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Voices of New Principals: Documenting the Needs of New Principals as they Transition Into Leadership

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Voices of New Principals:

Documenting the Needs of New Principals as they

Transition Into Leadership

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Lindsay Burt

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Voices of New Principals:

Documenting the Needs of New Principals as they

Transition Into Leadership

by

Lindsay Burt

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Eugene Tucker, Co-Chair

Professor Wellford W. Wilms, Co-Chair

This qualitative study focused on documenting the professional development and support needs of new principals in a large, urban school district in the Western United States as they transition into school leadership positions. Prior research suggests that principals may be unprepared for the realities of the principal position by administrative preparation programs. Despite having completed administrative credential programs, new principals in this study with three years or less in their first principal position perceive they need support with striking a balance between the demands of being an instructional leader and dealing with school operations issues as well as how to manage time and the school community. Using a survey, interviews, and a document review, this study found new elementary school principals believe professional development and

support must be focused on the knowledge and skills they need to be successful as school administrators and should be differentiated, practical, hands-on, and provide authentic opportunities for peer interaction and networking. The findings in this study, based on the experiences of new elementary school principals, can influence school districts and policy makers as they explore how to best develop professional development plans and support structures for new principals as they transition to the principalship.

The dissertation of Lindsay Burt is approved.

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2015

Dedication

This dissertation manuscript is dedicated first and foremost to my husband, David Britton, who kept me grounded through the entire process. Thank you for being patient and understanding during the countless hours I spent reading and writing. Maybe now I can help you work on the house!

I also dedicate this manuscript to my mother, Chrys Papatone, my brothers and their families, and to my father and mother-in-law, Scott and Lina Britton, for supporting me through the many years of schooling that brought me to this point.

Finally, I dedicate this manuscript in loving memory of my Papou and Yiayia, Gus and Georgia Papatone, who believed in the importance of pursuing an education and instilled in me the desire to be a lifelong learner. Without them none of this would have been possible.

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Chapter 1: Problem

Statement of the Problem

The breadth of literature on teacher professional development is impressive; however,

there is a dearth of literature on professional development for principals, especially for new

principals[1] (Daresh, 1988; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; McCay, 2001; Spillane, Healey, &

Mesler Parise, 2009). Spillane, Healey, and Mesler Parise (2009) refer to professional

development as the acquisition of new skills and knowledge by practitioners. In addition, much

of the literature about professional development and support for new principals was written

nearly 20 years ago. It is during this time researchers suggest that new principals need

professional development and support to help them acclimate to their new leadership position

(Peters, 2008) as many principals enter the position underprepared by pre-service principal

programs (Gill, 2012). Lack of support for principals can cause them to burn out and to leave the

principalship, as they are not prepared to meet the challenges of the position (Whitaker, 1995).

This research study concentrated on the current state of professional development and support

offerings for new principals in the Las Mariposas School District (LMSD), a large, urban school

district in the western United States. It will emphasize the voices of new principals as a way of

influencing the planning of future professional development and support opportunities focused

on the needs of new principals. The study brought attention to the needs of current new

principals for the purpose of updating antiquated literature on the subject.

New principals are faced with many challenges, including, but not limited to, being an

instructional leader focused on teacher instruction and student achievement, adept at solving

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[1] In this study, a new principal is defined as one within the first three years of their first principalship. In order to participate in this study, a principal must have completed at least one year of a principalship.

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issues with students and teachers, as well as acting as an operations manager (Daresh, 1988; Eller, 2010). Similar to a teacher's job, much of a principal's work is learned by doing. New principals need support in order to meet the challenges of their new position with ease. Research on new principals suggests that professional development and support emphasize the needs of a principal in order to ensure longevity in the position (Olivero, 1981). Professional development and support must also protect against burnout (Whitaker, 1995) and help the new leader feel prepared to lead (Neufeld, 1997). Olivero (1981) states about the principalship, "If we are to carry out that assignment, we must look for creative, practical ways to assist the person who has the greatest impact on a school – the principal. We must always look for ways to do the job better because the job is that important" (p. 110). By focusing on what new principals say they need, one may get closer to helping principals do what Olivero suggested and, perhaps, go on to have a long and successful career safe from burnout.

Ensuring Longevity. Whitaker (1995) conducted a study of 107 principals focused on principal burnout. Whitaker concluded that many principals opt to leave the job because of the increasing demands of the position. In addition, a lack of role clarity, lack of recognition, and decreased autonomy lead to burnout. The researcher suggests that support from the district office with making difficult decisions, the creation of better support systems, targeted professional development aimed at professional growth, and the creation of in-district support networks such as mentoring were ways of reducing principal burnout and potentially leaving the position.

Prepared to Lead. Professional development is not enough to prepare principals to lead in the way the district intends. Principals need practical strategies to improve their skills and be better equipped to do their job. Neufeld (1997) suggested that professional development be

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focused, and to use shadowing, self-analysis or reflection, leadership training, and peer observation as ways to support principals. Additionally, Grissom & Harrington (2010) suggest mentoring and coaching, peer observation, and the formation of a principal network where principals can support one another. To assist districts in providing professional development focused on the needs of new principals, Peters (2008) suggests that they need to lead the charge to support new principals but that principals need to be involved in the planning process to help them adjust to the principalship.

In a mixed methods study of 106 principals in the state of Wyoming, Duncan, Range, & Scherz (2011) found that a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting principals is ineffective. The researchers state that principals require ongoing, job-embedded opportunities for professional growth as well as formal training if continuous improvement is to be expected.

Local Problem. After speaking informally to LMSD principals with less than three years experience, I have found they have clear needs the school district has not addressed, such as a mentor to work with on a regular basis, someone they could call with questions or concerns and get advice on how to deal with difficult situations, or help in transitioning from one position to the next (R. Rojas (pseudonym), personal communication, December 3, 2013; E. Rodriguez (pseudonym), personal communication, December 3, 2013). The recommendations made by these principals suggests a disconnect between what a new principal needs and what the district thinks they need (Olivero, 1981). In speaking with an Instructional Area Superintendent from one of the district's five local service centers (LSC)[2] I discovered that LMSD has two programs for principals, one for aspiring principals and one for new K-12 principals (T. Ayala (pseudonym), personal communication, October 2, 2013), and a third program for secondary

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[2] Due to the large size of LMSD, it is composed of five smaller local districts called local service centers (LSC) for this study. Each LSC has a Superintendent in charge of the instructional and professional development programs for principals and teachers in their area.

school leaders. Enrollment in each of these programs is extremely limited considering the size of the district; LMSD has approximately 640,000 students, 25,989 teachers, and 824 principals (L. Ulrich [pseudonym], personal communication, November 21, 2013; LMSD Office of Data and Accountability, personal communication, December 4, 2013). One of the programs only accepted 12-15 new principals and another for secondary leaders accepted 36 applicants.

The aspiring principal program, the Developing Leaders Portfolio (DLP) Program, formerly called the Aspiring Principal Portfolio Program, is two-years in length. In order to be a part of the DLP, one must be recommended by an immediate supervisor or principal. The program consists of nine sessions focusing on such topics as supervision of instruction, schoolwide positive behavior support, special education, and staff relations. The most current information on DLP is for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, the most current district memorandum for Cohort 2 is dated August 28, 2012. No program is currently available for developing aspiring principals.

In addition to DLP, LMSD offers a program that supports new K-12 principals called the New Principal Academy (NPA). This program is offered through the district's Leadership Pipeline Development and Support Unit and in collaboration with the school administrator's union. The program is voluntary and includes 15 sessions, drop-in services, and mentoring with current and retired principals. NPA is intended to assist new principals with strategic planning and reflection on leadership practice. Unfortunately, the most current post about NPA is dated November 7, 2012, leading one to question what professional development options new LMSD principals have to pursue.

One final program offered by LMSD is specifically for middle school and high school personnel responsible for their school's master schedule. Although this program is not limited to

principals, it can provide new principals with the support they need to do the master schedule or support the individual or individuals that do. During the 2012-2013 school year, the program started its twelfth cohort. The program is a 10-week job-embedded program aimed at assisting school personnel in creating a master schedule. There is currently neither an application nor memo for the 2013-2014 school year for the Master Program Institute. Although the professional development programs offered last year and in previous years are no longer being offered, an ad hoc committee that includes the members of the administrator's union has been discussing future possibilities (I. Ortega [pseudonym], personal communication, November 14, 2013).

As previously stated, acceptance into any of the three professional development offerings for aspiring or new principals is very limited. The number of positions in these programs appears to be going down year after year (T. Ayala, personal communication, October 2, 2013). Limited enrollment plus the fact that each of these programs are not being offered during the current school year exhibits limited professional development opportunities for new or aspiring principals. The lack of professional development options leaves an entire population of new principals being hired this year who will not have these programs as options. Although the five LSCs have their own mandated professional development for all principals in their local area, it is unclear how focused this professional development is on the needs of new principals. In the absence of the aforementioned programs, one wonders what the district is doing to support these individuals as they start their careers as principals.

By conducting a study of new principals, this study answered the following questions:

1. What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in a large, urban school district perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?

2. What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

3. In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

4. What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (i.e., mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

The perceptions of new principals on the professional development and support they have received and the support they perceive they need which was uncovered in this study were presented to the instructional superintendents of two of the LSCs. The hope is these recommendations result in reform that will help ease the transition into the difficult job of being a new principal. What new principals need should always be taken into consideration when designing professional development activities intended to support them and help them do the best they can as school leaders.

Research Site

Given the size of the district, this study was conducted with two LSCs within LMSD. As of November 21, 2013, there were 824 principals in LMSD. Of those principals, 258 were in their first three years as principals. Table 1 shows the number of principals hired in the past three school years.

Table 1. New Principals Hired Between 2011 and 2014

School Year	# of Principals Hired
2011 – 2012	75
2012 – 2013	115
2013 – 2014	68

Sixty-eight principals were hired during the 2013-14 school year, 115 during the 2012-13 school year, and 75 during the 2011-12 school year. One hundred thirty seven of the new principals are at the elementary level and forty-nine are at the secondary level with the remainder filling other classifications.

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions, I gathered data in the following ways. To gain knowledge of how many principals perceive they were fully prepared for the job, what their needs are, and their initial perceptions about professional development models and methods, I distributed a survey. The survey was designed to learn how new principals were prepared for their first principalship and how they perceived that preparation (i.e. credential preparation programs, district pre-service programs, on the job experience, etc.). During the survey I asked about interest in participating in an in-depth interview. Individuals interested in participating in an interview were placed into categories of elementary and secondary[3]. From that list, twenty individuals were randomly selected to participate in one-on-one interviews. This makes up nearly 8% of the new LMSD principal population.

