. One participant would have preferred more ongoing check-ins during the *APC*:

The only thing I think that would've been a little bit helpful for me is having a few more check-ins throughout. I found myself in April [realizing] I have a lot to do still, and there's not that much time left … If I had said each time, okay, this is where I said I would be at this point, this is what I still haven't gotten done, I need to get those, that way it would've been a little stressful as we were coming towards those last few weeks … Pair up and, you know, talk to your buddy. I think that there's just a little bit more accountability when you have to tell somebody else.

Another participant desired a chance to have a practice time for presentations in front of peers. A final participant reflected on the leadership project journey and the struggle to showcase all of a staff's accomplishments in a very short presentation. The suggestion was made to allow participants to have a few more minutes during presentations (personal communication, May 2018).

Readings and book discussions were incorporated into the *APC* through required reading assignments followed by short group discussions of several of the readings. A description of the assigned texts can be found in Appendix D. This category was one of the lowest rated during the post-academy interviews, with elementary and secondary participants valuing the readings and book discussions at 8.50 and 5.50, respectively. Two themes emerged across all interviews related to the readings and book discussions. First, participants were appreciative of the readings, and found the books *Thanks for the Feedback* and *The Speed of Trust* to be the most valuable as they build their professional capacity and move toward a potential principalship. One elementary participant offered praise for these two selections:

> I really liked *The Speed of Trust*. That one spoke to me and really put some things in perspective. It kind of forced me to recognize things, you know, in different ways and see from different perspectives. I also liked *Thanks for The Feedback*. I think that that's really helpful. I mean, that's what we do every day, sometimes not even when we're realizing it. People are constantly looking at you for reassurance, even if it's just a thumbs up.

The other elementary assistant principal agreed with these thoughts, and especially valued the *APC* reflection that accompanied *Thanks for the Feedback*:

I loved the reflections that we had for *Thanks for The Feedback*. I think reading

the book was valuable, but then [the program director] really asked thoughtful

feedback questions, that made you really think on a deeper level about yourself,

and how to incorporate this knowledge into your work. That was just fantastic. I

had a couple breakthroughs not just in reading the book, but in filling out those

reflections … I [also] really connected to *The Speed of Trust*. There's four core

values in it, and I actually created a survey that I gave to my special education

staff that had each of those four core values … And I got really good feedback

from my staff on that.

A secondary participant echoed positive sentiments toward *Thanks for the Feedback*:

Thanks for the Feedback was good. It certainly shows you your strengths and

weaknesses in areas where you can continue to improve but also pat yourself on

the back because you're doing things better than you thought you were, or maybe

even at least at level. That was probably the richest one of the bunch.

The second emergent theme within the conversations about readings and

discussions of the texts was that *APC* members valued the book discussion and reflection

related to *Thanks for the Feedback*, but felt that this same level of grappling with the

texts fell away later in the *APC*. One elementary assistant principal seemed to argue that,

absent discussion and reflection, the readings were not as valuable:

We didn't have a lot of time for discussion, and I would like to have more time for

discussion. At least for me. I enjoy reading, but, like I said with the *Thanks for*

The Feedback, I got so much more out of that reflective piece. I need that

conversation, some sort of processing to really, to get to the next level … And I

think that we had some of that, we just didn't have enough time to do it for all the books.

Another elementary assistant principal similarly felt that discussions around the themes of books could have been more robust or structured differently:

I enjoyed talking about [the books], although I did kind of feel like … we were squeezing it in when it happened, and I might've gained more from it if it had been more of a protocol. [For example,] when we started the day, we would start with talking about our book and focus in, maybe even doing smaller circles, versus a whole group conversation about it. [This] might've been a little bit more helpful because I feel like when you're talking about a book, it's hard to talk to that large of a group.

Interactions with APC peers throughout the sequence were also rated highly by interview participants, with value ratings of 9.50 and 7.50 by elementary and secondary assistant principals, respectively. One elementary assistant principal spoke to the power of building perspective through interaction:

If there were [a score of] an eleven, I might even put this over the leadership project, because every time that someone shared, every time that someone told a story, every time that people gave their perspective, it just gave us so much more knowledge that we didn't have prior and it's just amazing. I would want as many [interactions] as possible. I'd try to turn everything into an interaction.

A secondary participant echoed this, even noting that the creation of a learning community within the *APC* and the ability to spend time outside of a "siloed" school

building led to further discussion outside of the experience that likely would not have occurred:

A lot of times, we're just stuck in our buildings. Especially when you get to the point where there's only so many of you around the county that do things. And you're so busy. And you never have time to bounce things off of each other. It was nice at different times to be talking to someone and they're like, "Yeah, I know just what you mean." You know, they can validate what you're thinking. They have ideas on how to make things better. Sharing their thoughts on moving up, where they had come from. I did forge some new relationships that I could rely on in the future … I met a couple of people for coffee. We talked about some different topics. When we were working on our projects, a couple of us got together and bounced ideas off [of one another] … There was a work connection, and there was a personal connection, so it was good.

While agreeing that collaborating with peers from other schools and school levels was valuable, one elementary participant admitted to downgrading her value rating for this component because there was not enough of the interactions throughout the *APC*:

I would like more. I just don't think we had enough time, there was so many presentations, and so many things to learn, that we talked to each other a lot the first day, but not really a lot after that. And I would've really like to have spent more time talking to them.

The participant noted that there appeared to be a great deal of time built in for discussion on the first day, perhaps to better establish a learning community, but that subsequent *APC* meetings did not have the same level of interaction. The participant did point to the

Fierce Conversations workshop days as times when she was able to speak with others (personal communication, May 2018). A secondary assistant principal also found that they were yearning for a deeper experience with peers:

> I didn't feel like I gained a ton from that. Just continued having conversations about whatever we were told to do. It would've been nice to have heard something from them, like, "name something you feel is the most innovative at your school". "What's something on which you feel like you have to work on?" "How would you handle that if you were in your principal's shoes?" Like, we need more questions like, "What would you do if you were in that position." And maybe, if we're being confidential, "How would you have handled that differently from what your principal did?" … And it would've been interesting to have students involved too. To say … "How can principals help you better as students?"

Two participants also noted during their discussion of peer interactions and collaboration that they would be willing to attend an extra academy day to in order to facilitate more discussion throughout the experience.

Interactions with the program director was the final area scored, and was scored most highly, with elementary and secondary assistant principals rating its value at 9.50 and 10.0, respectively. This component was presented in an open-ended fashion with considerable leeway for interpretation; participants were not given examples of when they would have been required to interact with the program director, but rather were encouraged to reflect on their cumulative interactions with the director during the *APC* sequence.

One participant was thankful for the feedback that was given during the conceptualization of the leadership project, noting that they were given "really specific things to focus on" (personal communication, May 2018). Another participant appreciated the program director's demeanor and calming presence during a stressful day of leadership project presentations, noting "I think we all would've been cats in a room full of rocking chairs on that last day, except she kept saying, "It's okay," and, "I know you're feeling like this" (personal communication, May 2018).

A major theme that emerged during discussion of this component was not a discussion of personal interactions that participants had with the program director, but rather a general sense of appreciation for the perceived high quality of the *APC*. This likely contributed to the high value rating that participants assigned to this component. One secondary assistant principal praised the structure and organization of the *APC*:

[The *APC*] was structured well. I felt like [she] was very resourceful in it. And she's the perfect person to lead the academy. I mean, her organizational approach to everything is phenomenal … I think honestly, her patience, her organization, her structuring of everything, the sequencing of it. It was just very well done in terms of how I expected it to be done.

An elementary assistant principal also praised the program director, and went so far as to make a plea for the program to continue in the future:

I can't imagine people have anything but great things to say [about her]. What a great experience. Whatever expectations I had, it completely blew them out of the water. She thought of things that wouldn't have even occurred to me as something that would've been an option or something that I needed to know, and she just

thought of it all. It was pretty amazing. So that would be my advice; keep it. Don't

not do [the *APC*] again.

One participant spoke of a desire to have more specific, individualized

conversations and guidance about "making the next step" into the principalship. Though

acknowledging that such conversations with this director (who occupies a position within

the human resource department) would come from a human resources perspective and

thus perhaps be limited, the participant still felt that any guidance would be helpful. The

participant acknowledged that "everybody's journey is different", but desired more

information on what hiring panels and division leadership are looking for when hiring for

principal positions (personal communication, May 2018).

Summary. Data included in the findings for Research Question 2 come from a

variety of instruments. Quantitative data garnered from "exit ticket" surveys completed

by participants at the end of each meeting day demonstrated that the majority of learning

experiences were valued by participants in terms of the best-practice components

examined. They did indicate some disparity between the content-focused components

(coherence, alignment) and the pedagogy-focused components (active participation,

collective participation) and perceptions of elementary vs. secondary participants. Semi-

structured interviews provided further quantitative data by asking participants to assign

value ratings to several components of the *APC*. The interviews also yielded qualitative

descriptions of why participants assigned these values. Trends emerged regarding how

participants assigned value or lack of value to components, and these themes will

contribute to presented recommendations.

Research question 3. *In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders utilized within the APC?* An observation protocol (see Appendix H) was used to capture detailed descriptions of each activity and assigned reading, and document their alignment to leadership standards each of the ten PSEL (2015) standards. The observations of each activity are presented below, and are grouped into the following categories:

- Core Academy Activities

- Readings and Book Discussions

- Principal Shares and Site Visits

- Department Presentations

Core academy activities.

- Core values activity – participants were presented with a list of 18 "core values" and asked to circle all that they "held dear". Participants were then asked to narrow the list to the eight most essential core values. Subsequent prompting eventually led participants to select their most important two core values. Several participants shared their thinking with their peers in the *APC*.

- Mock interview / resume workshop – In this activity, participants had the opportunity gain feedback on their current resumes as well as their performance in a mock interview. Participants were allotted time to sit with a human resources representative, who reviewed the resume and provided actionable feedback to participants. In the mock interview component, participants were interviewed by a school division leader who would likely be involved in a genuine principal interview. Feedback was also provided to participants during this interview

session. The questions posed by the interviewer were partially agreed upon by the

APC themselves.

- Fierce conversations workshop – this activity spanned a large part of the academy, utilizing the greater portion of two meeting days. A facilitator guided *APC* participants through learning around several types of conversations that are common in schools and important for school leadership to navigate. These sessions aimed to build participants' conversational toolkit in team conversations, coaching conversations, delegation conversations, and confrontation conversations. Opportunities to practice new skills were embedded in the training.

- Leadership project presentations– participants were asked to select an individual leadership project not only based on the needs of their schools, but also based on their values as leaders and their vision for schools. Several projects were implicitly linked to leadership standards, including vision and mission of schools, school operations and curricula, and ongoing school improvement. Several *APC* members made references to their vision for effective schools when presenting their projects.

Principal shares and site visits.

- Equitable practices site visit – This involved a visit to a Title I high school that had a disproportionate amount of English language learners and economically disadvantaged students. The principal discussed the multi-tiered supports offered to students, additional food and nutrition options, and how schools need to be responsive to adverse childhood experiences that students may have had. The principal led the *APC* on a tour of the "new ELL pods" – a dedicated hallway in

the school where instruction is provided for students with little proficiency in English. The principal also made note of how the school vision, mission, and ethical responsibilities were utilized in the day-to-day decision making of the school and their leadership. Another division leader also presented a PowerPoint titled "Equitable Practices", and spoke to several topics including the achievement gap vs. the opportunity gap, unconscious bias, equity vs. equality, and the content of our curricula.

- STEM site visit – During the site visit to a STEM-based elementary school, the principal began by briefly meeting with *APC* participants and sharing some information on the staff's journey to becoming a STEM school. He noted that it was an encompassing journey, involving teacher recruitment, modifying curricula, family involvement, and ongoing improvement. He also spoke to the group about the value of the community having an understanding of the school's mission. The principal noted that the participants would be able to see community engagement as they toured STEM classrooms that day. As participants visited classrooms and saw examples of STEM instruction, they were able to observe several classrooms in which parents had been invited and made contributions to students' learning while students from kindergarten to 5th grade participated in different types of hands-on and STEM-based instruction and assessment.

- Personalized learning site visit – during a site visit to a middle school within the school division that was part of the division's "Personalized Learning" initiative, the principal met with the *APC* in the library and began by introducing her leadership journey. She spoke to her transition into the principalship, lessons that

she quickly learned, and how the role changed after the first year. She espoused understanding not only the challenges of the school, but also seeking to understand what had made the school successful in the past and attempting to honor those traditions. She then spoke about the transition to personalizing instruction for students. She called this process one of "baby steps, acknowledging success, and risk taking" and shared that professional development has also become teacher-led and personalized. Participants in the *APC* were then invited to tour the school and observe classrooms in which teachers had volunteered to showcase their personalized learning approaches.