The survey merely gave a snapshot of the background and experience of each new principal, thus comprehensive interviews were used to gather more in-depth information to help answer the research questions. The randomly selected individuals from the survey who agreed to participate in interviews were asked a series of questions intended to investigate what

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[3] The category of secondary includes both middle school and high school.

professional development and support new principals are currently receiving from the district. The interviews also revealed the principals' perceptions of the support they are currently receiving. The interview uncovered what support and professional development opportunities new principals perceive they need. In addition, the interview documented what types of professional development or delivery models or methods new principals feel are most useful to them as they transition to new school leadership positions, such as mentoring or the creation of professional learning communities.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study were presented to the study's action research team, which consisted of the two LSC Instructional Area Superintendents, the president of the school administrator's union, a veteran principal, and a new principal. I presented data about what new principals' perceptions are about the professional development and support they are currently receiving as well as what they perceive they need. I took the study's findings, determined by participant interviews, the survey, and a document review as well as the recommendations of the study's New Principal Research Team (NPRT) to construct the implications on state policy and on district professional development practices to influence the type of support that should be provided to new principals during the first years of the principalship.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Aspiring principals enroll in principal preparation programs through universities and school districts to prepare for the challenging job of a school leader. Some researchers believe that principal preparation programs are inadequate and need to be more concerned with principal socialization, or learning how to do the job versus theory of educational leadership (Crow, 2006). As policy has changed over the past decade, for example, the introduction of No Child Left Behind legislation, the responsibilities of school leaders have become more challenging (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Clayton, Sanzo, & Myran, 2013; Crow, 2006; Eller 2010). Support of new principals post-hire is of utmost importance if they are expected to be successful, as most of this learning how to be a successful principal happens on the job (Peterson & Cosner, 2005). This goes against the sink-or-swim mentality often is attached to those taking a principal position (Spiro, Mattis, & Mitgang, 2007). Although there is a breadth of research on teacher training and professional development, there is a dearth of literature on new principal professional development and support (Daresh, 1988; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; McCay, 2001; Michaelidou & Pashiardis, 2009; Spillane, Healey, & Mesler Parise, 2009). The focus on new principal professional development and support is intended to assist new principals as they transition into leadership positions. Frequently, new principals experience several challenges due to the nature of their job, including being "educational visionaries and change agents, instructional leaders, curriculum and assessment experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and community builders" (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007, p. 1). These challenges can lead to the lack of longevity in the position

(Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011); the potential to burn out (Whitaker, 1995); feeling underprepared to lead (Daresh, 1986; Gill, 2012; Neufeld, 1997; Olivero, 1981; Peters, 2008); and limited professional development opportunities that are not suited to the specific needs and challenges principals now face (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hoffman, 2012; Grogan & Andrews, 2002)

In this literature review I integrate the following topics as they relate to the support and continued development of new principals: concepts of andragogy and adult learning theory as they relate to planning for professional development and support of new principals (Drago-Severson, 2004; Knowles, 1990; Terehoff, 2002); instructional practices in principal preparation programs; professional development models designed to support new principals (Peterson & Cosner, 2005), such as mentoring (Clayton et al., 2013; Daresh, 2004; Drago-Severson, 2004; Mitgang et al., 2007; Monsour, 1998); professional learning communities (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010; DuFour & Marzano, 2011); communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000; Wenger, McDermott, & Synder, 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000); teaming (Drago-Severson, 2004); collegial inquiry (Drago-Severson, 2004; Peterson & Cosner, 2005); and situated learning as a means to developing a new principal by having them learn from veteran principals on the periphery of a community of practice and eventually gain full access to it (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Mitgang et al. (2007) share that "transition into leadership is a process – not an event" (p. 17). Thus, the integration of models of professional development that will promote ongoing support for new principals is key. By discussing these topics, I lay the groundwork for what can guide a new principal to successful leadership (Daresh, 1988; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Rich & Jackson, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Adults as Learners

A majority of literature on adult learning theory tends toward helping educational leaders, such as principals, design, plan for, and implement professional development that supports the specific learning needs of each teacher under their supervision. The concept of andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1990), concentrates on taking the needs of individual learners into account when planning for professional development and involves them in such a way that adult learners buy into and feel excited about advancing their learning (Speck, 1996; Terehoff, 2002). Additionally, this learning can be transformational in nature which Drago-Severson (2004) defines as "learning that helps adults better manage the complexities of work and life" (p. 17), a challenge with which both teachers and principals cope.

Adult learning theory focuses on how a person knows what they know (Drago-Severson, 2004). Drago-Severson (2004) conducted a qualitative study of principals that focused on how school leaders used their leadership to promote the transformational learning of the adults with whom they worked. By reviewing documents, observing school environments, and interviewing and coding the responses of 25 principals, the researcher highlighted the practices to support teacher learning in their schools. Under the theoretical framework of constructive-developmental theory, Drago-Severson used the work of Kegan to show the following about adult learners: they construct their own reality; their reality can change over time with appropriate supports; growth and development are interactive with the environment and are lifelong processes; and each person has a different "way of knowing". Each individual's way of knowing must be taken into consideration when planning for professional development because everyone learns differently and if this fact is not recognized growth can be inhibited.

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Drago-Severson (2004) created the Learning Oriented School Leadership Model, which focus on four pillars that support adult learning: teaming, providing leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring. Teaming promotes professional growth by having adult learners participate in reflective work with others (Terehoff, 2002). In a school setting this looks like teachers placed together by the principal and asked to reflect on their personal philosophies and those of others while considering the school's core values and mission. Collaborative decision-making is also a part of teaming. The next pillar, providing leadership roles, finds teachers assuming leadership roles of their choosing in order to raise their own consciousness. The author points out that this pillar differs from distributed leadership in that leadership roles are not distributed or passed out to teachers but that individuals assume the role because they choose to do so. The next pillar of the leadership model is collegial inquiry, which focuses on the reflective practice of the individual or the group. Collegial inquiry helps the participants develop complex perspectives as they listen to others' perspectives and ideas. The last pillar is mentoring. Mentoring takes on various forms such as a partnering a new teacher with a veteran teacher, partnering two new teachers, or placing two veteran teachers together. Mentoring allows mentors and mentees to learn from one another, broaden perspectives, examine assumptions, and share expertise. Applying these pillars and concepts of andragogy as developed by Drago-Severson to professional development planning for teachers or principals can result in learning opportunities that best meet the needs of all adult learners.

Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1990; Merriam, 2001; Terehoff, 2002). A review of literature and concepts about this science by Terehoff concentrates on the work of Knowles, the researcher who developed the idea of andragogy in part by contrasting it from pedagogy (Knowles, 1990, 1978). Knowles (1990) found the following

assumptions about the way adults learn: their desire to know why they need to learn about what is being taught; the self-concept of the learner or making one's own decisions; the importance of the role of experiences of the adult learner; a readiness to learn in order to deal with real-life situations; orienting learning to life, task, or problems, and internal motivation. An important theme of andragogy is the idea of being self-directed (Merriam, 1993; Mezirow, 1985) which Knowles describes as "a process of mutual inquiry with [the adult learner] rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it" (p. 31). To be self-directed means when one is in need of assistance or support, one takes the initiative to reach out to others for help (Caffarella, 1993). This allows the learner to be in control of his learning and to reflect often about what he wants or needs to learn.

Terehoff (2002) overviews elements in the process of professional development that keep the interest of the learners and engage them in the learning process as well as how the knowledge of adult learning can help a leader meet the professional development needs of their staff. The author highlights seven principles of adult learning. The first is setting up a learning environment conducive to the learning of adults, one that is comfortable, positive, and recognizes self-directedness. The next principle involves adult learners in mutual planning. This is not allowing them to plan for teaching together but rather being involved in the planning of professional development in which they will take part. Mutual planning time will limit the learner's feeling of resentfulness and allow for buy in. Terehoff states, "mutual planning offers the promise and potential to facilitate developmental growth not only of competencies but also of the capacity to learn from a collective effort of teamwork" (p. 72). The next principle refers to attending to the needs and interests of adult learners, allowing learners to be more motivated to learn when they feel that the person or persons planning for the learning has taken their needs

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and interests into account. The author suggests conducting a needs assessment to determine the

professional development needs and interests of the adult learners. The last principles involve

having adult learners set the goals and objectives of the professional development program,

assisting in the designing of the program, taking part in implementing the program, and

participating in evaluating the program. Terehoff believes that "professional development is a

period of ongoing intellectual and cognitive growth" (p. 70). Thus, the principles of andragogy

can foster the intellectual growth in all adult learners.

Terehoff believes that planning for professional development must utilize methods of

andragogy to teach adults in the best possible learning environment. She states, "Principals who

create a professional development environment conducive to self-directedness can help teachers

develop the capacity for self-direction within the mission and goals of the school" (p. 67).

According to this belief, professional development planning must recognize and value the

importance of the experiences of the prospective participants. Similar to the concepts laid out in

Drago-Severson's leadership model, Terehoff believes that sharing and reflection on the

experiences of the adult learners within the school environment leads to a strengthened school

community. Additionally, and similar to Drago-Severson's work, is the idea of teaming. In this

case, the principal facilitates the teams. Finally, Terehoff believes that carefully planned

professional development utilizing the concepts and principles of andragogy will be of great

benefit to all involved. The "principal's knowledge and consideration of the andragogical

concept can enhance their capacity to assist in the professional growth of others and bring about

developmental 'changes in internal consciousness' that will ultimately benefit the school,

community and society" (p. 66) making professional development planning and implementation

a transformational experience when concepts about adult learning are applied.

Principals as Adult Learners

Despite the focus of the aforementioned literature on optimizing learning opportunities for teachers, the adult learning concepts developed by these authors can and should be applied to the planning and implementation of support and learning for new principals. New principals can benefit from specifically targeted learning opportunities in the same way new and veteran teachers do. In Drago-Severson's study, the use of adult learning theory guided the creation of a school leadership model aimed at supporting teachers as adult learners. This model can be adapted to match the context of this dissertation to meet the needs of new principals as adult learners. Drago-Severson's Learning Oriented School Leadership Model, if applied to a district leadership model that supports the learning of principals, can result in professional development opportunities that are transformational and help new principals to better manage the complexities of work and life. The concept of teaming which, if placed in the context of a principal learner can look similar but the choice of teams would be placed in the hands of a principal leader. Mentoring and teaming with principals will look similar to that of teachers but with a new principal placed with a veteran principal or two new or veteran principals placed together. One must not lose sight of the fact that principals, although they are in positions as educational leaders, are set with the challenge of leading a team of teachers, which means designing professional learning opportunities that will ultimately lead to the teachers' professional growth but also increased student achievement. Support and professional learning opportunities for principals becomes the responsibility of the school district and the principals themselves and must be taken into consideration if one expects a principal to lead teachers and the school. Principals must attend to their own learning and challenges as well as the learning of others (Drago-Severson et al., 2012). For new principals, this is of utmost importance as they have

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much to learn in order to face the challenges of the profession and can also be in great need of support. Although some of this learning can and should come during pre-service programs, some researchers argue that changes need to be made to pre-service and in-service programs to better support new and aspiring principals (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Clayton et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Principal Preparation

Principal development programs come in a variety of forms. Many programs prepare aspiring principals to be a "top-down manager" (Grogan & Andrews, p. 7). The focus of other programs is how to prepare and develop aspiring principals to be effective leaders (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Drago-Severson et al., 2012). Bottoms & O'Neill (2001) refer in their research to a disconnect between real life situations and experiences principals face and university course work. They believe future programs need to connect real life with theory and give aspiring principals practical experiences from which to learn.

Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) conducted a study asking what successful leaders in education need to know and be able to do. Their research focused on how to prepare school leaders to be effective. The researchers gathered data to answer their research questions by separately convening a group of principals, a national planning group, fifteen school leaders from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and members of higher education institutions. Due to high standards and high-stakes testing, expectations of school leaders are increased. Leadership programs must adjust their focus to provide principals with the tools to create quality experiences for their students. Their research yielded the following competencies successful school leaders need to understand which classroom practices lead to student achievement; how to work with teachers in order to foster student achievement; and how to

support teachers as they sustain the school and improve student achievement. Bottoms and O'Neill believe connecting practical experiences with what is taught in leadership preparation programs is necessary to creating effective school leaders.