- Managing change principal share – This activity addressed the developing of teaching capacity through a discussion of the change process. A high school and an elementary principal engaged the participants in two activities. The high school principal discussed "immunity to change" and led participants through a paper-based map that would help them identify an area for personal change. The elementary principal led participants through an activity that challenged them to better understand the variables at play during times of change in school, and to be able to articulate the importance of and necessity for the change process.

- Family engagement principal share – Two principals, one secondary and one elementary, visited the *APC* and shared their visions and strategies for engaging their community. The elementary principal talked about the power of positive communications with families about student progress, about the differences between family involvement and family engagement, and then walked through a brief reference sheet which catalyzed a short discussion. The secondary principal

94

talked about the importance of staff being "on message" with the vision of the

school, and how staff need to be empowered to engage families but still draw firm

lines to not "let them run the school". He also discussed the need for schools to be

a "PR machine" and to communicate many small, positive school

accomplishments that help to offset the effects of any negative events that arise.

- Principal share: Trust – an elementary principal from the school division

  introduced the concept of "integrity" and noted that integrity in school

  administration flows from core values and a commitment to professional ethics.

  The principal shared several anecdotes and personal core values from her career

  that served to demonstrate the value and necessity of integrity in leadership

  practice.

- New principal panel – A panel of individuals who had recently transitioned to the

  principalship met with the *APC* and answered several questions that were posed

  by the program director. These questions include:

  - o What are the top five things for assistant principals to know?

  - o What is the most challenging aspect of transitioning from assistant

    principal to principal?

  - o What surprises have you encountered so far during your transition?

  - o How did you meet your new staff when you were announced as principal?

  The principals shared insight in response to these questions, which included

  advice to learn everything about the school community, involve yourself in

  difficult conversations, become proficient at managing a budget, get involved

  with early initiatives, and find a way to develop a good home/life balance. Most

importantly, several principals shared that one needs to define a vision for a school and work tirelessly with the professional learning community to ensure that staff have both the understanding and resources needed to move the school in the right direction.

Department presentations.

- Office of Support presentation – The assistant superintendent for school support spoke about the department's function, vision, and goals using a traditional PowerPoint presentation. The superintendent then introduced the school support staff who supervise facility use, transportation, zoning, school nutrition, security, and school support. Each introduced themselves and spoke briefly about their newest initiatives to give participants an understanding of their function.

- Red flags in hiring workshop – The school division's Human Resources Department engaged participants in a workshop designed to develop expertise in the areas of interview candidate selection and the interview process itself. Small groups of participants were given three resumes and asked to identify potential "red flags" that would need to be investigated if the individual was given employment consideration. After participants took some time to identify these areas, the presenters allowed time to share, and added their own commentary that helped to add additional value to the conversation. The same process was followed when discussing best practices in the interview process. Participants were given time to share their experiences with the entire group.

- Legal issues awareness presentation – The division counsel spoke to participants about a few legal issues that may be encountered during their time as

administrators. These included best practices to dealing with FOIA and FERPA requests, as well as best practices for documentation of meetings with employees. A traditional PowerPoint was used and implications for training additional staff, especially those who work with special needs students, were discussed.

- Whole child approach presentation – a division leader from the Student Support Department engaged the *APC* in a presentation to "build a rationale for educating the whole child" and to "engage thinking around social-emotional learning". Though the presentation was mostly traditional in nature, there were periods of time in which the *APC* was asked to speak with nearby peers. A Ted Talk on positive psychology and an interview video on social-emotional learning were also shown. The presenter related the mission to develop students social and emotional resiliency to the school division's mission, and finished the presentation by asking participants about how they intended to "catch students upstream before they fall into the river".

- Digital innovation presentation – Supervisors from the Department of Technology visited the *APC* and detailed, through a traditional PowerPoint presentation, the recent developments occurring within their department. These included progress toward a 1:1 device rollout, a new software review process, new practices for ensuring the protection of student information, the monitoring of internet usage, a new acceptable use policy for students, and the capabilities of new teacher and student devices. The team took several questions from the *APC* before departing.

- Public Communications presentation – Staff from the Office of Public Communications led the *APC* in a brief scenario exercise in which four school

crisis scenarios were presented (Facebook rumor about a school shooting, student death on campus, emergency building evacuation, community "lock out"). After presenting each scenario, participants were asked how they would respond to the event. Public Communications staff clarified best practices during each event, and added anecdotes from their experiences helping to manage events like this.

- Budget and finance workshop – A representative from the budget department led a PowerPoint-based presentation, which included the role of the department, a school accounting overview, an introduction to the principal's role in payroll, information on division efforts in health, wellness, and benefits, how the division procures materials, as well as information on the school division budget.

- Security infrastructure discussion – The division's security supervisor visited the *APC* to share the latest updates on issues in the community, which included providing a few scenarios for participants to grapple with as a group. The supervisor finished by updating participants on future implementations, including new fire alarm systems, security patrols, and enhanced building-level security like updated badge readers and high definition security cameras.

- Comprehensive needs assessment presentation – The division's research coordinator led an interactive presentation that highlighted the school system's approaches to continuous improvement and how this will impact schools. The presenter allowed participants to share anecdotes about their efforts in school improvement, and differentiated the presentation based on the needs and prior knowledge of participants.

Readings and book discussions.

- *The Speed of Trust* – this text united powerful discussions of core values, trust, and integrity for the readers, and led to *APC* discussions about the "Four Cores of Credibility": integrity, intent, capabilities, and results.

- *Thanks for the Feedback* – this required reading exposed participants to the concept of *receiving* feedback and how this valuable skill can enhance their leadership practice.

- *101 Ways to Create Real Family Engagement* – This required reading was focused solely on approaches that school staff can take to better engage and empower their stakeholders. During post-academy interview sessions, several participants noted that they will use this book as a desk reference and share it with their staff when considering new avenues for community outreach (personal communication, May 2018.)

- *Kids Deserve It*! – the *APC* was asked to read selected chapters from this text, which focused on challenging conventional thinking in education and better advocating for the holistic needs of students. The chapters selected for reading spoke to the importance of relationship building, understanding the unique perspectives of different stakeholders, and remembering what makes working with students so special. Participants were asked to write a one page reflection on their thoughts after the reading.

- *Bringing Innovation to School* – this required reading argued that innovation is necessary for the success of 21st century learners, and provided a vivid account of what this looks like within our nation's schools.

   Alignment.

Table 22 provides a summary of the PSEL standards alignment of each learning experience within the academy, as well as the total number of activities per standard.

Table 22

PSEL Standards Alignment

	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10
Core Academy Activities										
Core Values/ E.I. Activity	X									
Mock Interview/Resume Workshop						X				
Fierce Conversations Workshop									X	
Leadership Project Presentation	X		X	X					X	X
Principal Share/Site Visits										
Equitable Practices Site Visit	X	X	X		X					
STEM Site Visit				X		X		X		
Personalized Learning Site Visit				X		X	X			X
Managing Change Principal Share						X				X
Family Engagement Principal Share						X	X	X	X	
Trust Principal Share	X	X								
New Principal Panel							X			
Department Presentations										
Office of Support: Staff and Functions									X	
HR: Red Flags in Hiring						X				
Division Counsel: Legal Awareness						X			X	
Student Services: Whole Child Approach					X					
Technology Services: Tech. Innovation				X					X	
Information Office: Crisis Scenarios									X	
Finance Office: School Budget/Finance									X	
Security Dept.: Security Infrastructure									X	
Research Office: Comp. Needs Assessment										X
Readings/Book Discussions										
The Speed of Trust	X	X								
Thanks for the Feedback						X				
101 Ways: Family Engagement								X		
Kids Deserve It					X					
Bringing Innovation to School										X
Total	5	3	2	4	3	8	3	3	9	5

Summary. Data for Research Question 3 were collected by the researcher utilizing an observation protocol, as well as by consulting with the *APC* program director's meeting agendas and notes. The intent of this inquiry was to determine the extent to which the PSEL (2015) standards were incorporated into the learning experiences of the *APC*. Evidence suggests that each of the ten standards were incorporated into at least two learning experiences, with many surpassing this. This alignment to leadership standards suggests that the "alignment to leadership standards" portion of the conceptual framework was incorporated.

Conclusion

Together the variety of data sources utilized to complete the initial evaluation of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* answer the three research questions and highlight data points that will be instrumental in understanding recommendations for future improvement. In Chapter 5, data from across the three research questions will be synthesized and analyzed to allow for a more holistic view of the *APC* sequence. Recommendations for improvement of the sequence will follow this analysis and synthesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Several key discussion points emerged as a result of data analysis. This chapter will present five points that draw from data associated with each research question:

- Research Question 1: How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*?

- Research Question 2: Which experiences in the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?

- Research Question 3: In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders utilized within the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*?

In addition, four recommendations for improvement of the *APC* will be discussed and situated within the study's conceptual framework.

Discussion Points

Discussion Point 1: Data suggests the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* to be, overall, a valuable, encompassing, and efficacious experience for participants (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

The study's three research questions approached determining the program's value through different lenses.

Research Question 1 focused on the program at a "macro" level and sought to evaluate the changes in participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity over the course of the program. The *Administrator Preparedness Survey*, which was aligned to the

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2015), was completed by participants both before and after the *APC* experience. As an integral piece of the study's conceptual framework, it was important to understand participants' perceived growth related to the implementation of leadership standards. Assistant principals in the *APC* evaluated their own confidence in their ability to implement each of the strands of the ten standards. Mean data were used to demonstrate growth in each of these ten standards, which was then analyzed by standard and participant school level. An observation protocol was used by the researcher to document the content and pedagogy of each learning activity and to align these activities to leadership standards. This allowed for a further analysis to determine the extent to which each standard was incorporated.

Survey data suggest that participants finished the *APC* overwhelmingly confident in their abilities to lead effectively in each of the ten PSEL (2015) standards. Participants rated their perceptions of confidence in their abilities in each strand on a scale of one to five. Final confidence values for the ten standards ranged from 4.74 to 4.98, with an average post-*APC* value of 4.84. Additionally, data demonstrated growth in perceptions of confidence from the pre-*APC* administration of the survey to the same survey after the program. Growth was shown in all ten standards, and ranged from .29 (S8: Engagement of Families and Community) to .80 (S10: School Improvement), with an average perceived growth per standard value of .55. An additional comparison was made between the number of activities aligned to a standard with the perceived value of growth in the standard. This value represents "perceived growth per activity" and allows for a glimpse into which activities made have played a larger or lesser role in contributing to perceived growth. These values range from .06 growth per activity (S9: Operations and

Management) to .37 (S3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness). This is discussed further in Discussion Point 2 and Table 23.

While Research Question 1 focused on the cumulative change in participants' perceptions of their leadership capacity as a result of their participation in the *APC*, the focus of *Research Question 2* could be described as a "micro level" approach and aimed to understand participants' perceptions of each individual learning experience within the *APC*. After each meeting day, participants completed an "exit ticket" survey to rate each activity in terms of four best practices for leadership development established by Desimone and Garet (2015). For this study, learning experiences with a mean perceived value of 4-5 are considered "highly valuable". Experiences in the 3-4 range and 2-3 ranges are considered "moderately valuable" and "low value", respectively.

Results showed that the *APC* was successful at providing individual learning experiences that were valued by participants. Ten activities (45%) fell into the "highly valuable" range, with the "Fierce Conversations Workshop" as the most valued experience with a rating of 4.64. Eleven activities (50%) were categorized as "moderately valuable" experiences. These eleven activities averaged a value of 3.78. One experience (5%), the "School Budget and Finance Workshop" fell in the "low value" range with a value of 2.53. This activity is notable as the only experience that participants did not feel was aligned to their job responsibilities. Participants also did not feel that they were actively engaged in their learning (1.63 average rating) or able to interact with and learn from their peers (1.38 average rating).

Owing to the conceptual framework's reliance on alignment to accepted leadership standards to facilitate programmatic success, *Research Question 3* primarily

examined the extent to which the PSEL (2015) leadership standards were incorporated into the workings of the *APC*. Observations and analysis of learning experiences within the sequence demonstrated that, despite some disparate participant perceptions of pedagogical value, all of the ten standards were addressed. As discussed in Chapter 4, the ten standards were addressed differently, with some receiving more activity alignment.

Much of the success of the *APC* can be directly linked with the literature that was explored in Chapter 2. Namely, the literature review explored positive outcomes in adult development associated with the inclusion of mentoring approaches (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), a cohort format (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000), high quality professional development (Desimone & Garet, 2015), and content that is aligned to standards for educational leaders (Canole & Young, 2013). This research, along with its inclusion in the *APC* will be reviewed more thoroughly during the discussion of recommendations. While it is important to note the inclusion of these elements in the *APC*, it is also necessary to note that not all learning activities were aligned to these tenets. This will also be further discussed.

Discussion Point 2: Data pointed to the quality, rather than quantity, of learning experiences as a more powerful determinant of participants' growth by PSEL standard (RQ1, RQ3).

APC participants' completion of a pre- and post-program *Administrator Preparedness Survey* allowed for measurement of perceived growth in leadership capabilities for each of the ten PSEL (2015) standards. Observation protocols that linked the *APC* activities to leadership standards made it possible to determine how each leadership standard was utilized, including how many activities were aligned to each

standard. By analyzing these two variables jointly, perceived growth by standard and the utilization of each standard, some determination can be made about the relationship between the number of activities per standard and growth per standard. Table 23 displays the leadership standards ranked by candidates' perceived growth, as well as the number of activities that were found to align with each standard.

Table 23

Growth by Standard and Standard Utilization

Standard	*M* Final Confidence	*M* Growth	Activities Utilized	Growth per Activity
S10: School Improvement	4.86	0.80	5	0.16
S3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	4.88	0.74	2	0.37
S4: Instruction, Curriculum, Assessment	4.78	0.63	4	0.16
S6: Prof. Capacity of School Personnel	4.86	0.63	8	0.08
S1: Mission and Vision	4.74	0.57	5	0.11
S7: Prof. Community for Teachers/Staff	4.88	0.57	3	0.19
S9: Operations and Management	4.77	0.50	8	0.06
S5: Community of Care and Support	4.80	0.43	3	0.14
S2: Ethics and Norms	4.98	0.32	3	0.11
S8: Engagement of Families/Community	4.80	0.29	3	0.10

The number of activities aligned to a standard and the amount of growth perceived by participants were not always correlated at the same level. It is likely that the quality, rather than the quantity, of learning experiences plays a more important role in perceived participant growth by standard.

This point for discussion is provided to assist in refuting the notion that PSEL (2015) standard areas can be further addressed by simply including more *APC* activities that are aligned to standards of need. Data do not support the idea that the quantity of activities aligned to a standard will correlate to participants' perceived growth. It may be more helpful to understand how activities that were included within the high-growth standards were valued in terms of the core professional development components

106

referenced by Desimone and Garet (2015). For example, the two highest growth

standards, Standard 10 and Standard 3, included the School Improvement Project and

Equitable Practices Site Visit components, respectively. These were both highly valued

based on interview and exit ticket data, and this may serve to explain the high levels of

growth that were perceived in these standards.

Discussion Point 3: Overall, learning experiences were perceived as valuable and aligned to the principalship, but perceptions of value in activities varied and activities did not always actively engage participants or take advantage of the established professional learning community of the _APC_ (RQ2, RQ3).

APC participants completed an "exit ticket" survey at the conclusion of each day.

This data provided clarity about the value of each individual learning experience in terms

of four domains: the extent to which the activity's content contributed to a participant's

leadership capacity, the extent to which a participant perceived that an activity was

aligned to their daily job responsibilities, the extent to which a participant was able to

actively participate in their learning during the activity, and the extent to which a

participant could learn from their peers during the course of their activity. It is helpful to

make comparisons between learning experiences that were highly valued to participants

and experiences that were not valued. Table 24 below depicts the four learning

experiences that were valued most by participants:

Table 24
Most Valued APC Activities

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	M (SD)	
					Overall	By Level
Fierce Conversations	4.89	5.00	4.22	4.44	4.64 (.397)	E: 4.83 (.397) M: 4.50 (.000) H: 4.58 (.722)
Thanks for the Feedback Discussion	4.71	5.00	4.14	4.29	4.54 (.548)	E: 4.83 (.289) M: 4.38 (.177) H: 4.25 (1.06)
Mock Interview & Resume Workshop	4.90	4.10	4.80	3.50	4.33 (.578)	E: 4.69 (.125) M: 3.83 (.520) H: 4.33 (.764)
Core Values Activity	4.22	4.56	4.33	4.22	4.33 (.573)	E: 4.67 (.573) M: 4.25 (.289) H: 4.08 (.629)

It is easy to see why these activities were highly valued by participants. They united content that the assistant principals perceived to be valuable to their growth as leaders and was relevant to their day-to-day responsibilities with the opportunity to be actively engaged in the activity and with peers in the *APC*. Qualitative data garnered from semi-structured post-*APC* interviews provides further confirmation of the value that participants associated with these activities:

- Fierce Conversations – An elementary assistant principal noted that "being a principal is all about the conversation … building up those skills, as to how to have those conversations the most productively and to get the outcomes that you want, is extremely valuable" (personal communication, May 2018).

- *Thanks for the Feedback* discussion – A participant shared "I loved the reflections that we had for *Thanks for The Feedback*. I think reading the book was valuable, but then [the program director] really asked thoughtful feedback questions, that made you really think on a deeper level about yourself, and how to incorporate this knowledge into your work" (personal communication, May 2018).

- Mock Interview and Resume Workshop – a secondary participant noted that "It was authentic … It really made me think as how I would interview from the vision of being the principal. And it was one of the few experiences I felt like we had where we were really dropped in the role" (personal communication, May 2018).

- Core Values Activity – An elementary assistant principal discussed how they utilized the tenets of this activity, along with one of the *APC* readings, to create a survey for part of the staff to rate the participant in several areas.

To understand the success of this iteration of the *APC*, it was also necessary to understand the learning experiences that participants did not find to be valuable. Table 25 showcases the three activities that participants found to be least valuable.

Table 25
Least Valued APC Activities

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
School Budget / Finance Workshop	3.75	3.38	1.63	1.38	2.53 (.558)	E: 2.58 (.520) M: 2.42 (.520) H: 2.63 (1.23)
Digital Innovation Presentation	4.57	4.71	2.29	2.43	3.50 (.540)	E: 3.67 (.382) M: 3.50 (.354) H: 3.25 (1.06)
Support Services Presentation	4.40	4.80	2.50	2.40	3.53 (.650)	E: 3.31 (.554) M: 3.50 (.433) H: 3.83 (1.01)

There were several commonalities between these three activities and their incorporation into the *APC* experience. The most readily apparent were participants' perceptions of little active learning and peer interaction. In the case of these three experiences, each presenter relied on a PowerPoint presentation (either printed in packets or projected) and offered few opportunities for participants to apply new learning in a meaningful and active way. That is not to say that the subject matter of the presentations was not valuable, especially in the cases of the Digital Innovation and Support Services presentations, which participants felt were valuable to their leadership capacity. Reimagining these experiences in a way that would better engage participants seems to be an obvious next step.

A comparison of all "exit ticket" surveys revealed that, in all activities, participants' value ratings for the average of the first two professional learning features (alignment and coherence) were greater than their ratings for the average of the third and fourth features (active learning and collective learning). This endorsed the notion that participants appreciated the value of the *content* of the experiences provided, but had some reservations about the specific *pedagogy* that drove the implementation of the experiences. Table 26 shows averages for each of the four features that were measured using "exit ticket" surveys. These averages include each of the *APC*'s 22 surveyed activities.

Table 26
Average Ratings of Each Professional Learning Feature

Professional Learning Feature	Content - Contribute to Leadership Prep.	Coherence - Relevant to Job Responsibilities	Active Participation in Learning	Collective Participation / Peer Learning
M	4.52	4.55	3.49	3.33

It may also be helpful for the program director to compare which activities had the most disparity between *content* value ratings and *pedagogy* value ratings. Table 27 below showcases the activities that participants found to have lower pedagogical values than content values.

Table 27

Content/Pedagogical Features Disparity

Activity	Average of "Content" Elements	Average of "Pedagogical" Elements	Disparity
Digital Innovation Presentation	4.64	2.36	2.29
Support Services Presentation	4.60	2.45	2.15
School Budget / Finance Workshop	3.56	1.50	2.06

Observation protocols completed by the researcher indicated that these three activities were primarily facilitated using PowerPoint presentations or slides, and that, while valuable, provided minimal or no opportunities for the participants to engage actively in their learning or consult their peers.

Future iterations of the *APC* could consider how these learning experiences could better leverage active learning approaches and the collective experiences and talents of participants. Active learning and collective participation are two central "core features" of the professional learning sequence proposed by Desimone (2009) and Desimone and Garet (2015). Active learning "can take a number of forms, including observing [experts] or being observed, followed by interactive feedback and discussion; reviewing … work in the areas being covered; and leading discussions" and collective participation "can be a powerful form of teacher learning" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184). Though the *APC* utilizes these two features periodically, it may be useful to ensure that they are more deeply embedded throughout.

112

Discussion Point 4: A moderate amount of program activities and components were found to be more valuable to elementary participants than to secondary/high school participants (RQ2).

As discussed above, participants overwhelmingly valued the individual learning experiences of *APC,* as well as the components that were discussed during individual interviews. Despite this, data pointed to a level of disparity between values assigned to these experiences by elementary participants and secondary participants. This was most visible through quantitative value ratings associated with the "exit ticket" surveys completed after each meeting, as well as the values that interview participants assigned to the various components of the *APC* experience. Table 28 shows the individual activities that were perceived as more valuable to elementary participants, ranked by the value of disparity.

Table 28

School Level Exit Ticket Disparity

Name of Activity	Value to Elementary Participants (1-5 scale)	Value to High School Participants (1-5 scale)	*Difference*
Comprehensive Needs Assessment	4.42	2.63	1.79
Managing Change Activity	4.33	3.17	1.16
Whole Child Approach Presentation	4.17	3.38	0.79
Core Values Activity	4.67	4.08	0.59
HS Site Visit: Equitable Practices	4.08	3.50	0.58
Thanks for the Feedback Discussion	4.83	4.25	0.58
STEM School Visit	4.42	3.88	0.54
Family Engagement Pres.	4.00	3.50	0.50
Digital Innovation Presentation	3.67	3.25	0.42
Red Flags in Hiring Presentation	4.31	3.92	0.39
Mock Interview & Resume Workshop	4.69	4.33	0.36
Fierce Conversations	4.83	4.58	0.25
Personalized Learning School Visit	4.17	4.00	0.17
New Principal Panel	3.94	3.92	0.02

Note: E = 4; H = 4

It is worth reiterating that all of the participant values in the table, with the exception of

the high school value for "Comprehensive Needs Assessment", fell into the moderately

valuable or highly valuable ranges established by the study. A trend showed, however,

that even for activities that are highly valued by both school levels, elementary

participants still tended to assign higher values.

Table 29 shows similar data that were garnered from semi-structured interviews in which participants assigned ratings of value to components of the *APC*. This table is similarly sorted by disparity between elementary and secondary (middle and high school) participants.

Table 29
School Level Interview Disparity

Name of Activity	Value to Elementary Participants (1-10 scale)	Value to High School Participants (1-10 scale)	*Difference*
Fierce Conversations	10.00	5.50	4.50
Readings/Book Discussions	8.50	5.00	3.50
Principal Shares / Site Visits	9.50	6.50	3.00
Mock Interview / Resume Workshop	10.00	7.00	3.00
Principal Shadows	9.00	7.00	2.00
Department Presentations	7.50	5.50	2.00
Interactions with *APC* Peers	9.50	7.50	2.00
Leadership Project	10.00	8.50	1.50

Note: n = 4; E = 2; S = 2

These values should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size associated with the post-*APC* interviews, as one interviewee's value ratings would have a significant impact on the school's levels aggregate ratings of a component. However, they may be indicative of potential differences in perceived professional learning needs between elementary and sec principals. This could be a topic for future research.

While approaches to accommodating the learning needs of elementary and secondary administrators were not encountered in the academic research, this could prove to be an interesting area for future research, especially as most education leadership preparation programs (both traditional, university-based as well as school district

programs) typically enroll elementary and secondary participants together. It may be useful to consider this disparity through the lens of *differentiation*. Tomlinson (2012) notes that teachers adapt their classroom content, processes, and products based on the learning needs of their students. This generally requires the acquisition of baseline data to identify how content can be delivered more effectively to different groups of students. The *APC* accomplishes this in several learning experiences, including the principal shadows, leadership project, and mock interviews. It may be worthwhile to explore how this can be accomplished in other areas so that high school principals perceive relevancy to their daily job responsibilities.

Discussion Point 5: Data indicated a need for additional leadership development in the area of school budget and finance (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

A triangulation of data sources indicated that participants did not feel that preparation was adequate in one leadership area, and that further learning would be needed to ensure their preparation. Standard 9d in the PSEL (2015) standards notes that effective leaders "Are responsible, ethical and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and non-monetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices" (p. 17). Three data sources from this study provided some insight into participants' development in this area.