In an empirical, mixed methods study, researchers Drago-Severson et al. (2012) surveyed eighteen faculty members from two accredited universities with leadership preparation programs. They used close-ended and open-ended questions to determine how they perceive they are preparing aspiring principals to lead. One of the universities is a newer, public institution that requires an exam to become credentialed and the other is an established, private institution that does not require an exam. By using the lenses of social-emotional leadership, adult learning, and educational leadership standards, the researchers wanted to uncover whether faculty are using more holistic approaches to preparing aspiring principals, namely giving them skills, tools, and knowledge to solve problems or meet what the researchers call technical and adaptive challenges.

Key findings from the study indicate that although university faculty at both institutions reported doing well at focusing on adult learning when teaching their students, they believe that their instruction is limited by accreditation and state certification and licensure requirements. Faculty also stated an interest in creating relationships among the faculty and between faculty and students. In addition, the faculty recognized the importance of making connections between theory and practice, or what the researchers call the "Theory to Practice Nexus". The researchers and the faculty believe this approach of making a connection between what students are learning and real life will help new principals as they face the challenges of the job. The researchers suggest a holistic approach to professional practice and preparation for educational leaders "to help leaders be better prepared to support the human side of leadership" (p. 47).

Cambron-McCabe and Cunningham (2002), members of a national commission for educational leadership, found colleagues have concerns about the relevancy of the content in leadership development programs. The authors discovered that if new principals were expected to lead schools in a certain way then preparation programs needed to demonstrate and emulate those leadership skills. They believe that bringing together university faculty and practitioners is a "powerful" learning opportunity for educational leadership students and bridge the practical with the theoretical.

In a related study funded by the Wallace Foundation, education researchers focused on what makes pre-service and in-service programs for aspiring and new principals "exemplary" along with giving recommendations about what states can do to make principal development programs successful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, 2010). By conducting surveys, interviewing principals and superintendents, reviewing program documents, observing principals and meetings, courses, and workshops, and examining school practice data, the researchers found eight pre-service and in-service programs in California, Connecticut, Kentucky, Mississippi, and New York which they considered to be exemplary. The programs were chosen because of the approaches they used such as creating partnerships with school districts and because they showed evidence of strong outcomes in preparing principals. The best programs were ones that created what the authors called "a continuum of coherent learning opportunities" (p. 6). These opportunities began during the pre-service program at the university and expanded to the school district where the principals would be employed. One such program exists in San Diego, where a partnership has been forged between the University of San Diego, which offers a pre-service principal leadership program, and the San Diego Unified School District that continues to

support participants after finishing the pre-service program by offering in-service professional development for new principals.

Exemplary in-service programs identified by the study consisted of several "high-quality learning opportunities" (p. 7). One learning opportunity was the use of retired principals as mentors. In addition, the new principals were engaged in leadership learning grounded in practice included connecting readings to day-to-day practice and observation. Finally, exceptional in-service programs contained collegial learning networks where new principals were part of problem-solving study groups and other types of professional learning communities. The researchers concluded that the accomplishments of the exemplary pre-service and in-service programs they studied should be models referenced when writing state policy to support the learning of new and veteran principals.

Continuing Support for New Principals

Discussions of pre-service and in-service programs for aspiring and new principals go hand in hand. Once hired, new principals need continued support if they are going to take what they learned in leadership development programs and connect it to practice during the principalship and if they are going to continue to grow as educational leaders. This support must be ongoing and significant (Drago-Severson et al., 2012) and integrated as much as possible into the daily work new principals do since much of their learning, including the acquisition of problem solving skills, happens on the job (Peterson & Cosner 2005). There are many innovative ways to support new principals: mentoring (Clayton et al., 2013; Daresh, 2004; Drago-Severson, 2004; Mitgang et al., 2007; Monsour, 1998), teaming (Drago-Severson, 2004; Terehoff, 2002), collegial inquiry (Drago-Severson, 2004), building communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000; Wenger & Snyder, 2000), support groups, and forming a

professional learning community (PLC) (DuFour et al., 2010). Each of these supports and their potential impacts on the professional growth and development of new principals will be explored in further detail.

Mentoring. The potential impacts of mentoring on both the mentor and mentee, or protégé, as some researchers refer to them, are many (Clayton et al., 2013; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Mitgang et al., 2007; Monsour, 1998). Although mentoring can be done in a variety of ways, in general mentoring consists of a mentor, perhaps a veteran district or school administrator, supporting the mentee, or protégé, in whatever they need to ease their transition into a school leadership position and be an effective leader (Drago-Severson, 2004). In addition, "mentoring helps close the gap between preservice training and the actualities of administration" (Monsour, 1998, p. 100). Mentoring also helps new principals with the complexities of both building management and instructional leadership, as mentors become development guides and not someone who simply gives the mentee answers to difficult problems (Daresh, 2007).

Research has found both advantages and disadvantages of mentoring. However, a well planned out program consists of a needs assessment to determine specific needs of mentees. In addition, both parties must devote time and effort to the process. As a result the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages (Clayton et al., 2013; Daresh, 2004; Mitgang et al., 2007; Monsour, 1998). Mentoring is not without its problems. One of the issues that arises with mentoring can stem from impediments that effect the time that mentors and mentees can connect such as focusing on accountability, which can be time consuming and cut into the time the mentor and mentee can meet (Clayton et al., 2013). As well, there is a lack of data about the effectiveness of mentoring and a tension between a program that is state funded but designed by a school district (Clayton, et al., 2013). Additional issues include the availability of resources, sustaining focus,

limiting mentoring to certain populations, and not preparing mentors and protégés adequately (Daresh, 2004).

The advantages or benefits of mentoring for mentors, mentees, and school districts are numerous. Mentoring offers the following to new principals: reduction of the feeling of isolation; ease of transition; guidance and feedback to help navigate the district; strategies and skills to meet the demands of the job; communication and political skills; and increased professionalism (Monsour, 1998). A mentor can teach a new principal critical and crucial knowledge of policies, procedures, and practices in a school district (Daresh, 2004). Mentoring also allows for new administrators to reflect and explore their sense of self and moral and ethical stances on issues in education (Daresh, 2004). The mentor must be devoted to the responsibility of working with the mentee on the aforementioned topics. In addition, the potential benefits of mentoring for the protégé are to increase professional competence, seeing the link between theory and practice, to improve communication skills, to "learn some of the tricks of the trade" (Daresh, 2004, p. 504), and to increase a sense of belonging. For mentors, the benefits include increased job satisfaction, increased peer recognition, and the possibility of personal career advancement as they learn new ideas from their protégés. Finally, school districts also benefit from mentoring by supporting the development of capable staff, developing norms for lifelong learning, and increasing motivation, self-esteem, productivity of staff (Daresh, 2004).

A research study was conducted with a university-based mentoring program that had a partnership with a small, rural school district in the mid-Atlantic area (Clayton et al. 2013). The focus of the study was on the development of relationships between veteran and aspiring school administrators. The study found the pressure of accountability for student achievement of yearly goals directly impacted the time administrators had to devote to building their mentoring

relationship. However, when the mentor and mentee met to talk about accountability, they were able to work together to create goals for the school and to improve student achievement. In general, the mentors and mentees shared that they were able to build good relationships because they were paired so well by the program's administration. This lead to great benefits for all involved. The researchers recommended that when planning a mentoring program beneficial to both mentors and mentees, it is important to consider the time constraints school administrators are under because of accountability.

If school and district administrators are devoted to the idea of mentoring, a program can be successful, as it will provide critical job-embedded support (Peterson & Cosner, 2005). School administrators have to "become more active players in the development and maintenance of mentoring programs for inexperienced colleagues" (Daresh, 2004, p. 513). Mitgang et al. (2007) said the following about mentoring:

> [Mentoring] should take an important next step by embracing a larger vision—beyond a buddy system that merely helps new principals adapt to a flawed system to one whose core goal is to help prepare a new generation of principals willing and able to challenge the status quo and lift the quality of teaching and learning in every school. (p. 4)

As new principals successfully complete mentoring programs, they may be more inclined to become a mentor and prepare mentees to lead our schools.

Teaming. The idea of teaming is about placing a group of individuals into a team with a common goal or purpose. In a school this might look like a team of teachers focused on literacy or technology (Drago-Severson, 2004). Inviting principals to be part of a team can lead to collective inquiry, discussed in the next section, where all are gathered together to dig deep into a particular subject or issue. Drago-Severson (2004) argues that teaming can reduce the feeling of

isolation one feels. For principals this is especially important as they are obviously separated

from other principals in the district. When principals are brought together for meetings or

professional development, teaming them for a particular purpose can provide a substantial

learning and growth opportunity. "It cultivates an individual's skills for dialogue and discussion,

builds leadership, and contributes to school growth" (p. 71). In addition, it decreases isolation,

allows principals to make meaningful connections with one another while working toward a

common goal and being reflective, and allows for an environment where multiple perspectives

are shared.

   Collegial Inquiry and Collaboration. Collegial support is of utmost importance for a

new principal transitioning into a position of leadership (Daresh, 1988). Collegiality between

colleagues can reduce a new principal's feeling of isolation and being overwhelmed by what

their new job entails, and can increase productivity. Daresh (1988) wrote, "a powerful way for

school principals to learn is to interact with their colleagues" (p. 86). The integration of

collaborative opportunities that use actual issues and problems new principals face as a learning

experience can foster professional growth and development (Peterson & Cosner, 2005). Not

only should collegiality be created between school leaders but also between the staff of the

school and the new principal to create a sense of "we" (Daresh, 1988). By expanding this idea to

include inquiry in a collegial manner, Drago-Severson (2004) defines collegial inquiry as

"shared dialogue in a reflective context that involves reflecting one's assumptions, convictions,

and values as part of the learning process…collegial inquiry can facilitate both teacher learning

within a school and growth of the institution" (p. 103). Drago-Severson believes one can support

another's professional growth by challenging their way of knowing. She also believes

individuals will challenge their own thinking and the thinking of others when they participate in

a reflective practice. Once an environment fit for adult learning has been established, reflective practice can be used. Collaborative inquiry and reflective practice support principal learning by creating a safe, supportive environment for adult learners. When schools and districts where professional development occurs focus their efforts on building a space that adheres to andragogical principles and is collegial, collaborative, and reflective in nature, they will be supporting the learning and professional growth of their principals.