Seven participants completed the *Administrator Preparedness Survey* before and after their time completing the *APC*. These participants rated their perceived confidence in the above-listed Standard 9d on a scale of 1-5, with a rating of five indicating that they were very confident in their ability to engage in effective budgeting and accounting practices. In the post-*APC* administration of the survey, participants rated their

confidence at 4.6. Though a high rating numerically, this represented the lowest rating on any of the 47 threads assessed. Furthermore, participants' change in confidence in this area from the pre- to post-*APC* administration was only .29 (elementary .50, middle .33, high 0.0). This also represented one of the lowest values in terms of change in perceptions.

The "exit ticket" survey and observation protocol from the sixth day of the *APC* also provided data relevant to this discussion point. During this session, participants completed the "school budget/finance workshop", which appeared to be aligned to this standard and thread. During this activity, a representative from the division's budget department presented using a handout of PowerPoint slides. Topics included the role of the department, an accounting overview, an introduction to the principal's role in payroll, information on division efforts in health, wellness, and benefits, procurements of materials, as well as information on the school division budget. Though it seemed to provide a comprehensive overview of the administrative department, little discussion centered around school issues and the role of the principal in the budget process. On the survey, the workshop was rated the lowest in the *APC* sequence in each of the four areas assessed – alignment to daily job responsibilities (3.38), contributing to growth as a leader (3.75), active participation (1.63), facilitated learning from peers (1.38) and overall (2.53).

Several assistant principals who were interviewed after the *APC* also provided commentary on this workshop when asked to rate the value of the "department presentations" component of the *APC*. An elementary assistant principal shared:

117

Budget is one of the things that I think freaks a lot of leaders [who] haven't been a

principal. It's huge, and it's something that usually, as an assistant principal, you're

not really given a lot of experience with and then all of a sudden you're in charge

of all this money, and it's kind of a big deal. But there wasn't anything in the

presentation that made me feel better about that aspect of it. And it was super

boring … and hard to focus.

This participant also shared that difficulty focusing and internalizing the presentation

may also have been complicated by the workshop's placement just before the leadership

project presentations (personal communication, May 2018).

These sentiments of distraction on the last day of the *APC* were echoed by a

secondary participant, who noted:

That last day when we did finance, and we were so distracted by our presentations

in the afternoon, he had a PowerPoint in his hand, but I don't think we had copies

of the PowerPoint, nor did he project it. It was hard to concentrate on what he

said. And I mean, as far as that morning goes, there was such good stuff and

important stuff. I mean, finance is very important. And I could reflect on a few

pieces of what he said, but I don't think I gained a lot from that.

When asked whether the workshop's pedagogy/materials or its placement before

leadership project presentations were a bigger detriment to learning, the participant

responded that both were significant (personal communication, May 2018). The other

secondary interviewee also alluded to both content and presentation:

That was awful, the last day, when we were talking about the budget. [He was]

talking to us. Just talking to us and reading through a PowerPoint, which I hate.

And just like any bad kid, I would get my phone out and check my email, because

I knew there was nothing he had to tell me that I didn't, either already know or

that I couldn't just read in his Power Point later if I needed to research something.

… I just don't like to be bored.

This combination of survey data, observational data, and interview data make a

compelling case for iterative improvement in this area.

Although aligned to leadership standards, participants' learning in this area was

not informed by the effective pedagogical elements presented by Desimone and Garet

(2015). In addition to the active learning and collective participation concerns noted in

Discussion Point 3, a third of "core features" of professional learning relevant in this case

is content. Desimone (2009) noted that "The content focus … may be the most influential

feature. A compilation of evidence in the past decade points to the link between activities

that focus on subject matter content and how students learn that content" (p. 184). There

appears to be a disconnect with this workshop's selection of content between what was

delivered and what is most relevant for principals at the building level. This area will be

discussed in the recommendations section.

Recommendations

The preceding discussion points synthesized research literature with the findings

of this study. In order to inform iterative, continuous improvement of the *Aspiring*

Principals' Cohort, several recommendations will be presented. This are intended to be

actionable for the next iteration of the *APC*.

Recommendation 1: Continue to provide staffing, resources, and time to engage aspiring principals in a cohort-based principal development program with participants from elementary, middle, and high levels.

NOVA School District currently prioritizes leadership development for a variety of stakeholders, including principals, assistant principals, deans, and aspiring administrators. The *APC* serves as a flagship development program for experienced assistant principals who aspire to the principalship. The district commits a variety of resources to this endeavor. While human resource personnel are necessary and allocated to plan, organize, and facilitate the experience, the district has also shown a willingness to involve a large percentage of their central office as facilitators of the *APC*. These individuals, as well as the participating assistant principals themselves, are pulled from their normal job responsibilities for significant periods of time to engage in collective learning. Put simply, the district contributes substantial resources to this endeavor and surely wishes to ensure that the *APC* is effective in its goal of preparing soon-to-be principals.

Chapter 2 of this study synthesized research on characteristics of effective leadership and adult learning programs. All the research-based recommendations were included to some extent in this program. The **cohort** structure (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2009; Hitt et al., 2012; Odden, 2011; Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013) formed the backbone of the program and allowed for significant levels of collaboration, collective learning, and networking between participants. **Mentoring** approaches (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2006; Darling-Hammond et. al, 2009; Odden, 2011) were

provided at different points through interactions with the program director (an experienced principal), the principal shadow days, and other informal interactions with division leadership. An effort was made to plan **high-quality professional learning** (Desimone, 2009; Desimone and Garet, 2015; Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2013; Garet. Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001) across the *APC*, with considerations made for learning that was sustained, active, coherent, and collective. The entirety of the *APC* experience was **aligned to leadership standards** utilizing the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2015).

This study represented a first-run *implementation study* (Ni, Hollingworth, Rorrer, & Pounder, 2017) aimed at evaluating the *APC*'s initial implementation through the lens of its participants. A mixed methods approach utilized a variety of data sources to accomplish this, including a pre- and post-*APC* leadership inventory, "exit ticket" surveys administered at the conclusion of each day, semi-structured interviews of participants, and the completion of an observation protocol during meeting days. Several areas for iterative improvement aside, data analysis yielded promising conclusions. A pre- and post-*APC* administration of the *Administrator Preparedness Survey*, which was aligned to the PSEL (2015) standards, found that participants finished the academy overwhelmingly confident in their capacity to lead effectively in each of the ten assessed standards. "Exit ticket" surveys and semi-structured interviews allowed participants to assign value ratings to each major activity of the *APC*. The study found that the sequence was successful in providing activities that were valued by participants. Ten activities (45%) were classified as "highly valuable", eleven (50%) were classified as "moderately valuable", and one (5%) fell into the range for "low value". An observation protocol

documented the alignment between learning experiences of the academy and the PSEL (2015) standards and found that all the standards within PSEL were addressed.

Based on these initial findings, it is recommended that the school system continue to provide the resources necessary for the development of school leaders through the *APC*. The three recommendations that follow provide insight into three areas for potential iterative improvement in later years of the *APC*.

Recommendation 2: Consider providing resources or conversation with *APC* presenters that develops an understanding of best practices for participant-centered learning, and especially active, authentic, and collaborative experiences.

During the sequence, participants had the opportunity to complete "exit ticket" surveys at the end of each meeting day. These allowed participants to assign value ratings to each major learning experience in the four areas delineated by the study's conceptual framework. The data showcased in Discussion Point 3 demonstrated that some disparity existed between participants' perceptions of the *content* domains (generally rated higher) and the *pedagogical* elements of activities (rated lower in some activities). Three specific learning activities (Digital Innovation Presentation, Support Services Presentation, and the School Budget/Finance Workshop) were identified as experiences with a particularly high disparity between the four elements. Though aligned to leadership standards, the pedagogical choices of presenters was impactful, and participant engagement suffered as a result of passive learning through lecture and PowerPoint presentations.

Developing facilitator understanding of best practices for participant-centered learning, with particular focus on pedagogical strategies, could play an important role in ensuring effective learning experiences in later iterations of the *APC*. When individuals

and entities within the school division are contacted to participate as a facilitator within the sequence, a brief conversation, handout, or literature could be provided that would assist the facilitator(s) in activity planning. One approach would be to provide reflective questions to facilitators that advances thinking in each of the four domains associated with the study's conceptual framework (Desimone & Garet, 2015). These could include, for example:

- Content
    - Does this activity's content align with what participants will need in order to assume the role of principal?
    - Does this activity build upon the previous experiences and/or responsibilities of the participants?
    - Is this activity's content suitable for experienced assistant principals, rather than novice assistant principals?
- Coherence
    - Is the content of the activity aligned and relevant to the school division's mission?
    - Is the knowledge imparted by the activity relevant and useful for participants on a day-to-day basis?
- Active
    - Do participants have opportunities to be actively involved in their learning (discussing, debating, presenting, solving problems, dealing with mock scenarios, etc.)?
    - Have lengthy lectures and presentations by the facilitators been kept to a minimum during this activity?
- Collective
    - Does the learning experience allow participants to spend an adequate amount of time working with their peers?

   ○ Does this activity provide opportunities for participants to share their own prior experiences with peers to help advance the learning of the entire group?

The program director may also offer to review plans for learning experiences and provide some feedback with the aim of elevating the authenticity and active nature of the activity. A "Best Practices for Developing Leaders" resource has been included in Chapter 6 which may be of assistance.

  Recommendation 3: Consider further collaboration with a high school stakeholder(s) to ensure learning activities are aligned and relevant to the needs of high school administrators.

  Discussion Point 4 examined the disparity between perception data associated with the "exit ticket" surveys and interview data of elementary and high school participants. These data indicated that, in a moderate amount of activities and categories, elementary participants perceived higher learning value than their high school colleagues. This was particularly true for four major components of the *APC* as measured through the interview protocol – Fierce Conversations Workshop, Readings and Book Discussions, Principal Shares and Site Visits, and the Mock Interview/ Resume Workshop. This disparity between elementary and high school perceptions was also evidenced by "exit ticket" survey data, with three activities showing a high level of disparity – Comprehensive Needs Assessments, Managing Change, and the Whole Child Approach.

  It is often acknowledged that the job responsibilities and day-to-day functions of elementary and secondary administrators differ to a marked degree. This could contribute to the demonstrated disparity between the two groups if learning activities were more geared to the perceived responsibilities of elementary or middle-level school leaders.

When planning for future iterations of the *APC*, it would be beneficial to consult high school stakeholders within the school division to ensure that learning experiences are adequately aligned and relevant for the needs of aspiring high school principals.

The following are suggestions regarding the form of this discussion and collaboration:

- Interfacing with the Supervisor of High Schools to discuss current and prominent issues in high school education, perceived gaps in principal preparation, and/or the needs of particular members of the current *APC*.

- Discussions with a sitting high school principal regarding perceived programmatic emphases for aspiring high school principals which could be offered to the entire *APC* or differentiated for high school participants.

- Meeting with high school *APC* alumni with a discussion focus on ways to increase relevancy and authenticity of the *APC* for developmental needs of high school participants.

- Conducting pre-*APC* learning assessments of high school assistant principals who were accepted into the program in order to probe for specific needs, aspirations, and desires for the program.

Any of these stakeholders would likely be able to suggest modifications to learning experiences that would highlight uniquely high school aspects of school leadership and thus be found more relevant and valuable to high school participants.

Recommendation 4: Consider a more authentic structure for developing participant capacity in the area of school budget and finance.

One of the goals of this first-run program evaluation of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* was to unearth potentially valuable feedback on the extent to which learning activities were well-perceived by participants and led to a change in confidence in leadership capacity. "Exit ticket" surveys served to assist the researcher in identifying activities that participants perceived as valuable and not valuable, and a pre-post administration of the *Administrator Preparedness Survey* helped to demonstrate changes in perceptions of leadership ability. Additionally, semi-structured interviews gave participants the opportunity to describe in more detail how and why select learning experiences contributed to their preparation as school leaders. Together, these data sources allowed for a triangulation of data demonstrating the value of learning experiences as incorporated into the 2017-18 iteration of the *APC*.

Data analysis demonstrated that one learning experience in particular was not found to be valuable to participants and was evidenced by this triangulation of data across "exit ticket" surveys, interviews, and the *Administrator Preparedness Survey*. This activity, the "School Budget and Finance Workshop", was aligned to standard 9d of PSEL (2015) standards, which notes that school leaders "Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices" (p.17). While it was laudable that school budget and finance was included as a learning experience in the *APC* sequence, participants provided a variety of feedback that demonstrate that improvement could be made. Table 30 showcases "exit ticket" survey feedback provided by participants.

Table 30
Budget/Finance Exit Ticket

To what extent did/were the below activities - (scale 1-5)	Contribute to your leadership prep.?	Aligned to your job functions?	Allow you to actively participate?	Allow you to learn from peers?	*M (SD)*	
					Overall	By Level
School Budget / Finance Workshop	3.75	3.38	1.63	1.38	2.53 (.558)	E: 2.58 (.520) M: 2.42 (.520) H: 2.63 (1.23)

The workshop received the lowest value ratings of the entire sequence in each of the four

areas assessed. Reported value ratings were consistently low across elementary, middle,

and high school participants. These low ratings may have contributed to data on the pre-

post administration of the *Administrator Preparedness Survey.* At the conclusion of the

sequence, participants rated their confidence in this PSEL area as 4.6 – the lowest rating

of any of the PSEL standard threads. This 4.6 rating represented a growth value from pre-

to post-administration of .29, which was also one of the lowest growth ratings of the

PSEL standard threads. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their

thoughts on why this learning activity may not have met their expectations, and several

chose to do so. These responses were shared in Discussion Point 5 and covered areas of

pedagogy, instructor-centered presentation style, and lack of involvement.

Recognizing that assistant principals transitioning into the principalship often

express a lack of preparation or anxiety in the areas of school budget and finance (as

demonstrated by survey and interview data in this study), it is recommended that this be a

focus area for programmatic improvement. Moving forward into the next iteration of the

APC, participants would benefit from a more authentic, student-centered, and engaging

experience in this area. Learning experience planning could be steeped in the four domains through which this study analyzed activity value that were based on the research of Birman, et al. (2000):

- Contributions to leadership preparation – This learning experience could better prepare participants for the principalship by utilizing, for example, a sitting principal for facilitation of the activity. This could also include some combination of a sitting principal, school-based bookkeeper, and central office budget administrator who may contribute a more global, division-level perspective.

- Aligned to job responsibilities – The experience could be geared less toward providing an understanding of the division-level school budget and more toward the daily management of an individual school budget. This could provide a more focused perspective on "hot topics" in school budget, including for example concepts of budget equity, managing relationships with the PTA/PTO, school budget accounts, and/or a cautionary overview of commonly-made mistakes in this area.

- Allow participants to participate actively – A theme that emerged during semi-structured interviews was participants' requests for more authenticity through real-world scenarios and case studies that put participants in the role of the principal. While reflecting on ways to improve this budget/finance experience, one assistant principal noted that something as simple as "what would we do if someone handed us a blank check … that would have been an amazing conversation" (personal communication, June, 2018) could have catalyzed a more effective learning experience.

- Allow participants to learn from their peers – This pedagogical approach is easily integrated with the participatory approaches listed above. Allowing assistant principals to grapple with authentic, scenario and/or real-world budget situations, paired with the expertise and guidance of site-based presenters, could meaningfully promote confidence in participants' leadership capacity in this area.

Implications

For local practice: Potential impediments to implementation. The presented recommendations were devised to be actionable, implementable, responsive to programmatic needs, and aligned to the existing structures of the *APC*. With the assumption that this principal preparation sequence will continue to be featured as part of the leadership pipeline in this school system, all recommendations should be able to be accomplished. However, several factors could curtail programmatic improvement efforts.

In terms of Recommendation 1, staffing, budget, and the existence of interested candidates are an important aspect of the continued success of this program. In order to continue to meet the goal of preparing soon-to-be principals for the rigors of the role, the school system will need to continue to provide central office staff the time to plan and facilitate the program, and time for central office and site-based staff to visit the *APC* to facilitate learning experiences. These are "non-negotiables" for the continuation of the experience. In addition, interested candidates for program participation are essential. Program staff will need to continue to market the program as valuable for sitting assistant principals. A reduction in staffing, budgets, or interested candidates could complicate program improvement efforts.

Recommendations 2-4 rely on the program coordinator's ability to dialogue with other stakeholders in the school division. This includes, broadly, all learning experience facilitators as active, aligned, peer-based pedagogy is emphasized. Recommendations 3 and 4 would require the program coordinator to have the time to canvass with high school stakeholders and budget/finance representatives, respectively. This could be impeded if the necessary time is not able to be provided, or if the mentioned stakeholders were unavailable or unwilling to engage in dialogue around improving these learning experience.

Future research. Future research into the effectiveness of the *APC* can be viewed through the lens of continuous improvement, with ongoing assessments of perceived value being probed annually during and after each iteration of the *APC*. This would represent an extension of this implementation study and would allow for the continual assessment of the program's value as described by the assistant principals that participate.

After several iterations of the *APC*, the school division may wish to conduct a study of the program's *outcomes*. As described by Orr and Barber (2009) and Ni et al. (2017), an outcome study in this situation could focus on the career trajectories of alumni of the *APC*. It would be helpful to understand 1) if graduates of the program were more likely to be hired as principals both within and outside of the school district and 2) if practicing principals who had completed the sequence could relate success in the role to the learning experiences of the academy. A combination of further implementation studies with outcome studies may provide the richest descriptions of the value of continuing to provide this leadership development experience.

For leadership development. Based on the data associated with this iteration of the *APC,* it would behoove other medium to large school divisions to consider incorporating a similar program into their professional learning offerings. Quantitative and qualitive participant perceptions from this study provided a blueprint for how program designers can approach the development of a cohort-based program that unites best-practices for adult leadership development with leadership standards that delineate the needs of aspiring principals. A similar program evaluation of early iterations of leadership development programs could ensure that the local needs of aspiring leaders are being met and continuously improved upon.

CHAPTER SIX: ACTION COMMUNCATION PRODUCTS

In the previous chapter, the findings of this study were presented utilizing each of the study's three research questions. These included:

- Discussion Point 1: Data shows the *APC* to be, overall, a valuable, encompassing, and efficacious experience for participants (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

- Discussion Point 2: Data pointed to the quality, rather than quantity, of learning experiences as a more powerful determinant of participants' growth by PSEL standard (RQ1, RQ3).

- Discussion Point 3: Learning experiences were perceived as valuable and aligned to the principalship, but these perception values varied, and activities did not always actively engage participants or take advantage of the established professional learning community of the *APC* (RQ2, RQ3).

- Discussion Point 4: A moderate amount of program activities and components were found to be more valuable to elementary participants than to secondary/high school participants (RQ$_2$).

- Discussion Point 5: Data indicated a need for additional leadership development in the area of school budget and finance (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

In addition to the presentation of the above points, the previous chapter also outlined and discussed recommendations intended to inform iterative improvement of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort.* These recommendations included:

- Recommendation 1: Continue to provide staffing, resources, and time to engage

  aspiring principals in a cohort-based principal development program with

  participants from elementary, middle, and high levels.

- Recommendation 2: Consider providing resources or conversation with *APC*

  presenters that develops an understanding of best practices for participant-

  centered learning, and especially active, authentic, and collaborative experiences.

- Recommendation 3: Consider further collaboration with a high school

  stakeholder(s) to ensure learning activities are aligned and relevant to the needs of

  high school administrators.

- Recommendation 4: Consider a more authentic structure for developing

  participant capacity in the area of school budget and finance.

This chapter provides three actions communications that will be presented to relevant

school division administrators. These individuals will include the Assistant

Superintendent for Human Resources as well as the program director for the *APC*.

The first action communication product is in the form of a briefing memo that

provides an overview of this evaluative study and describes the research methods utilized

as well as the discussion points and subsequent recommendations included in this report.

The second takes the form of a digital slideshow intended for face-to-face presentation to

key stakeholders involved in the implementation and revision of the *APC*. It provides

further opportunity for discussion around research findings and recommendations. The

third is a professional learning resource based on Desimone and Garet (2015) which

depicts the four best practices for leadership development experiences as utilized by this

evaluation. It provides a series of helpful questions and is intended as a recommended

resource for distribution for all individuals who will be presenting learning experiences to later cohorts. It is hoped that these action communications will be helpful as stakeholders plan for iterative improvement to the *APC*.

Action Communication One: Memo to Department of Personnel

Subject: Program evaluation completed for the *Aspiring Principal Cohort*: 2017-18

Issue: Division resources have been allocated for a variety of initiatives and programs in the area of leadership development. One such program, the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* (pseudonym)*,* was created to facilitate the continuing development of assistant principals who aspire to the principalship. However, little is known about the program's effectiveness or how participants within the *APC* perceive its learning experiences. In order to inform iterative improvement of the program, it is critical to better understand the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the *APC*.

Research Methods: A mixed-methods design was used to investigate three research questions related to the participants' perceptions of the *APC*. A pre- and post-sequence *Administrator Preparedness Survey* allowed for an understanding of participant growth related to the PSEL (2015) standards. "Exit ticket" surveys and individual, semi-structured interviews provided feedback on individual learning experiences. An observation protocol completed by the researcher during each meeting provided insight into the content, pedagogical strategies, and the extent of the alignment between activities and the PSEL standards.

Findings: Five findings were outlined related to the research questions and literature:
- Finding 1: Data suggest that the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* is, overall, a valuable, encompassing, and efficacious experience for participants.
- Finding 2: Data pointed to the quality, rather than quantity, of learning experiences as a more powerful determinant of participants' growth by PSEL standard.
- Finding 3: Learning experiences were perceived as valuable and aligned to the principalship, but these perception values varied, and activities did not always actively engage participants or take advantage of the established professional learning community of the *APC*.
- Finding 4: A moderate amount of program activities and components were found to be more valuable to elementary participants than to secondary/high school participants.
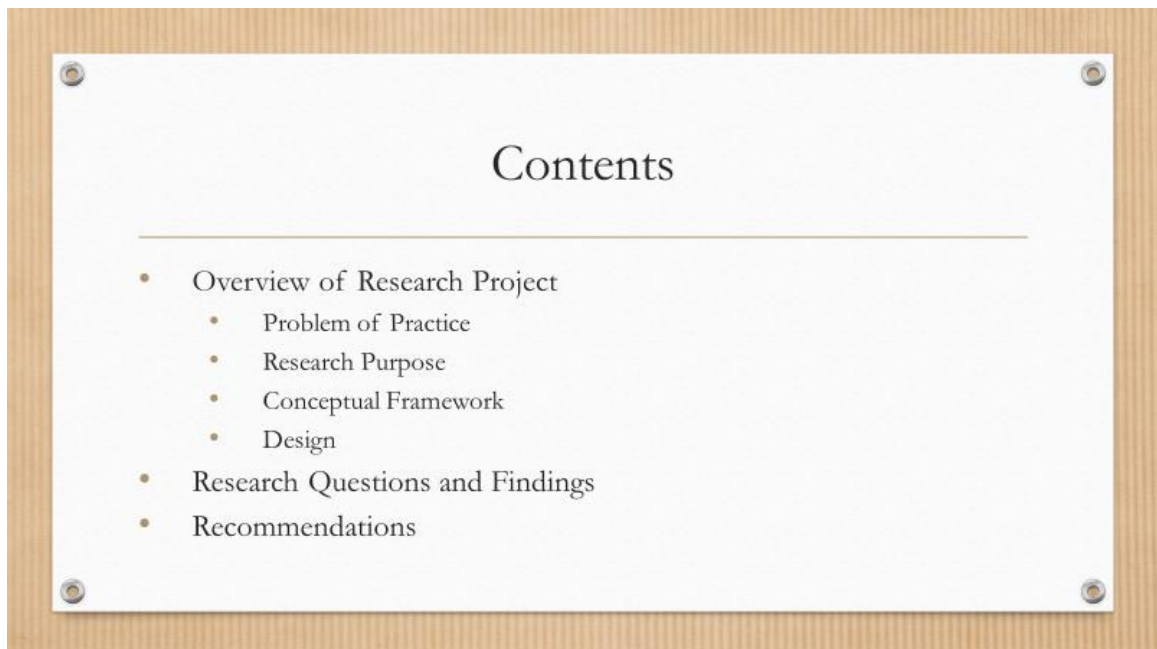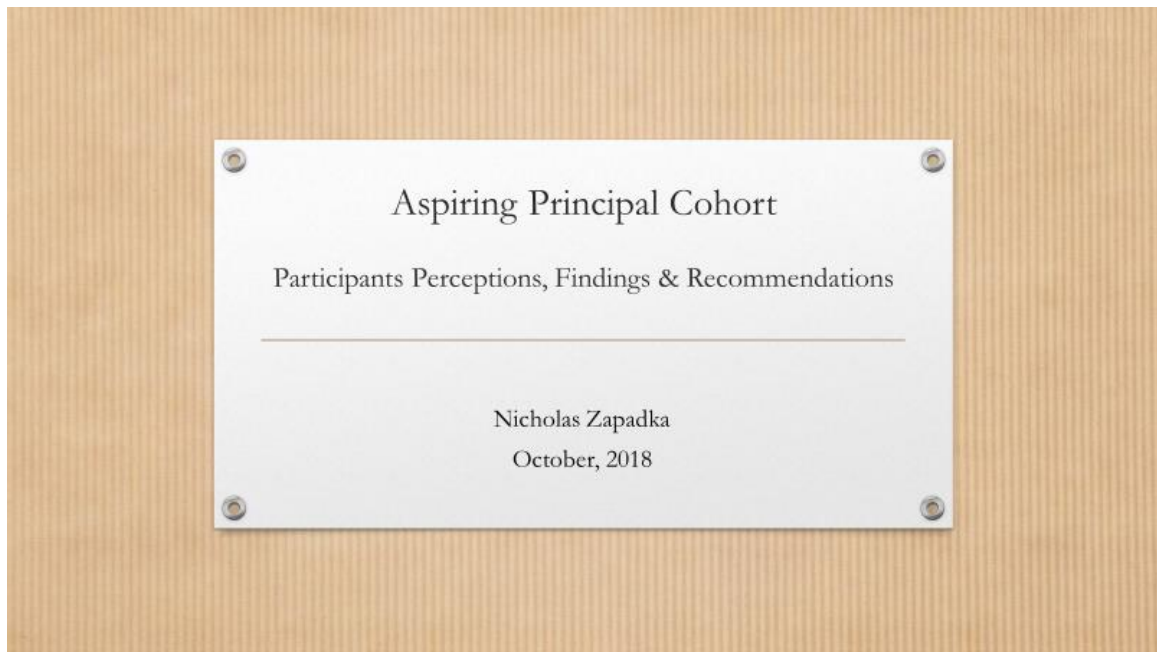- Finding 5: Data suggested a need for the refining of learning experiences in the area of school budget and finance.