Professional Learning Communities. Collaboration encourages educators and school leaders to go beyond their personal experiences in school and begin to answer important questions about teaching and learning which is less likely to happen in isolation. Building a collaborative environment has the potential of fostering a deep and meaningful collaborative culture (DuFour et al., 2010). Many school leaders have begun creating professional learning communities (PLC) at their schools with teachers. PLCs are built on three main ideas (DuFour, 2004). One is the shift from teaching to learning and the learning is done in collaboration with other colleagues either within the school setting or outside of it, at the district level, for example. The next big idea is about building a culture of collaboration in order to combat working in isolation. This is done by creating collective purpose, promoting a collaborative culture amongst colleagues, and engaging in collaborative conversations. The process of creating a collaborative culture is a systematic process. The last main idea for PLCs is focusing on results in order to determine the effectiveness of the learning community. In a school setting this might be collaborative teacher groups constantly looking at student data to determine if their collaborative work has resulted in increased achievement. The same can be done at the district level by bringing principals together to have meaningful learning experiences, examine student data, set goals, and overall, collaborate with other principals. When new principals create learning

communities with experienced principals, the learning can be exceptional and profound. The group forms common goals each of their sessions will strive to achieve. Goals are intended to support learning for all involved. The key to the PLC is that members of the community "learn how to learn together" and "learn by doing" (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 7). This includes collegial inquiry as covered in the previous section where principals are reflective and focus on specific questions for inquiry that help to "develop their capacity to improve student and adult learning" (p. 7). As school leaders work together, they create goals for their learning together as well as goals for the individual schools that will ultimately improve student achievement, support a new principal as they transition, and help the principal grow professionally.

Community of Practice. Similar to a professional learning community is a community of practice (CoP). The main difference is that a PLC is a formal collaborative opportunity set up by an organization or, in this case, a school district, while a community of practice is defined as "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise" (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 139) and further, "who deepen their knowledge and expertise into this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). CoP can include family, groups of friends, work groups, school groups, etc.; however, the key element differentiating a community from a community of practice is the idea of practice (Wenger, 2000; Wenger et al., 2002). The main ingredient for a CoP is having something in common with the other members. Wenger (2000) says "communities of practice are everywhere" (p. 6) and developed the idea of CoP based on the theory of learning and knowing as social participation and CoPs are essential considering how rapidly things change, e.g. ideas, innovations, and technology (Wenger et al., 2002).

The purpose of a CoP is to develop the capabilities of the self-selected group members and to exchange knowledge and learn from one another (Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Mainly seen in the business community, a CoP can also be present in school districts and in schools. A CoP cannot be mandated but can be nurtured by district administrators; however, they can and should be actively cultivated and nurtured (Wenger et al., 2002). Groups meet whenever it is convenient and although there is an agenda, they may not follow it given the unconstrained, organic nature of the CoP. A CoP may be large or small, made to maintain connections between group members, made in response to changes within an organization, and can be composed of members of multiple organizations that have something in particular in common that the community is based on (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). There is no time limit for a CoP since it will continue as long as the members of the group desire; however, it must allow for mutual engagement of members, be a joint enterprise, and provide for a shared repertoire of resources (Wenger, 2000).

In contrast from teaming described above, communities of practice "organize themselves" (p. 142), are organic, and based on the interests and ideas of the members of the group. CoPs have the potential to be a profound learning opportunity for new principals as they engage with other new and veteran principals to share ideas, build trust, learn from one another, offer and gain much needed support, and promote lifelong learning (Smith, 2003). The idea of a new principal going through the transition of integrating into the CoP is discussed further in the next section.

Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the idea of a community of practice and how a newcomer or apprentice, or in the case of this study, a new principal, learns from the old-timer,

or one that has much experience in the particular field, also referred to as master, expert, or veteran. The newcomer will start his or her learning journey on the periphery of a community of practice and participate in "legitimate peripheral participation" which "refers both to the development of knowledgably skillful identities in practice and to the reproduction and transformation of communities of practice" (p. 55). In other words, as a newcomer or apprentice, while on the periphery, observe and learn from the work and experience of a veteran and eventually, with increased knowledge and skill, move to full participation in the CoP. The idea of legitimate peripheral participation and newcomers learning from old-timers is called situated learning.

Situated learning describes learning as a social process happening within a certain context or environment. The main idea is that learning is a social experience delete situated in "the social world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 121). When a new principal is engaged with other new principals and with veteran principals in a community, learning will take place. In order for this learning opportunity to happen, new principals need to be given access to an existing community of practice where veterans can share their knowledge and skills. This means they will need full access to "information, resources, and opportunities for participation" (p. 101). This transformational learning experience renders the newcomer a fully integrated member of the CoP and changes a newcomer to an old-timer. Thus, new principals need opportunities to socialize with and learn from veteran principals in order to become members of the experienced principal community.

In an age when accountability and student test scores are of paramount importance, the challenges placed on K-12 principals are difficult. School districts need to ensure that their principals are prepared to lead effectively and successfully. By highlighting the professional

development and support needs of new principals, the school district will get a glimpse of what is necessary to ensure what they are offering these individuals will assist them in being successful and in meeting the many challenges of the position. In opposition to the "sink or swim" mentality a school district might employ, providing principals with rich, strategic learning and support opportunities will create a principal workforce prepared to lead in the 21st century.

Chapter 3: Research Design & Methods

Introduction

New principals, within the first three years of their tenure, are confronted with many challenges, such as day-to-day operations, testing and accountability, teacher evaluation, and student discipline, making it difficult for one to lead effectively and feel successful as an educational leader. School districts must work diligently to create professional development and support opportunities to best meet the needs of these new principals as they transition into leadership positions. This study focused on determining the learning and support needs of new principals at all levels of K-12 education to best assist them while they transition to positions of leadership and become effective and successful at their job.

This study's research design and methods were chosen to answer the following research questions:

1. What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?

2. What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

3. In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

4. What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

Philosophical Worldview

This study centered on the perspective of the social constructivist worldview. This worldview focuses on the assumption that "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Each new principal has unique experiences and challenges and sharing those so that others may understand their own experience is worth inquiry. Highlighting the challenges and successes of new principals and their professional development and support needs influence the methods of support school districts choose and promote the understanding of the real-life experiences of K-12 educational leaders (Yin, 2009). Thus, in order to understand the experiences and perceptions of new principals, I conducted one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions giving participants an opportunity to expound upon their thoughts. These personal interactions were essential to the understanding of the experiences of new principals, to detail their challenges, and to document their support needs.

Research Design and Site

I conducted an action research study in a small subsection of a large, urban school district in order to document the experiences of new principals. The goal of the study was to determine if the support and professional development given to new principals by the school district meets the needs of these new administrators. The intent of the study was to be informational and influential in the creation of professional development to supports what new principals say they need in order to feel they are being successful.

Being situated in the Western United States where several large districts are located allowed for many research site options. The Las Mariposas School District[4] (pseudonym; LMSD) covers a large geographic area in and has over 1,100 schools, about 640,000 students,

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[4] The name of the school district chosen for this study has been changed to protect the rights of its employees.

and 31,000 teachers. Due to its sheer size both geographically and in the number of students

served, LMSD is divided into smaller LSCs. Each of the smaller districts contains an

Instructional Area Superintendent who oversees all aspects of the LSC. The Instructional Area

Superintendent manages a group of instructional directors. Each of the directors has a group of

approximately 15-18 principals with most working with and supporting elementary schools and a

few with secondary schools including middle school and high school.

The rationale for choosing this particular school district had much to do with its size and

access to more new principals than a small district can offer. In addition, I have a professional

interest in improving professional development and leadership quality as a future school

administrator. As of October 2013, the number of new principals (those within their first three

years of their first principalship) in LMSD numbered 258. Of the 258, 137 are new elementary

principals and 49 are secondary (middle and high school), with the remainder filling other school

classifications such as span schools, K-8th or 6th-12th grade, for example. Concentrating on a

district of LMSD's size with 258 new principals allowed for access to a very large pool of

potential participants for the study.

To allow for this study to have a manageable number of participants, I focused on new

principals from two of the five smaller LSCs. From the 89 new principals at the selected LSCs,

52 new principals completed the online survey (Appendix J)[5]. Of the 52 new principals, 73%

were females and 27% were males. Local Service Center affiliation was nearly even with 52%

from LSC A and 48% from LSC B. Sixty percent of surveyed new principals were in their first

year, 23% were in their second year, and 17% were in their third year. A majority of

[5] Of the 89 at LSC A and B, 52 completed the survey for a response rate of 58%. The remaining
42% of new principals who did not complete the survey may have affected the overall results of
this study. These individuals may have had a fear of reprisal from the school district or they
were unaware of the protective measures the researcher had in place to secure confidentiality.

respondents, 73%, were from elementary school. Lastly, most surveyed principals had 11 years

or more experience in education: 11-15 years (27%), 16-20 years (31%), 21-25 years (21%), and

26 or more years (19%).

Twenty individuals were randomly selected from the 55 new principals who completed

the survey to participate in one-on-one interviews based on their indication of interest in being

interviewed on the final question of the survey. The following figures show the demographics of

the new principals that participated in the one-on-one interviews.

Figure 1. One-on-One Interviews - LSC Affiliation

Local Service Center (LSC) Affiliation

50%   50%

LSC A   LSC B
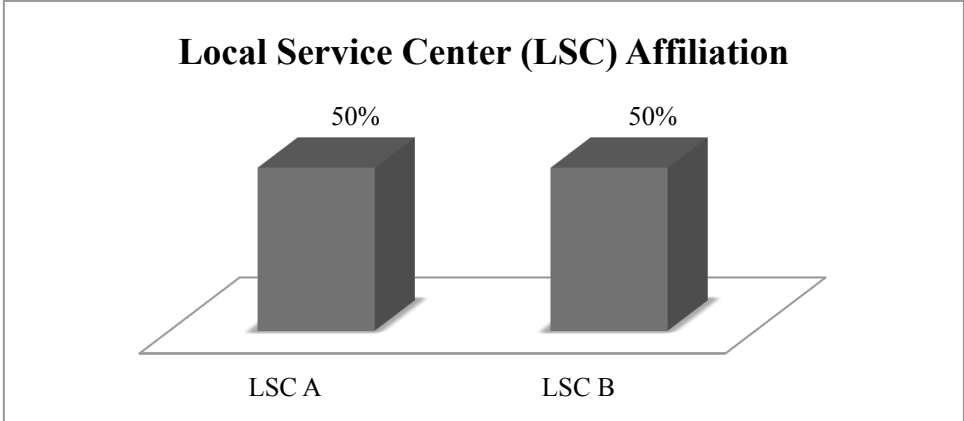
Figure 2. One-on-One Interviews - Year as Principal

Year as New Principal

65%

25%

10%

1st Year   2nd Year   3rd Year
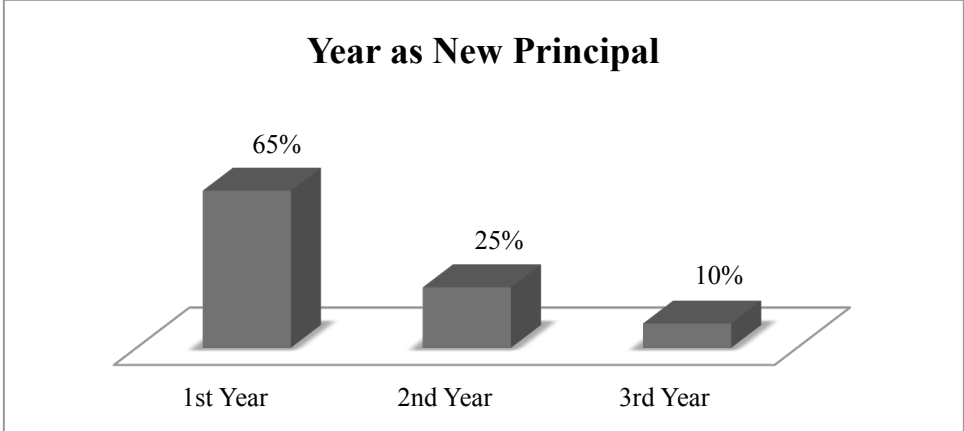
Figure 3. One-on-One Interviews - School Size