Recommendations: Four recommendations were proposed to address research findings:
- Recommendation 1: Continue to provide staffing, resources, and time to engage aspiring principals in a cohort-based principal development program with participants from elementary, middle, and high levels.
- Recommendation 2: Consider providing resources or conversation with *APC* presenters that develops an understanding of best practices for participant-centered learning, and especially active, authentic, and collaborative experiences.
- Recommendation 3: Consider further collaboration with high school division leadership, or a sitting high school principal to ensure that learning activities are adequately differentiated for the needs of high school administrators.

- Recommendation 4: Consider a more authentic structure for developing participant capacity in the area of school budget and finance.

Summary: A program evaluation investigated the effectiveness of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* at the macro level through analysis of growth around leadership standards, and at the micro level by gauging participants' perceptions of individual learning experiences. Data found the *APC*, overall, to be effective in facilitating growth and valuable to participants. The evaluation unearthed several areas in which iterative improvement is possible. The school division is encouraged to continue to prioritize leadership development opportunities by providing authentic, sustained, and cohort-based experiences.

Action Communication Two: Evaluation Results Presentation

Aspiring Principal Cohort

Participants Perceptions, Findings & Recommendations

Nicholas Zapadka
October, 2018

Contents

- Overview of Research Project
  - Problem of Practice
  - Research Purpose
  - Conceptual Framework
  - Design
- Research Questions and Findings
- Recommendations

Problem of Practice / Purpose of Study

- Pseudonym School District's *Aspiring Principal Cohort (APC)* is a promising program for developing leadership capacity in aspiring principals. However, the school division does not currently possess qualitative or quantitative measures that shed light on the cohort's current effectiveness or assist in facilitating iterative, continuous improvement of the cohort. The purpose of this study was to garner feedback from a variety of sources and to use these data to make recommendations for the future improvement of the cohort.
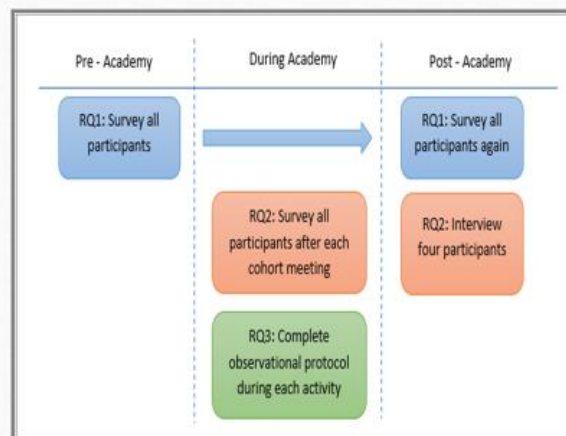
Conceptual Framework
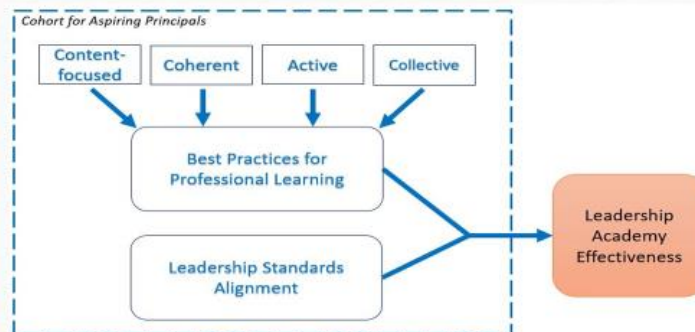
Research Questions

1. (Macro focus) - How do individuals' perceptions of their leadership capacity change as a result of their participation in the Aspiring Principal Cohort?

2. (Micro focus) - Which experiences in the Aspiring Principal Cohort sequence did participants perceive to be valuable/not valuable?

3. In what ways were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) utilized within the cohort?

Pre - Academy	During Academy	Post - Academy
RQ1: Survey all participants	→	RQ1: Survey all participants again
	RQ2: Survey all participants after each cohort meeting	RQ2: Interview four participants
	RQ3: Complete observational protocol during each activity	

Methodology

- Research Question 1 – participants completed the pre-post cohort *Administrator Preparedness Survey*

- Research Question 2 – participants completed an "exit ticket" survey after each meeting, and four assistant principals participated in semi-structured interviews after the cohort.

- Research Question 3 – the researcher completed an observational protocol during each meeting of the cohort.

Response Rates

Data Source	Number Returned	Return Rate
Administrator Preparedness Survey (Pre-Cohort)	8	73%
Administrator Preparedness Survey (Post-Cohort)	9	82%
Exit Ticket Survey – Meeting 1	9	90%
Exit Ticket Survey – Meeting 2	10	91%
Exit Ticket Survey – Meeting 3	7	64%
Exit Ticket Survey – Meeting 4/5	9	82%
Exit Ticket Survey – Meeting 6	8	82%

Findings

1. Data found the Aspiring Principal Cohort to be, overall, a valuable, encompassing, and efficacious experience for participants (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

2. Data point to the quality, rather than quantity, of learning experiences as a more powerful determinant of participants' growth by PSEL standard (RQ1, RQ3).

3. Overall, learning experiences were perceived as valuable and aligned to the principalship, but perceptions of value in activities varied and activities did not always actively engage participants or take advantage of the established professional learning community of the *APC* (RQ2, RQ3).

Findings (con't)

4. A moderate amount of program activities and components were found to be more valuable to elementary participants than to secondary/high school participants (RQ2).

5. Data indicate a need for additional leadership development in the area of school budget and finance (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3).

Recommendations

1. Continue to provide staffing, resources, and time to engage aspiring principals in a cohort-based principal development program with participants from elementary, middle, and high levels.

2. Consider providing resources or conversation with cohort presenters that develops an understanding of best practices for participant-centered learning, and especially active, authentic, and collaborative experiences.

Recommendations (con't)

3. Consider further collaboration with a high school stakeholder(s) to ensure learning activities are aligned and relevant to the needs of high school administrators

4. Consider a more authentic structure for developing participant capacity in the area of school budget and finance.

Provided for You

- Departmental memo for use as needed
- Data tables relevant to discussed findings and recommendations
- "Best Practices for Adult Learning" resource for distribution to future presenters, if desired
- Final draft of full study (once approved by committee)

Questions?

Action Communication Three: "Best Practices for Adult Learning" Resource

PD Resource

Best Practice Considerations for Leadership Development Experiences

"Coherence" Considerations:

- Is this learning experience consistent with the needs, mission, and vision of the school division?
- Does this learning experience build upon other professional development focuses already existing within the division?

"Active" Considerations:

- Does this learning experience allow participants to build knowledge through active means, such as through authentic scenarios, peer discussion, or the receiving of feedback?
- Does this learning experience avoid passive forms of learning, such as listening to a lecture or following along with a slideshow?

"Collective" Considerations:

- Does this learning experience allot time for participants to benefit from the experiences and perspectives of their peers?
- Are there opportunities for participant sharing and discussion at the horizontal (same school level) and vertical (different school level) levels?

"Aligned" Considerations:

- Does this learning experience develop skills or competencies that school leaders use in their daily practice?
- Is this learning experience aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL?)

Leadership Development

Adapted from Desimone, L. M., & Garet, M. S. (2015). Best practices in teachers' professional development in the United States. *Psychology, Society and Education, 7*(3), 252-263.

144

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APPENDIX A - Administrator Preparedness Survey (Pre/Post Academy)

Congratulations on your completion of the *Aspiring Principal Cohort!* As you know, a program evaluation is being completed to improve future iterations of the academy. Your responses to this survey are greatly appreciated and will assist this program evaluation. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Researchers do not have access to identifying information on the individuals accepted into the academy. Information that you provide (school level, PID, etc.) will not be used to identify you, only to compare your survey results before the academy to your survey results after the academy. All individual responses are strictly confidential and will not be shared with the NOVA Public Schools.

By clicking the box below, you acknowledge that you have read the Informed Consent Agreement and agree to participate. This is voluntary and you may opt out at any time.

○   I agree to participate in this study

Please enter your PID. This is not used to identify you, only to compare your survey results today to your survey results after the
academy. _____

What is your school level?

○   Elementary

○   Middle

○   High

What are your total years of service:

	0	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30

As an educator	⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎮⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
As an employee of this school division	⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎮⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
As an assistant principal	⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎮⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯

For each of the following sections, you will be asked to consider your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice. Indicators are rated on a scale

of 1-5 (1 = not at all confident in my abilities to do this; 5= very confident in my ability to do this).

Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.	○	○	○	○	○
Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education.	○	○	○	○	○
Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.	○	○	○	○	○
Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.	○	○	○	○	○

Standards 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.	○	○	○	○	○
Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.	○	○	○	○	○
Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context.	○	○	○	○	○
Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.	○	○	○	○	○
Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school	○	○	○	○	○
Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.	○	○	○	○	○
Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.	○	○	○	○	○
Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.	○	○	○	○	○
Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.	○	○	○	○	○
Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.	○	○	○	○	○
Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.	○	○	○	○	○
Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth	○	○	○	○	○
Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation	○	○	○	○	○
Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers/Staff

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.	○	○	○	○	○
Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Be approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.	○	○	○	○	○
Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.	○	○	○	○	○
Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning	○	○	○	○	○
Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 9: Operations and Management

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity	○	○	○	○	○
Be responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.	○	○	○	○	○
Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption.	○	○	○	○	○
Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.	○	○	○	○	○

Standard 10: School Improvement

How confident are you in your ability to:

	Not at all confident				Very confident
Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.	○	○	○	○	○
Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.	○	○	○	○	○
Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.	○	○	○	○	○
Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX B - "Exit Ticket" Survey

The following represents one "exit ticket" survey administered during the *APC* experience. Each survey followed the same format and were updated with the meeting date's activities.

Exit Ticket - November 2 Meeting

By clicking below, you acknowledge having read the Informed Consent Agreement at the beginning of this study.

○ I agree to participate in this study.

Thank you for your participation in the program evaluation. All responses are anonymous and will not be associated with your name at any time. No identifying information is collected by this exit ticket.

What is your school level?

○ Elementary

○ Middle

○ High

This page asks for your feedback on the activity "Determining Our Core Values" and "Emotional Intelligence"

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did this activity contribute to your preparation as a school leader?

○ 1- Did not contribute to my preparation.

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Contributed greatly to my preparation

To what extent was this activity aligned with your daily job responsibilities?

○ 1- Very low level of alignment

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Very high level of alignment

To what extent was your participation during this activity passive (listening, absorbing, etc.) or active (discussing, applying, integrating, etc.)?

○ 1- Entirely Passive

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Entirely Active

To what extent did your cohort of peers within this academy contribute to your learning during this activity?

○ 1- My peers did not contribute to my learning

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- My peers contributed greatly to my learning

This page asks for your feedback on the activity "Managing change presentations".

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did this activity contribute to your preparation as a school leader?

○ 1- Did not contribute to my preparation.

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Contributed greatly to my preparation

To what extent was this activity aligned with your daily job responsibilities?

○ 1- Very low level of alignment

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Very high level of alignment

To what extent was your participation during this activity passive (listening, absorbing, etc.) or active (discussing, applying, integrating, etc.)?

○ 1- Entirely Passive

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Entirely Active

To what extent did your cohort of peers within this academy contribute to your learning during this activity?

○ 1- My peers did not contribute to my learning

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- My peers contributed greatly to my learning

This page asks for your feedback on the activity "Family engagement discussion"

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did this activity contribute to your preparation as a school leader?