School Size - Number of Students

■ 0 - 349   ■ 350 - 500   ■ 501 - 650   ■ 651 - 800   ■ 801 - 950   ■ 951 +

15%
35%
10%
10%
20%
10%
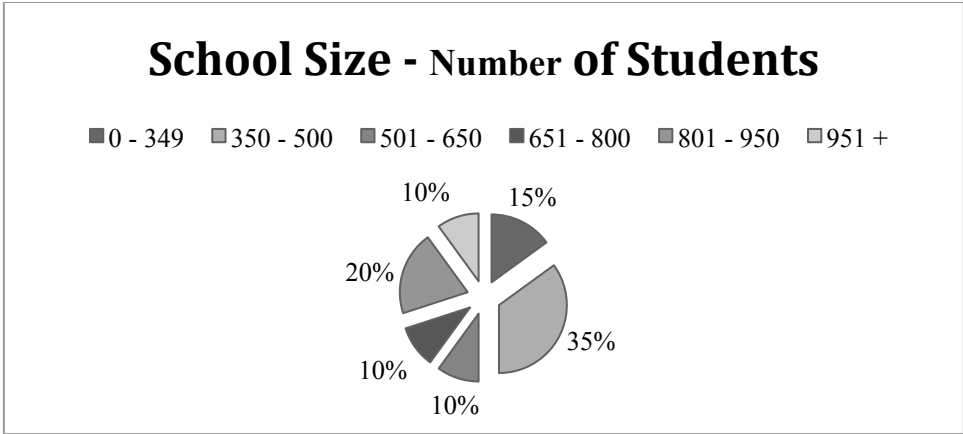
Figure 4. One-on-One Interviews - School Grade Span

Grade Span

35%
25%
15%
5%   5%   10%   5%

Pre K - 2nd   Pre K - 5th   Pre K - 6th   TK - 5th   K - 5th   K - 6th   6th - 8th
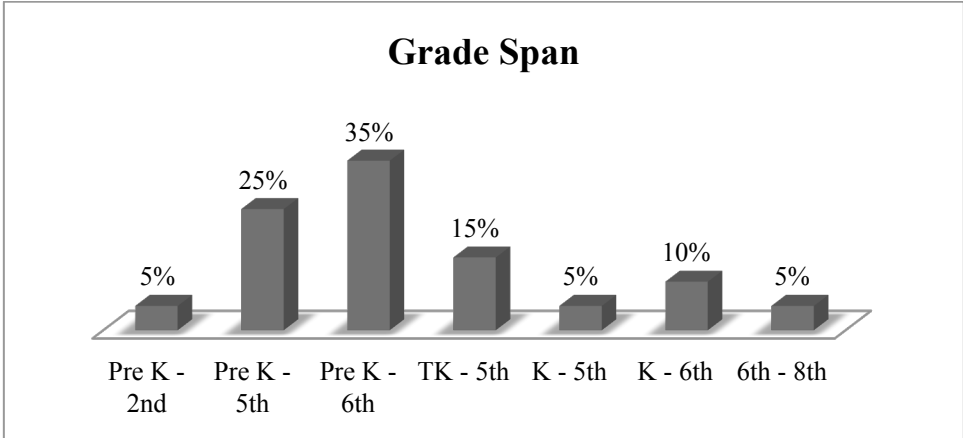
Figure 5. One-on-One Interviews - School Level

School Level

Middle School
5%

Primary Center
5%

Elementary
School
90%
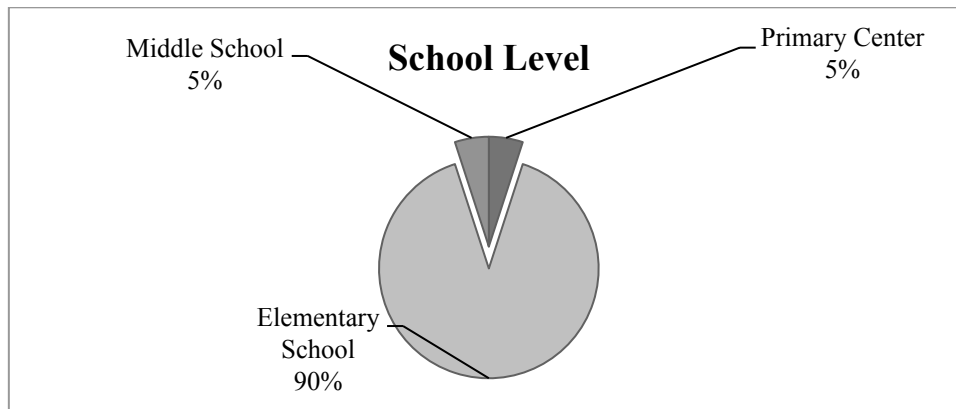
Figure 1 shows the number of principals from each LSC who participated in interviews was even with ten from each. Of this group, 65% are principals in the first year, 25% are in the second year, and 10% are in the third year (Figure 2). A majority of new principal interviewees have from 350 to 500 students in their schools (Figure 3) and most schools have a grade span of pre-kindergarten through sixth grade (Figure 4). Finally, 90% of the new principals interviewed are leaders at elementary schools, 5% from a primary center and 5% from middle school (Figure 5).

Action Research

An action research team called the New Principal Research Team (NPRT) was formed for this study. This team consisted of the following individuals: the researcher, two Instructional Area Superintendents from the two LSCs, the president of the administrator's union, a new principal and a veteran principal. These individuals each had a vested interest in the professional growth and support of new principals. In addition, the members had a unique perspective to share, as they are either practitioners (veteran and new) who currently receive district professional development and support or someone who develops and coordinates professional development programs for new principals. The study's data was shared with the team twice during the course of the research: after the survey was completed and again after one-on-one interviews and the document review were completed and the study's findings determined.

During the first of three NPRT meetings, the team was responsible for creating the questions that were used on the survey tool (Appendix G). After the tool was created through the online survey generator Qualtrics, the members were sent a link of the online survey draft. In addition, the team received a link to a Google Form (Appendix H), which asked for specific feedback about confusing questions, concerns, and any additional comments. The feedback was used to develop the final version of the survey (Appendix I) that was distributed to the district's new principals. Since only four out of six of the NPRT members were able to attend the survey development meeting, the online feedback form was very important. The form allowed for the perspectives of all members to be taken into account when finalizing the survey tool for distribution to new principals.

The second NPRT meeting had three objectives: share the available survey data, give the team an opportunity to reflect and dialogue about the data, and create interview questions for the one-on-one interview protocol (Appendix L). The interview protocol (Appendix N) was developed based on the survey data, the personal experience of the team members, and what the team was interested in learning from new principals. Again, after the meeting, I designed the interview protocol with the team's suggested questions. A draft of the protocol was emailed to the team along with the link to a Google Form to gather feedback (Appendix M). Three out of six of the team members were present for this meeting making the online feedback form critical for the completion of the protocol.

The third and final meeting of the NPRT was a presentation of the study's findings following all data collection tools: surveys, interviews, and document review (Appendix S). After the findings were presented, each member had an opportunity to reflect on them and offer recommendations about how the district might support new principals in the future (Appendix

18). Unfortunately, a common meeting date and time was not found for the final meeting.

However, individual meetings between the researcher and the team members were held in order

for the findings to be shared and recommendations to be given. The NPRT recommendations are

shared in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Research Methods

This study's research methods were threefold: a survey, one-on-one interviews, and an

analysis of district documents (Appendices P-R). The study focused on what Maxwell (2013)

called the "participant's perspective" in order to get a glimpse of the new principal's reality.

After the survey, 20 participants were chosen at random to take part in an interview with open-

ended questions designed to answer the study's research questions and capture the perceptions of

the participants. Although the participants were chosen at random, they had to meet the criteria

for a new principal: three years or less in their first principalship. I intended to get an even cross

section of elementary, middle school, and secondary principals. However, most participants

were elementary school principals. Finally, I examined district documents such as memoranda,

bulletins, web pages, meeting agendas, and feedback forms to determine current professional

development offerings and models used as well as support offered to principals or those

interested in becoming a principal. These data were triangulated as a way of gaining a better

understanding of the new principals' experience (Maxwell, 2013).

In addition, as described in the previous section, meetings of the New Principal Research

Team were used to influence the creation of survey and interview questions and

recommendations made at the conclusion of the study. The purpose of using these data

collection methods was to gain preliminary information from a survey, to give participants an

opportunity to provide more elaborate responses through open-ended interview questions, and to

analyze district documents to determine the current state of professional development opportunities for new principals.

Survey. New principals in the focus LMSD LSCs were surveyed by using the New Principal Survey. The survey was given to all new principals with three years or less experience at the beginning of the data collection process in September 2014. The LMSD LSCs' Instructional Area Superintendents signed a memorandum of understanding (Appendix C) making access to the new principals and to LSC documents possible. The purpose of the survey was to gather demographic information as well as general information and initial perceptions about district support and professional development offerings and models.

The online survey was administered through the website Qualtrics.com. Prior to completing the survey, each participant was asked to read the consent form explaining the purpose of the study and the ways in which any personal information they share was to be protected and confidential (Appendices E-F). The survey consisted of 17 questions, all of which were either fixed response or statements that solicited responses based on a Likert-like scale.

The survey began with demographic questions, such as school level and credentials obtained, and then continued with questions intended to answer the first research question. These questions were about the type of principal preparation program, if any, the individual attended and the knowledge and skills acquired from these programs. The next section of questions were aimed at answering the second research question and focused on responding to statements about the specific needs the new principals had in terms of professional development and support. The final sections of the survey focused on answering the third and fourth research questions focused on professional development models the new principals were aware of, which they took part in, and which models they felt were most useful in supporting their professional

growth and development. The results were quantified to show totals and means in order to gather general information.

       Interviews. The second phase of data collection consisted of interviews with a stratified random sample of participants selected from the pool of 52 new principals who completed the survey and agreed to participate in an interview. The selected participants represented mainly elementary school principals including one primary center principal and only one middle school principal. Twenty interviews were conducted. The purpose of the interviews was to allow participants to elaborate on many of the close-ended responses that were given in the survey. I also assured the interviewee the study was being done by me as a student of the university and not sponsored by the school district (Merriam, 2009). Participants were asked to elaborate on their perceptions of professional development they received from the school district as well as reflect on specific support they felt they needed in order to be effective leaders. Follow up questions were asked to elicit more information and stories which highlighted a particular challenge or success that could be helped or was helped by district support or professional development. Interview questions were focused on asking quality questions aimed at responses telling a story about the experiences of the new principal (Merriam, 2009). Each interview consisted of 16 questions and several follow up questions, taking approximately 30 – 60 minutes to administer. The interviews took place in a location comfortable for the interviewee such as their office or the school's conference room. Each interview was recorded using a digital recording device as well as an iPhone recording app as backup. All interviews were transcribed and the transcription was given to participants for a "member check", or an opportunity to review and make any omissions or additions they deemed necessary (Merriam, 2009).

Document Analysis. The final phase of data collection was an analysis of district

documents pertaining to professional development and support for new principals. Again, with

the support of the LSC Instructional Area Superintendents, I was provided principal professional

development meeting agendas and feedback forms for network, new principal, and operations

meetings. In addition, I was able to access district memorandums and bulletins regarding

professional development, support, and specific programs for aspiring or current principals.

When examining these documents, I focused on the type of professional development offered to

principals and especially aimed at new principals and coded for the instruction and operations

topics covered, leadership development opportunities offered, professional development

models/methods used during meetings, and reflection given (Appendix R). I was interested in

finding out whether professional development was aimed at supporting the needs of new

principals or if it was aimed at principals in general.

Data Analysis

All data were analyzed in order to make connections between the methods and the

research questions. Quantitative data collected from the survey through multiple choice and

Likert-like scales were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, such as means and frequency of

responses for a given question. The survey was divided into sections related to the research

questions making connections between the data and the questions possible. Each interview was

transcribed and coded for themes related to the research questions, such as professional

development needs, support needs and offerings, leadership development, and reflection

(Appendix R). After each interview was coded, I sorted the data into categories and connected

each coded response from all interviews. When analyzing district documents, I focused on the

frequency of professional development meetings, professional development models used,

meeting locations, and topics covered. For district bulletins pertaining to professional development programs for new principals, I looked at who is eligible and how many can participate as well as topics covered.

Confidentiality

In order to protect all participants of this study, pseudonyms were used for all respondents and no identifiable information was used in the writing of the study's findings. The transcripts, digital recordings, field notes, and documents used during the data collection process will be destroyed within one year of the completion and approval of the study. As the researcher, I am the sole owner of the data collected from the survey. Although the local Instructional Area Superintendent supported the study, this study was not sponsored by them or by the school district (Merriam, 2009). Thus all data gathered was solely that of the researcher. All findings were shared with the district personnel once the study was completed. The district received the same information in the written findings shared with the university.

Access to People

This study concentrated on data collection from new principals in two out of five of LMSD's small LSCs. I was able to gain access to these new principals by way of an agreement with the LSC's Instructional Area Superintendents. These individuals stated their interest in the data to be generated by the study and agreed to support the data collection process. The superintendents signed a memorandum of understanding regarding their participation in and support of the study. The superintendents sent a letter of support to each of the principal directors, as well as new principals, asking them to cooperate with the study because of the potential benefits to them and future new principals. The letter provided assurance that no identifying information would be gathered nor would anything personal be shared with anyone at

the district. This statement eased concerns the new principals could have had about

participating. Potential participants were assured that their information was kept secure

throughout the research process and after the study was concluded.

In addition to a letter of support to the principal directors and the new principals, I

attended two of the principal meetings at one of the LSCs and provided a video introduction of

the study and myself to the other LSC before data collection started. I fielded all questions,

invited a veteran and new principal to join the New Principal Research Team, and described the

study time line and time requirements for participants.

Managing My Role

Although I am an employee of LMSD and have been for nearly ten years, I am not a

principal. I work within the boundaries of one the two LSCs where the study took place. I met

with the Instructional Area Superintendents in person a couple times before this study started.

To eliminate the potential for bias or conflict of interest, I visited the district to introduce myself

as a graduate student researcher from UCLA, not as a district employee or someone doing

research for LMSD. The fact that the school district employs me did not influence the way I

conducted research within it. More new principals might participate more openly in the study

knowing I was a researcher from the university, and did not have ulterior motives or biases.

I stressed that confidentiality was of utmost importance and no identifying information

was revealed to anyone other than the researcher. I also guaranteed them that all data was under

lock and key during and after the study was concluded. During the one-on-one interviews, all

participants were asked the same questions; however, I did ask follow up questions to gather

more information or to clarify a response. Although I was working closely with the Instructional

Area Superintendent to gain access to the district's new principals, no information was shared with them other than general findings at the conclusion of the study.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Bias. This study took place within the school district I was employed, which could easily allow for bias. Therefore, the way the data were gathered and interpreted was done with care in order to avoid bias. When collecting interview data, I transcribed the recordings and used direct quotes to use the voice of the participant as much as possible and to show the opinions of the participants, not the opinion of the researcher. The data was triangulated to ensure it came from multiple participants, from multiple sources, and was not just the perceptions of one individual or information from one source. Additionally, to protect against bias, the study used random sampling to ensure the probability that all perspectives were heard because anyone could have been selected to participate (Creswell, 2009).

Reactivity. The difficulty when interviewing individuals is reducing, or better yet, eliminating reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). This study was endorsed and supported by the LSC's superintendents, which had the potential to lend itself to reactivity of participants if they were reluctant to speak freely for fear of repercussions. To avoid reactivity and ensure the gathering of authentic data, I guaranteed participants that the data being collected (e.g. transcripts of interviews or survey responses) was only to be used by the researcher and no identifying information would ever be connected to the individual's responses.

Insufficient evidence. In order to ensure that a sufficient amount of evidence was collected, the study had several safeguards in place. First, to avoid a negative analysis of the data, other hypotheses or explanations were found to support the data. In addition, data was triangulated by way of survey, interview, and district document data to show what was

concluded to be a finding was truly a finding (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The evidence

included quasi-statistics to complement the qualitative data from interviews and district

documents to assist the reader in understanding the results and findings. Finally, to prepare for

the one-on-one interviews, I practiced asking probing and follow up questions to maximize the

collection of data from the participant.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

Introduction

> I think that if they really want to invest in you…I don't mind working hard. I've always been a hard worker but I work probably seven days a week and that's to keep my head above water. I don't think that's an investment in longevity. You already feel like you are looking at burnout and I don't want to be that person.

> –Rachel Montgomery, First Year Principal[6]

The life of a principal in a large, urban school district is a challenging one as a principal works to provide the best learning environment possible for students. Even after years of experience, the struggles are ever present making a balance of all competing priorities difficult to attain. Every principal has a different reality, whether striving to be an instructional leader, constantly being pulled away from classrooms because of school operations, or spending nearly 100 hours per week at work and home just to get the work done. That reality may include being the only administrator on campus due to small school size and budget, dealing with litigious parents, teachers who are not embracing the new instructional standards, teacher morale, or school culture, the list goes on. A new principal enters the position with high hopes and expectations of what he or she will accomplish but soon find that their course must be altered because the needs of others and the needs of the school require immediate attention. The new principals in this study have compelling stories to tell about triumphs and defeats in their first years as a new administrator. Each new principal needs assistance in specific areas that, if supported, new principals believe will help them be successful as school administrators.

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[6] Ninety percent of the new principals interviewed for this study were elementary school principals with the remaining ten percent being one middle school and one primary center principal. The school level of each new principal will not be identified in this chapter unless he or she is a middle school (MS) or primary center (PC) principal.

"Look at me, I'm all emotional about it". Diana Lucas, a second year principal, recently started her second year as principal. She has a large staff and a student body of nearly 1000 students. She struggles to find a balance between her responsibilities as a principal and being a parent. When talking about the district's teacher evaluation system, Diana said it was very time consuming because one has to script and tag an entire lesson including what the teacher and students say based on specific focus areas chosen by the teacher and principal. She was doing much of this work at home, which was difficult and was taking an emotional toll on her. Diana said, "I'm like a young administrator with young kids. How is it sustainable to…I know other new principals and we are working like hundreds, it feels like a 100 hours a week. It's not sustainable. You can't do it." She became emotional when describing the kind of person she is. "I'm a Gold Star person. I was a Gold Star kid, like I was one with As on my test, I always…I am a do-what-it-takes person, so that requires staying up late at night and scripting. [My child] goes to sleep and I'm working and it's really, really challenging to balance." Diana worked very hard to complete the work she had and also be a there for her family. She felt the pressure of completing the work when it was required with fear of being on "the list." She stated, "That's not to say, but these ones didn't, but if you are not on the 'You Completed It list', and it's like, 'I'm doing the best I can.'" At the conclusion of the interview, Diana shared how cathartic it was to be able to voice her concerns and struggles as a new school administrator.

Diana Lucas is just one of many new administrators finding their first years as a principal to be a balancing act of priorities; district priorities, school priorities, and home priorities. The findings in this study provide a glimpse into what new principals in a large, urban school district believe is needed to develop as successful school administrators by answering the following questions:

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1. What knowledge and skills do new (three years or less experience) principals in a large, urban school district perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?

2. What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

3. In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

4. What types of professional development do new principals perceive would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (i.e., mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

To answer these questions, this study focused on the perceptions of new principals from two of five LSCs within LMSD a large, urban school district in the Western United States. I start by sharing the knowledge and skills new principals believe they must have to be successful as a new administrator in order to inform future professional development and preparation options. This study documents the learning opportunities for new principals and how well prepared they felt as a result. The focus of this chapter then shifts to documenting the challenges new principals faced and what assistance and support they felt they needed to meet the challenges of their position. Specific professional development topics were offered and principals shared their perceptions of those topics. Finally, I discuss the types of professional development models or methods new principals believe are useful for them as adult learners and new administrators. The subsequent chapter will have a summary of the findings followed by a discussion.

Although this study documents the experiences of new principals in a large, urban school district, the focus is on two of the five service centers within the one school district. This study will not compare or contrast the two LSCs but rather focus on themes that have arisen across both centers in order to concentrate on the experiences of new principals in general. The individuals in this study are described as employees of one district and not delineated by the service center with which they are affiliated. In addition to interviews of twenty new principals, ten from each service center, I conducted a document analysis of meeting agendas and reflection forms to compare what new principals shared about professional development topics and methods offered in meetings with what was offered through the district and the two service centers.

Developing a Successful School Administrator

New principals had several opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for success: experiences they gained as a classroom teacher and out of classrooms as coordinator, coach or administrator position, completion of a preliminary credential program, attendance at a pre-service program offered by a school district, completion of a clear credential program once hired, and job experience upon becoming a principal. Whether they gain the knowledge and skills through the avenues listed above or through other means, the new principals identified key knowledge and skills they believe will make them successful as new administrators. This section explores the knowledge and skills new principals perceive they need to be successful in their first principal position as well as their beliefs about their preparation for their first principalship.

Knowledge and Skills. New principals in this study identified specific knowledge and skills they perceived they need to be successful as a new administrator. These findings fall into four categories: knowledge of school operations, knowledge of instruction, management skills,

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and soft skills. Figure 6 shows a visual representation of the knowledge and skills needed by new principals to be successful.

Figure 6. Knowledge and Skills New Principals Need to be Successful
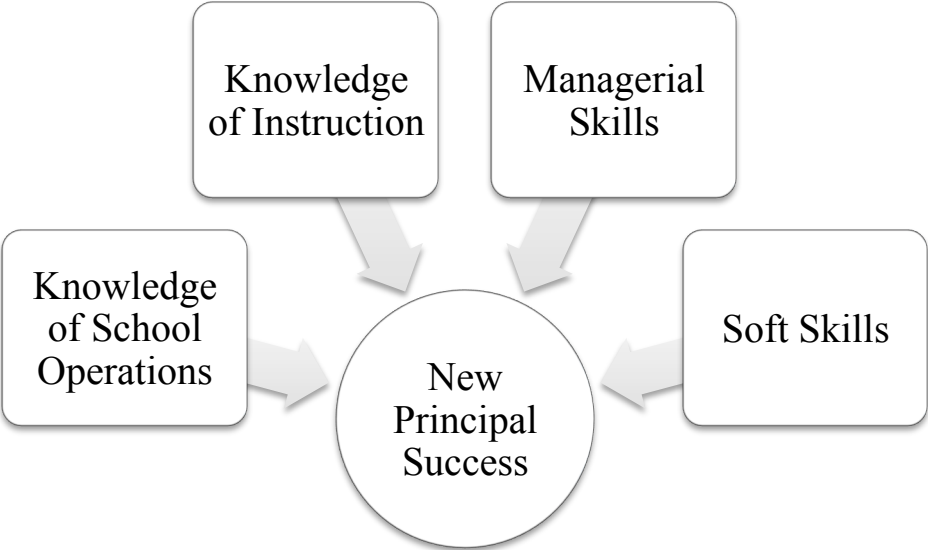
Knowledge of School Operations. School Operations covers several areas aimed at keeping students and teachers safe as well as protecting the rights of all involved. Examples are student discipline, employee discipline, child abuse reporting, emergency services such as earthquake preparedness, budget, compliance, employee evaluation, workers' compensation, and human relations. Twelve out of twenty new principals (60%) believe a new administrator must have knowledge of School Operations in order to be successful with school budget management as the most mentioned of the Operations areas.