○ 1- Did not contribute to my preparation.

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Contributed greatly to my preparation

To what extent was this activity aligned with your daily job responsibilities?

○ 1- Very low level of alignment

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Very high level of alignment

To what extent was your participation during this activity passive (listening, absorbing, etc.) or active (discussing, applying, integrating, etc.)?

○ 1- Entirely Passive

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Entirely Active

To what extent did your cohort of peers within this academy contribute to your learning during this activity?

○ 1- My peers did not contribute to my learning

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- My peers contributed greatly to my learning

This page asks for your feedback on the activity "Establishing Equitable Practices"

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent did this activity contribute to your preparation as a school leader?

○ 1- Did not contribute to my preparation.

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Contributed greatly to my preparation

To what extent was this activity aligned with your daily job responsibilities?

○ 1- Very low level of alignment

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Very high level of alignment

To what extent was your participation during this activity passive (listening, absorbing, etc.) or active (discussing, applying, integrating, etc.)?

○ 1- Entirely Passive

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- Entirely Active

To what extent did your cohort of peers within this academy contribute to your learning during this activity?

○ 1- My peers did not contribute to my learning

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5- My peers contributed greatly to my learning

(Optional) We would be appreciative of any additional feedback on this meeting as a whole that would be helpful in improving the program for future cohorts.

_____

APPENDIX C - Post-Academy Interview Protocol

This protocol will be utilized to elicit feedback from participants in the *Aspiring Principal Cohort* after completion of the academy sequence. It aims to garner specific feedback and perspective from participants on major components of the academy program.

1. Allow for participants to re-read copy of the Informed Consent Agreement; reiterate that all responses are confidential and that no identifying information will be shared or reported. Audio of this session will be recorded for transcription and coding – all will be destroyed post-analysis.

2. Introduce large, laminated continuum (see page 2) that will be used to facilitate conversations with participants. Briefly explain this chart.

3. One at a time, hand participant a small index card with the name of an academy component, and read a brief description of what was completed/accomplished during the activity. Ask the participant to place it on the continuum. The following order will be utilized, until all eight items are represented on the continuum.

   - Principal Shares
   - School Site Visits
   - Administrative Department Presentations
   - Leadership Project
   - Readings / Book Discussions
   - Fierce Conversations Workshop
   - Collaboration/Discussion within the APC
   - Individual Meetings / Discussions with the Program Director

4. While participant considers placement of each of the 8 components, encourage "think aloud" sharing of process of placing that selection, and ask "What made you decide to place it at that location? What made this valuable or not valuable to you?"

5. After each of the 8 components have been placed, ask these two questions:

   a. "Tell me about the component of the academy that you ranked the highest. Why did you do so?" and engage participant in discussion that allows them to detail their thoughts. Probe further with references to best practices in leadership development.

   b. "Tell me about the component of the academy that you ranked the lowest. Why did you do so?" and engage participant in discussion that allows them to detail their thoughts. Probe further with references to best practices in leadership development.

   6. Ask for any additional thoughts on the Academy to be shared and conclude interview.

Not a
Valuable
Experience

Valuable
Experience
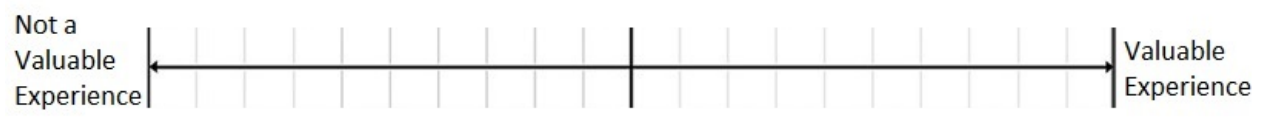
The publisher's description of the text is included with each reference.
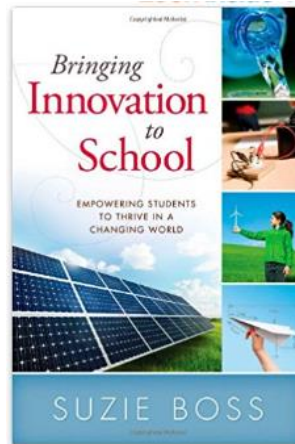
Boss, S. (2012). *Bringing innovation to school: Empowering students to thrive in a*

changing world. Solution Tree Press.

Are you preparing a new generation of innovators? Activate your students'

creativity and problem-solving potential with breakthrough learning projects. Across all

grades and content areas, student-driven, collaborative projects will teach students how to

generate innovative ideas and then put them into action. You'll take learning to new

heights and help students master core content.
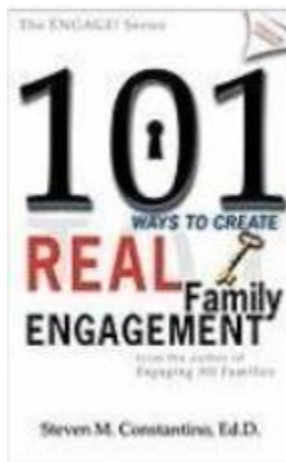
Constantino, S. M. (2008). *101 ways to create real family engagement*. ENGAGE! Press.

Many schools and districts have proclaimed their "strategies for family

engagement" and set about "doing things" but they have not succeeded in engaging all

families. At best, many have merely increased the engagement of the already engaged.

Dr. Steve Constantino addresses the cultural revolution that must first occur, along with

providing strategies and exercises that help schools begin making the tough cultural

changes. Readers then learn how to build on that new cultural foundation and create the

relationships that motivate family involvement, and ultimately create family engagement.

This book contains 101 tested ways to create REAL family engagement.
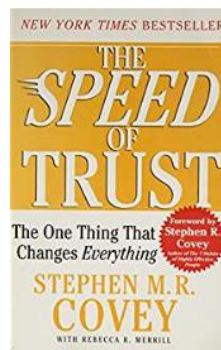
Covey, S. M. (2006). *The speed of trust: The one thing that changes everything*. Simon

and Schuster.

Stephen M.R. Covey shows how trust—and the speed at which it is established

with clients and, employees—is essential to a successful organization. With nearly

750,000 copies in print, this instant classic shows that establishing trust is "the one thing

that changes everything" (Marcus Buckingham, coauthor of Now, Discover Your

Strengths) in both business and life.

Trust, says Stephen M.R. Covey, is the very basis of the new global economy, and

he shows how trust—and the speed at which it is established with clients, employees, and

constituents—is the essential ingredient for any high–performance, successful

organization.

For business leaders and public figures in any arena, The Speed of Trust offers an

unprecedented and eminently practical look at exactly how trust functions in our every

transaction and relationship—from the most personal to the broadest, most indirect

interaction—and how to establish trust immediately so that you and your organization

can forego the time–killing, bureaucratic check–and–balance processes so often deployed

in lieu of actual trust.
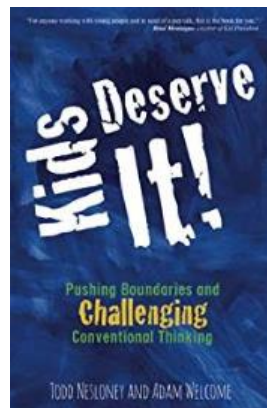
Nesloney, S. & Welcome, A. (2016). *Kids deserve it!: Pushing Boundaries and*

challenging conventional thinking. Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

What if learning was exciting? What if students felt important and empowered every time

they walked into the building? What if parents looked forward to calls from their

children's teachers and principals, instead of cringing when the school's number

popped up on their phones? To Todd Nesloney and Adam Welcome, those aren't far-fetched what ifs; they can (and should) be a reality for every teacher, school, parent, and student. In Kids Deserve It!, Todd and Adam encourage you to think big and make learning fun and meaningful for students. While you're at it, you just might rediscover why you became an educator in the first place. Learn why you should be calling parents to praise your students (and employees). Discover ways to promote family interaction and improve relationships for kids at school and at home. Be inspired to take risks, shake up the status quo, and be a champion for your students. #KidsDeserveIt

Stone, D., & Heen, S. (2015). *Thanks for the feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well*. Penguin.

We get feedback every day of our lives, from friends and family, colleagues, customers, and bosses, teachers, doctors, and strangers. We're assessed, coached, and criticized about our performance, personalities, and appearance.

We know that feedback is essential for professional development and healthy relationships—but we dread it and often dismiss it. That's because receiving

feedback sits at the junction of two conflicting human desires. We want to learn

and grow, but we also want to be accepted and respected just as we are now.

Thanks for the Feedback is the first book to address this tension head on. It

explains why getting feedback is so crucial yet so challenging and offers a simple

framework and powerful tools to help us take on life's blizzard of offhand

comments, annual evaluations, and unsolicited advice with curiosity and grace.

The business world spends billions of dollars and millions of hours each year teaching

people how to give feedback more effectively. Stone and Heen argue that we've

got it backwards and show us why the smart money is on educating receivers – in

the workplace as well as in personal relationships. It's the receivers, after all, who

interpret what they're hearing and decide whether and how to change.

Coauthors of the international bestseller Difficult Conversations, Stone and Heen have

discovered that while receiving feedback can be fraught, doing it well can be

taught. With humor and clarity, the book blends the latest insights from

neuroscience and psychology with practical, hard-headed advice. It is destined to

become a classic in the world of leadership, organizational behavior, and

education.

APPENDIX E - APC Agendas

(identifying information redacted)

Lead ███████

Leadership Development

███████████████████

Agenda
Thursday, November 2, 2017
8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Administration Building
████████

8:00 am – 8:45 am	**Welcome and Introductions**
	Team Building Activity: Design a Group Résumé
	Overview of ████████ **Academy**

	Principal Shadow Day
	Change Project
	Career Fair Information
	   February 10, 2018 @ ████████ **HS**
	   March 3, 2018 @ ████ **HS**
	   April 14, 2018 @ ████ **HS**

	████████ **Academy Goal Setting**
8:45 am – 9:35 am	**Defining Our Why: Determining Our Core Values**
	Professional Standards for Educational Leadership
9:35 am – 9:45 am	**BREAK**
9:45 am – 10:30 am	**Study Overview**
	Cohort Readings: *"Start With Why"*
10:30 am – 11:30 am	**Principal Share: Managing Change** ████████ **High School** ████████████ **Elementary School**
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	**LUNCH**
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	**Family Engagement: Engaging All Families, Establishing a School Community and Effective Communications Strategies**
	Principal Share: ████████████ **Elementary School** ████ **Middle School**
1:15 pm – 1:45 pm	**Travel to** ████ **High School**

1:45 pm – 3:45 pm	**Establishing Equitable Practices (Groups rotate after each session)**
	   Site Tour w/Principal ████
	   Group Discussion and Activity w/Dr. ████████

3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	**Homework: Readings**

Lead ███████

███████████████ **Academy**

Agenda

Thursday, January 11, 2018
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Administration Building
███████████

8:00 am – 8:45 am	**Welcome**
	Standards Review
	•**Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms**
	•**Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel**
	•**Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**
	•**Standard 9: Operations and Management**
	Book Study: *Thanks for the Feedback*
8:45 am – 9:45 am	**Interview/Résumé Workshop Preparation**
	Introduction of Workbox Activities/Leadership Simulation
9:50 am – 10:50 am	**Mock Interviews**
	With Guest Participants from
	Department of Human Resources ███████
	Department of Instruction
11:00 am – 12:15 pm	**Support Services Presentation**
	Assistant Superintendent
	Support Services
	Transportation
	Planning Services
	Safety & Security ███████
	Facilities Services
	School Nutrition Services
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	**Lunch with Support Services** ███████
1:00 pm – 1:30 pm	**Principal Share: Core 1: Integrity**
	Elementary School
	The Speed of Trust
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	**Red Flags in Hiring**
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm	**BREAK**
2:45 PM – 3:40 PM	**Legal Issues Awareness:**
	Division Counsel
3:45 pm – 4:30 pm	**New Principal Panel**

181

Lead ▮▮▮▮

Aspiring Principals' ▮▮▮▮

Agenda

Session 3

Thursday, February 15, 2018
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

8:10 am – 9:35 am	**Principal Share:** ▮▮▮▮ **Elementary School** **STEM Classroom Visit**
9:35 am – 9:55 am	**Transition to** ▮▮ **Middle School**
10:00 am – 11:30 am	**Principal Share:** ▮▮ **Principal,** ▮▮ **Middle School** **Personalized Learning Classroom Visit**
11:30 am – 12:45 pm	**Transition to Admin Building, Room** ▮▮ **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**
12:45 pm to 1:00 pm	**"Speed of Trust" – Partner Activity**
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	**What Does the "Whole Child Approach" Look Like?** ▮▮ **Director** ▮▮
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	**Best Practices in Digital Innovation** **Department of Digital Innovation:** 　　　　　▮▮ **Director of** ▮▮ 　　　　　▮▮ **Director of** ▮▮ 　　　　　▮▮ **Director of** ▮▮
2:30 pm – 2:40 pm	**BREAK**
2:40 pm – 3:00 pm	**"Bringing Innovation to School" – Reading/Discussion**
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	**Communication Overview** **Public Information Office:** 　　　　　▮▮ **Public Information Officer** 　　　　　▮▮ **Public Information Coordinator**
3:45 pm – 4:30 pm	**"Thanks for the Feedback" – Discussion/Activity**
	Next Steps

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Academy

PSEL Focus:

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

a) Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.

c) Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.

d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.

e) Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Effective leaders:

a) Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.

b) Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.

c) Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.

d) Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.

e) Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.

f) Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and the Community

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

c) Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.