During the data collection period for this study, the school district experienced a change in leadership at the top resulting in the placement of an interim superintendent. With this change came many others in terms of support for new principals. As of November 2014, a moratorium was placed on all district professional development, cancelling the regular Operations and new principal support meetings. Darla Beltran, a first year principal, remarked on these cancellations

by saying, "I'm missing that whole entire piece that's not being addressed at all for some of us who are new who need that support." Not having these meetings, which could have helped new principals to learn about school operations, has made the job more challenging, given the extensiveness and importance of operations in the day-to-day function of a school.

To many new principals, Operations is massive. Rachel Montgomery summed it up this way:

> Operations is like chapters and chapters. There's the law. There are policies for attendances. There's policies for earthquake preparedness. There's policies for school climate, the culture, positive behavior. There's all the staff relations issues. There's the hiring aspects.

Rachel shared her concerns about her budget knowledge:

> Budget is a tremendous thing because, as a coordinator I came in, I know my categorical budget but then there was an entire new other thing. There's payroll. There's the procurement card. There's the budget. There's all the do's and don'ts.

First year principal Bella Barajas agreed, having also held coordinator and assistant principal positions requiring her to manage certain budgets. She acknowledged that the budget has changed a lot over the years and explained she had "bits and pieces" of knowledge about budget but needs to have more. As challenging as Operations and especially budget have been, many new principals acknowledged that the support they received from the school district has "made it not as daunting as I had imagined it was going to be" (Veronica Torres, first year principal).

The new principals in this study are not alone in thinking that they need to know everything possible about being a principal and managing a school. Jessica Nelson, second year elementary school principal said that aside from academic knowledge, a new principal must have

knowledge of school operations "because many things go on here that are not academically related but you still are responsible. You're responsible for everything as a principal."

 Knowledge of Instruction. First year principal, Molly Tapia, believed in a balance of knowledge of instruction and operations. However, she felt that "instruction is something you really naturally need to own. It's hard to learn instruction as opposed to learning operations, so if you follow the instruction, the operations come as you're in seat." Iris Patton, also a first year principal, shared, "You have to really know instruction is #1. Really you have to know what the teachers are doing in there, the different curriculum. You have to be knowledgeable about the curriculum." This is coming at a time when the district's schools are in the full implementation stage of Common Core State Standards. This study finds that fourteen out of twenty new principals (70%) believed that knowledge of instruction is necessary. In a more detailed analysis, new principals cited the importance of knowledge of the Common Core State Standards, including expectations, instructional practices, and strategies. In addition, they cited that a new principal must develop and hone strategies to support teachers with their instruction of the new standards, as well as knowing about assessments, curriculum, and the new English Language Development standards.

 Bella Barajas went to all the professional development offered by the district for teachers to expand her own knowledge of instruction. Beverly Easton, a third year principal, worked hard to stay caught up to where her teachers were but admitted, "I can't provide the instructional lead for my people because I know as little as they do as much as I try to catch up." Third year principal Olivia Hurtado highlighted the importance of being credible in the eyes of teachers she supports:

If you don't know instruction and you're asking your teachers to do certain jobs, then

there's not really that buy in and that credibility. I'm not afraid to say, 'You know what,

can I model in your class?' because I want them to see what I would like to see.

New principals are consciously proactive in augmenting their knowledge of instruction in an

effort to develop their instructional leadership skills. Their desire to be credible and consciously

support their teachers is demonstrated when they attend professional development and offer to go

into classrooms and work side by side with teachers. Specific management skills are necessary

in order to find the time to visit classrooms and attend instructional professional development.

    Management Skills. Fourteen out of twenty new principals (70%) believed that in order

to be successful, they must have management skills. New principals must be organized and

know how to manage both time and people including all school stakeholders: teachers, students,

parents, community members, etc. New principals must also know how to delegate, which many

principals say is necessary to accomplish much of what the job entails, such as visiting

classrooms and being an instructional leader. In addition, they need to know how to manage

their time, prioritize, manage teacher and student behavior, as well as parent and community

engagement. First year principal Kate Ulrich said:

You have to be extremely organized, very tactful, strategic, a planner and really know

how to prioritize your time. Those are ideal skills. Those are the ideal skills. If there

were the box for a perfect principal you would have to have these in it.

Similarly, Rachel Montgomery voiced her own concerns with time management and the

desire for time to stand still so she can deal with all the issues she faces.

When I call [the district] up and say I want to write somebody up, it suddenly becomes

this huge project, but I really have about five other things happening simultaneously so I

really wish that -- or I have to investigate a discipline issue and that can take three days to

discipline kids, you have to talk to each child, you have to -- you get interruptions and

you have to written statements and call the parents and it's so time consuming so

sometimes you have multiple things going on, and you call the [service center] and you

say, 'How can I go about it?' Sometimes the answer is hard, because in a perfect world

time stands still and you just do this.

Raul Dominguez, also a first year principal, shared his own learning about managing time

and delegating as a skill that new principals need. "I come from always doing things on my own.

In this job, you can't know everything. I guess what I'm saying is being able to reach out to your

support." He continued, "Not having a big, huge ego. Thinking I can do everything because I

can't. This job…you can't do everything. There's no way." Raul touched on the importance of

managing, and also the specific skills one needs in order to be able to manage others.

Soft Skills. To be successful in school leadership, thirteen out of twenty new principals

(65%) believe they must possess specific soft skills. Soft skills are defined as "personal

attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people"

(http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/soft-skills?q=soft+skills).

The participants believed a new principal must be able to communicate, have common sense, be

professional, be patient, have self-control, and be a good listener. Jessica Nelson elaborated on

the importance of having good listening skills:

By listening I mean to what your students' needs are, what your teachers' needs are and

you have to work together collaboratively with one another to make it become successful

because if you're not listening, you're not hearing, then there's no way you're going to be

successful.

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Maria Santiago, a first year principal, compared soft skills with knowledge of instruction and operations by saying, "What I'm finding to be the less concrete, more abstract that is understanding group processes, understanding group thinking, understanding relationship building; all those soft things". She said that unlike instruction and operations, one cannot go to a book to learn about these skills. New principals believed they must have people skills, social skills, and interpersonal skills in order to build those relationships Maria referred to, as well as being sensitive to the staff and community and firm but fair.

New Principal Preparation. "Honestly, I don't think anything prepares you for the principalship but being a principal." First year principal Bianca Nava offered this sentiment shared by many of the new principals that participated in this study: regardless of the programs they completed, they were not fully prepared. This came from individuals that, before stepping into the principal position, attended at least two years of school to fulfill the requirements to receive a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC), which some programs offer in conjunction with a masters degree. LMSD has also offered pre-service school leader development programs in which 55% of the study's new principals participated. In addition, after entering an administrative position, they must complete a program to receive the Clear Administrative Services Credential (CASC).

Bianca Nava not only completed a PASC, but she was also in one of the district's pre-service programs. She held an out-of-classroom coordinator position where she was responsible for compliance and specific budgets, as well as administrative duties. Even with the time spent on education and years of service in and out of the classroom giving new principals exposure to the kinds of responsibilities they might face, a majority believe they were not well prepared for their first principal position by the credential program they attended. Several new principals

shared that the position(s) they held prior to becoming a principal is where much of their experience was gained. Bella Barajas agreed. "What has prepared me the best for a principal job has been the experiences I've had along the way. I think that's my best training."

Aside from on-the-job learning aspiring school administrators gain, they must complete specific requirements in order to be eligible for the position of school principal. Figure 7 shows the preparation options that new principals explained during one-on-one interviews, as well as where the credential was acquired or the program offered.

Figure 7. How New Principals Were Prepared for the Principalship

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │   New Principal      │
                        │   Preparation        │
                        └─────────────────────┘
          ┌───────────────────────┼───────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────┐
│    Preliminary      │ │ Clear Administrative│ │                     │
│Administrative Services│ │ Services Credential │ │ Pre-Service Program │
│  Credential (PASC)  │ │       (CASC)        │ │                     │
└─────────────────────┘ └─────────────────────┘ └─────────────────────┘
      ┌───────────────────┐   ┌───────────────────────┐   ┌───────────────────┐
      │State College or University│ State College or University│ │                   │
      │  Online University │   │   Online University   │   │  District Program │
      │ District Examination│  │   District Program    │   └───────────────────┘
      └───────────────────┘   │   Private University  │
                              └───────────────────────┘
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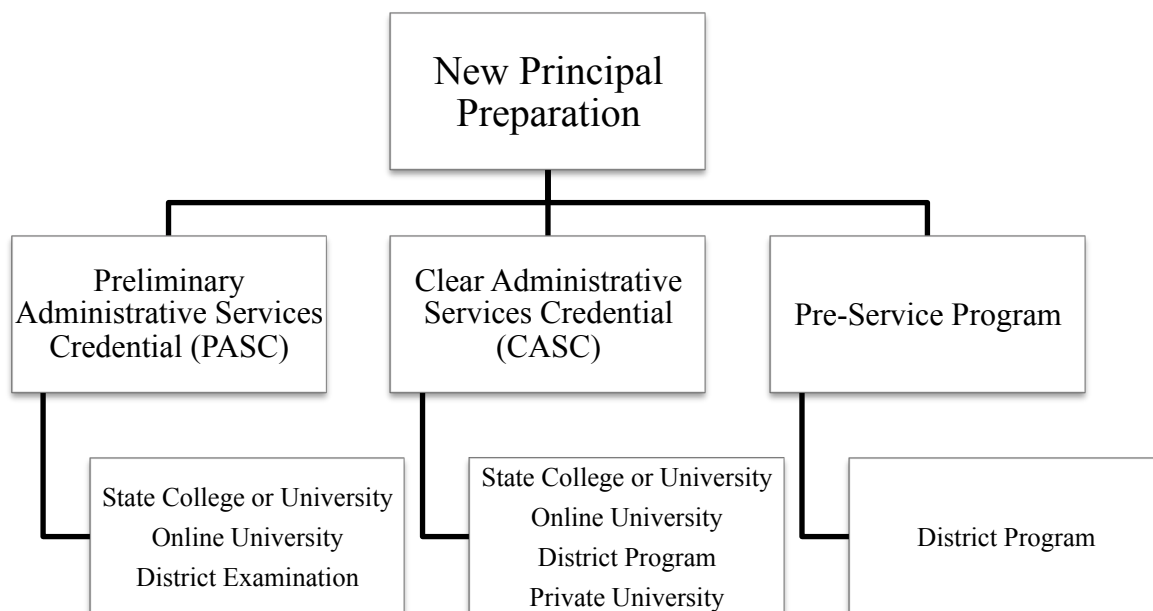
Of the twenty new principals interviewed for this study, 100% had completed a PASC program and hold a preliminary credential. Of this group, 80% acquired the credential by attending a state college or university program while the remaining 20% completed it either online or by taking an examination offered by the school district which required no formal instruction. Once individuals begin an administrative position, they are required to complete a program to clear the administrative credential and receive a Clear Administrative Services Credential (CASC).