Standard 9: Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

f) Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management.

g) Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement.

Lead ▮▮▮▮▮

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮**Academy**

Leadership Development

Agenda

Session 4

Thursday, March 15, 2018
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

8:30 am – 3:30 pm	**Fierce Conversations** ▮▮▮▮ **Directional of** ▮▮▮▮▮
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	**Discussion** **Core 4,** **"The Speed of Trust"** **Kids Deserve It!** **Principal Shadow Days** **Leadership Projects Update**

PSEL Focus:

Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

 e) Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.

Standard 6: Professional capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

 g) Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

 e) Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.

184

Lead ███████

███████████████ **Academy**

Agenda

Session 5

Thursday, April 26, 2018
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

8:30 am – 3:30 pm	**Fierce Conversations** ███████ **Directional of** ███████████
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	**Leadership Projects Update** **Final Assignment Reminders**

PSEL Focus:

Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

- e) Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.

Standard 6: Professional capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

- g) Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

- e) Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.

185

Lead ███████

███████████████ **Academy**

Agenda

Session 6

Wednesday, May 2, 2018
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

8:00 am – 8:30 am	**Academy Reflection/Discussion**
8:30 am – 9:15 am	**Budget and Finance Workshop** ███████ **Director of** ████████████
9:30 am – 10:00 am	**Security Infrastructure Update Discussion** ███████ **Safety & Security Supervisor**
10:00 am – 11:15 am	**Comprehensive Needs Assessment** **Dr.** ███████ **Research Supervisor**
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	**LUNCH –** ███████ **Catering**
12:15 pm – 2:00 pm	**Leadership Project Presentations** **Celebration**

PSEL Focus:

Standard 1. Mission, Vision and Core Values

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

Effective leaders:

b) In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.

d) Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.

Standard 9. Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Effective leaders:

c) Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement.

186

APPENDIX F - Final Leadership Projects of Participants

School Level of Participant	Leadership Project Topic
Elementary	PBL Reboot: Use of a PBL self-assessment tool to unpack data and create learning cohorts to provide differentiated, targeted staff development in the area of PBL
Elementary	Building an understanding of Personalized Learning among all stakeholders and providing an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process of transitioning to a PL school
Elementary	Implementation of STEM activities to combine with PBL and other initiatives across all grade levels
Elementary	Working with staff within year 1 of computer science immersion pilot. Creating opportunities to connect coding into the curriculum standards
Middle	Creation of a Student Advisory Council to engage students in the school based decision-making process through collaboration, research, dialogue, and discussion
Middle	Development of a system of professional development aligned to the teacher evaluations, division vision, and school data. Includes mental health, inclusive practices, and collaboration
Middle	Fostering opportunities for teacher collaboration to improve the use of technology and differentiation strategies in the classroom
High	Creation of a school-wide advisory program to support student mental health needs
High	Development of a mentorship program to support students in the areas of attendance, academic progress, and access to school resources
High	Building a student-led advisory lesson planning team tasked with building a bank of authentic lessons and activities shared by high schools. Meant to strengthen academic, social, and emotional supports at the county level
High	Developing a school-wide literacy action plan to implement literacy across content, provide supports for struggling readers/writers, improve school practices for supporting the culture of literacy, and developing teacher leadership in this area

APPENDIX G - Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2015)

Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student. Effective leaders:

a) Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.

b) In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.

c) Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.

d) Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.

e) Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.

f) Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community.

g) Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.

Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.

b) Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.

c) Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.

d) Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.

e) Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.

f) Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context.

b) Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.

c) Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.

d) Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.

e) Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.

f) Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.

g) Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.

h) Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive.

b) Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self.

c) Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.

d) Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized.

e) Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.

f) Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.

g) Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student. Effective leaders:

a) Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.

b) Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.

c) Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.

d) Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.

e) Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.

f) Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.

Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.

b) Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.

c) Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.

d) Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student.

e) Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice.

f) Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.

g) Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.

h) Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.

i) Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.

b) Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.

c) Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement.

d) Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.

e) Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice.

f) Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff.

g) Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.

h) Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.

b) Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.

c) Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.

d) Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school.

e) Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.

f) Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement.

g) Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community.

h) Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.

i) Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community.

j) Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning

Standard 9: Operations and Management

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school.

b) Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs.

c) Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement.

d) Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.

e) Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption.

f) Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management.

g) Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement.

h) Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.

i) Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.

j) Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board.

k) Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.

l) Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school's mission and vision.

Standard 10: School Improvement

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being. Effective leaders:

a) Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.

b) Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.

c) Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.

d) Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.

e) Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.

f) Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.

g) Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.

h) Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services.

i) Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts.

j) Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

APPENDIX H – Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Date: _____ Meeting # _____ Page # _____

Activity # _____	Standards Observed	Activity Description & Runtimes
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Location: _____ Presenter/Facilitator: _____		
Activity # _____	**Standards Observed**	**Activity Description & Runtimes**
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Location: _____ Presenter/Facilitator: _____		
Activity # _____	**Standards Observed**	**Activity Description & Runtimes**
Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Location: _____ Presenter/Facilitator: _____		

Informed Consent Agreement

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is evaluate participants' perceptions of the ████████████████████████ Data collected will allow recommendations to be made for improvement of the program to the ████████████████████.

What you will do in the study:

By participating in this study, you can expect the following:

1. You will complete the *Principal Preparedness Survey* both before and after the academy. Survey data from participant responses will be used to show growth in leadership areas due to participation in the academy.

2. You will complete a brief "exit ticket" at the conclusion of each meeting of the academy. Data from these questionnaires will be used to study which activities in the academy were more or less valuable to participants.

3. Six assistant principals (two per school level) will be selected for interviews aimed at delving more deeply into their perceived preparation for the principalship. These individuals will be interviewed at the conclusion of the academy. These interviews will be used to add richer description to the above two data sources.

Data gained from the above three sources will be used aggregately to make recommendations for future improvement of the ████████████████████.

Time required: You can expect to spend around 30 minutes completing the initial survey of your perceived leadership preparation, and somewhat less time completing a reduced length survey after the academy experience. "Exit ticket" surveys after each meeting of the ████████████████████ will require 5-10 minutes to complete. If you participate in semi-structured interviews, you can expect the interview process to take about one further hour of your time.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study. Responses to both surveys and interviews will be kept confidential. No identifying information will be stored or revealed to school employees, supervisors, or the public. A lack of participation in this study will not be reported to the ████████████████████ Schools, and thus will not affect future principal hiring determinations. Please see "Confidentiality" below for more information.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. This study's recommendations will be useful, however, for improvement of the ████████████████████, which will assist the school system in better preparing future principals. By helping to develop leaders who are prepared to navigate the rigors of the principalship, this study will contribute to the school division's ongoing strategic goal of *cultivating a high-performing team of professionals focused on* ████ *mission and goals.*

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name will not be recorded or associated with your responses at any time. In order to compare survey results

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SBS Staff		

before the program to survey results after the program, your PID number will be collected. Any interviews will be audio taped, but audio files and their related transcriptions will be stored securely during the study, and will be destroyed after analysis.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you participate in interviews, your audio file will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw.

How to withdraw from the study: If you choose to withdraw from the study after you have provided data, please contact Nicholas Zapadka, the primary investigator, at naz8e@virginia.edu.

Payment: You will not receive payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact:

Principal Investigator: Nicholas Zapadka
691 Potomac Station Drive, NE
Leesburg, Virginia 20176
Telephone: (724) 312-8317
Email address: naz8e@virginia.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sara Dexter
Curry School of Education – Ruffner Hall 270
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.
Telephone: (434) 924-7131
Email address: sdexter@virginia.edu

If you have questions about your rights in the study, contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999   Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Agreement:

I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
You will receive a copy of this form for your records

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SBS Staff		

Table 6

S1: Mission and Vision

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student.	4.5(0)	4.3(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.6(.29)
Develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success.	4.5(.5)	4.3.(33)	5.0(.5)	4.6(.43)
Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education.	5.0(1.5)	4.7(1.0)	5.0(.5)	4.9(1.0)
Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.	5.0(.5)	4.7(1.33)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.86)
Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.	**4.5(-.5)**	4.7(.67)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.29)
Overall Standard 1				4.74(.57)

Note: N=7; E=2; M =3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 7

S2: Ethics and Norms

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.	5.0(0)	5.0(.33)	5.0(0)	5.0(.14)
Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.	5.0(0)	5.0(.33)	5.0(0)	5.0(.14)
Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.	4.5(.5)	5.0(.67)	5.0(0)	4.9(.43)
Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.	5.0(.5)	5.0(.67)	5.0(.5)	5.0(.57)
Overall Standard 2				4.98 (.32)

Note: N =7; E =2; M =3; H =2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 8

S3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	M (Δ) Elementary	M (Δ) Middle	M (Δ) High	M (Δ) Cohort
Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context.	4.5(1.0)	5.0(.67)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.71)
Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.	4.5(1.0)	4.7(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.57)
Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.	5.0(1.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.86)
Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.	5.0(1.5)	5.0(.33)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(.86)
Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.	5.0(.5)	4.7(.67)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.71)
Overall Standard 3				4.88 (.74)

Note: N =7; E =2; M =3; H =2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 9

S4: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school.	5.0(.5)	4.3(0)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.29)
Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.	5.0(.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.43)
Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning.	5.0(.5)	4.7(1.0)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.71)
Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement.	5.0(1.5)	4.3(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.86)
Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.	5.0(1.5)	4.3(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.86)
Overall Standard 4				4.78(.63)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 10

S5: Community of Care/Support

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.	4.5(.5)	5.0(0)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.29)
Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(0)	5.0(.5)	5.0(.43)
Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(.33)	5.0(.5)	5.0(.57)
Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.	4.5(1.0)	4.3(0)	5.0(.5)	4.6(.43)
Overall Standard 5				4.88 (.43)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 11

S6: Capacity of School Personne

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	M (Δ) Elementary	M (Δ) Middle	M (Δ) High	M (Δ) Cohort
Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty.	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.71)
Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.	5.0(1.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.86)
Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth.	5.0(.5)	4.3(0)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.29)
Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation.	5.0(.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.57)
Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.71)
Overall Standard 6				4.86(.63)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 12

S7: Prof. Community for Teachers

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning.	5.0(.5)	4.3(0)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.29)
Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole.	5.0(1.0)	4.7(0)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.57)
Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(.67)	5.0(.5)	5.0(.71)
Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.	5.0(1.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.71)
Overall Standard 7				4.88(.57)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 13

S8: Engagement of Families and Comm.

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Be approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.	4.5(0)	**4.7(-.33)**	5.0(.5)	4.7(0)
Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.	4.5(0)	4.7(0)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.14)
Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning	4.5(1.0)	5.0(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.9(.57)
Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(.33)	4.5(0)	4.9(.43)
Overall Standard 8				4.80(.29)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 14

S9: Operations and Management

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Strategically manage staff resources, scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity	5.0(0)	4.3(.33)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.29)
Be responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices.	5.0(.5)	4.3(.33)	4.5(0)	4.6(.29)
Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption.	5.0(.5)	4.7(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.57)
Help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success.	5.0(1.0)	4.3(0)	5.0(.5)	4.7(.43)
Develop relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation.	4.5(.5)	4.7(0)	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.43)
Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)
Overall Standard 9				4.77(.50)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.

Table 15

S10: School Improvement

What is your confidence in your abilities to do each of the following in your daily practice? (1-5 scale)	*M (Δ)* Elementary	*M (Δ)* Middle	*M (Δ)* High	*M (Δ)* Cohort
Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)
Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous improvement.	5.0(1.5)	5.0(.67)	5.0(1.0)	5.0(1.0)
Develop appropriate systems of data collection and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.	5.0(.5)	4.3(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.57)
Manage uncertainty and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for improvement efforts.	5.0(1.0)	4.3(.33)	5.0(1.0)	4.7(.71)
Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.	5.0(.5)	4.7(.67)	5.0(1.0)	4.9(.71)
Overall Standard 10				4.86 (.80)

Note: N=7; E=2; M=3; H=2
The values shown first show the participants' final perceptions of their leadership capacity and then values within parentheses represent the numerical change from the pre- APC administration of the survey to the post-APC administration.