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According to survey data, 62% of the new principals had acquired their CASC **(**Appendix K**)**.

Similarly, 65% of the new principals interviewed had completed a program and acquired a

CASC with a majority (38%) receiving it through an online university or through a state college

or university (31%). Those remaining obtained the credential through a district program or

private university. The 35% who have not received the CASC are either enrolled or in the

process of enrolling in a program. Eleven out of twenty of the study's new principals (55%)

attended a pre-service leadership development program offered by the school district prior to

becoming a principal. Although all the study's new principals had completed an administrative

preparation program with some completing a district leadership development program, their

perceptions of how those programs prepared them for their first principalship varies greatly.

Perception of PASC Preparation. New principals' perceptions of the PASC program

falls into two categories: it was a positive learning experience for them or it did not prepare

them for their first principal position. While most, fifteen out of twenty (75%), cited positive

learning experiences from their program, of the same twenty new principals, fourteen (70%)

believed the program did not prepare them for the realities of their first principalship. Many new

principals completed the preliminary credential program several years prior to taking the position

causing much of the information they learned to be forgotten. Regarding the gap in time

between when he completed the PASC program and his first principal position, Raul Dominguez

said, "I don't think it really prepares you for when you're a principal because everything's a

theory. Everything is somebody else's perception or ideology regarding what it is to be a

principal. Here we are nine years later, ten years later, I don't feel really prepared. On a scale of

one to ten, just for our conversation, actually like a six."

Fifteen out of twenty new principals (75%) indicated that their experience in the PASC program was a positive one. Of the fifteen, nine new principals stated that their programs focused heavily on educational leadership theory evident in the quote above from Principal Dominguez. In addition, some of their instructors were employees of the school district or service center they worked for, which added to their positive experience. Others called the program they attended good, helpful, phenomenal, very effective, including that they "felt educated and well prepared" (Kelly Young, second year principal) by the program. Veronica Torres stated that the program she attended "prepared me for even, I think, maybe a tougher principalship, as far as in different neighborhoods" since the program focused on urban schools in a neighborhood different than the one where she is currently principal. Even with the skills and knowledge the study's new principals acquired during the PASC program, most still felt they were not prepared for their first principal position.

Seventy percent of new principals did not believe their preliminary credential program prepared them for their first principal position. Reasons given include a lack of practical, hands-on application opportunities and the shadowing of the principal requirement was "too short", one principal stated they shadowed for just one day. Third year principal Olivia Hurtado said:

I think it gave me an opportunity to get some background on the laws and the regulations

of overall supervising education and educators but as far as the nuts and bolts, I think you

get it more with the hands-on experience.

Under the "nuts and bolts" falls much of what principals must deal with on a daily basis, such as budget management and staff relations. New principals felt unprepared by the PASC program for either of those operational tasks. Brandy Combs, a second year principal (MS), offered the following insight about the effectiveness of her program's preparation:

Well, I don't know if [the program] necessarily prepared me. I was able to meet

different people by doing different projects, because you had to kind of step

outside of your comfort zone and interview people or shadow people that were in

a different area that you were not so much comfortable with. Even elementary for

me wasn't an area I was so comfortable with, so I had to take my extra time and

actually do that outside of work hours to go shadow a principal, talk about

different things. I don't know if that necessarily prepared me. It kind of just like

laid the foundation for is this something I really want to do.

Beverly Easton said she received a "very superficial understanding" of the job while another said they were not prepared for being responsible for everything that happens at the school site.

Perception of CASC Preparation. At the time the new principals were in the PASC programs, they were not yet in administrative positions. They were thinking about what Principal Hurtado called the "when I become an administrator" hypothetical situation. In contrast, the CASC programs are completed while holding an administrative position, allowing the experience to be perceived as much more relevant. Class subject matter can be directly applied to what happens on the job the next day. The new principals' perceptions of the CASC preparation, completed at various state colleges or universities or online, were overwhelmingly positive.

Eleven out of the thirteen new principals (85%) that have completed a CASC program shared positive perceptions of the program they attended. They found it valuable because it offered realistic, and practical content. Raul Dominguez explained the realistic nature of the CASC program he attended, saying the program gives "a lot of scenarios and you basically have to justify your decisions". He added that this process made the experience "a little bit more

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thought provoking". New principals remarked that the practical or hands-on approach of the programs allowed them to apply their learning right away because they were already in an administrative position, as opposed to their PASC programs, which was learning about their future position. Principal Nelson shared that the CASC program "solidified some of the things that were happening my first year as principal and it gave me a little bit more background knowledge as to how I could help these things that were happening going a more positive direction". New principals appreciated the opportunity to be reflective on their practice and plan for next steps.

   Perception of District Pre-Service Program. New principals in the study shared about three different pre-service school leadership development programs they completed. Of the 55% of new principals that participated in such programs, 91% attended the same program. Overall perceptions of these pre-service programs were overwhelmingly positive with 82% sharing positive remarks. New principals found the information they received to be relevant, very topical, and practical, covering such topics as instruction, compliance, budget, and English Language Learners. Since the programs were offered through the school district, new principals liked the fact that knowledgeable district employees were leading the sessions and presenting district expectations and initiatives. This allowed the information to be made what second year principal Oscar Perez called "digestible", "really hands on" and "very timely". He added, "I thought that was vital because that really filled in the slot of, now this is what the district is expecting, and so we got to hear policy directly from the horse's mouth, you might say." Molly Tapia shared that "nothing can prepare you for the day to day situations." Bianca Nava agreed by saying, "all those everyday things that slap you in the face, they are not in any of these programs". However, Molly also shared that she gained knowledge of district departments and

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was given resources, such as who to reach out to if she needs support. While some found the fast pace and short length of their program to be positive, others felt that the shortness only allowed a taste of what the job of principal entails.

Overall, this study found that new principals believe specific knowledge and skills must be acquired to be successful as a new school administrator. This includes knowledge of instruction in order to be a credible instructional leader for the school's teachers, knowledge of operations to create a safe and healthy learning environment for students, knowledge of management skills necessary for keeping competing priorities in check, and knowledge of soft skills allowing positive and constructive interactions with all stakeholders. In addition, while some new principals believed nothing could prepare one for the realities of being a school administrator, new principals who had attended various preparation programs prior to and while being an administrator perceived those preparation programs in a positive way.

Supporting New Principals to Meet the Challenges of the Principalship

New and veteran principals face myriad challenges due to the massiveness of the responsibilities associated with the position they hold and the preparation or training they received. Determining how to support new principals to meet the challenges of principalship can be daunting because every individual has a different daily reality. To give a glimpse into what challenges new principals in a large, urban school district face, the following section highlights the most significant findings in terms of challenges and what support new principals felt they need to be successful.

Jessica Nelson was a second year elementary school principal. Although she had faced many challenges as a new principal, she shared the struggles she has with the community in and out of the school and how the two often converge. Jessica said, "Community was happening.

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Not only are you dealing with what's going on in the school internally, externally you're dealing with what happened to so-and-so's cousins". She also said that she must listen to the community in order to stay on top of what was going on inside the school. "Have your eyes and ears open to the community because what goes on the outside affects what goes on the inside." When asked how she felt she was meeting the challenges of the position she responded:

> I think again that's what building community and partnership relationships to get that help
> to let everyone know that we are a family, we're a team and we can't do this alone. It
> takes everyone. It takes the teachers, the parents, the community. It takes the law
> enforcement. It takes the district. It takes all of us to be successful.

Jessica acknowledged she cannot do everything on her own and that it literally "takes a village" of all stakeholders to have success.

First year principal Marie Santiago faced different challenges than Jessica Nelson but tried to find the time to reflect both intellectually and emotionally in order to handle her first year as a school administrator. Marie started the school year well into the first semester, which made her transition difficult. She acknowledged that the position has a "steep learning curve" and she was trying to keep up with it. She said that time was a challenge for her in terms of time to reflect, time to be in classrooms, and time to process. She said, "For the Fall, it was my just kind of catching up and taking care of things, and all that and not really having time to think about anything. It kicked my butt." After reflecting, she noted she was "really trying to identify what is important. What action is going to meet the long-term needs? Which of the fires must be put out because if they are, it's going to have a serious implication". She mentioned that she recently began using a time management tool that has been very helpful but recognized that she cannot

continue to work overtime if she is going to be successful. She said, "I can't put in 15-hour days

forever and think that I'm going to be effective and functional."

New Principal Challenges. Principals Nelson and Santiago shared that time and the

school community were challenges for them, one acknowledging she cannot maintain the hours

she was currently putting in. Given the knowledge and skills new principals believed they need

to be successful in the first principalship, as outlined in the first section of this chapter, it is not

unexpected that new principals are faced with challenges in similar categories once they are in

the position. Figure 8 shows the challenges new principals faced.

Figure 8. New Principal Challenges
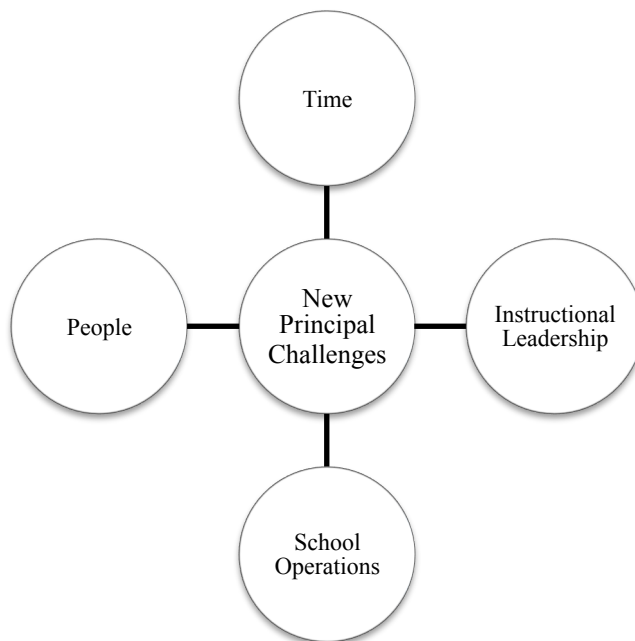
Although the interviewed new principals shared many challenges, the most significant of them

belong to four categories: school operations, time, instructional leadership, and people.

School Operations. Fifteen out of twenty new principals (75%) believe that school

operations present the greatest challenge. The most mentioned areas of operations were student

safety/discipline, staff relations, and budget. Under student safety and discipline new principals

cited dealing student discipline is problematic because it can be very time consuming which caused the principals to be unable to visit classrooms. In addition, doing student supervision is time consuming especially when one does not have staff to support them in that effort and the entirety of student supervision and discipline is left to them alone. One principal shared a challenge of putting systems into place for student safety and behavior and those systems "need to be tight" in order to be effective.

Budget also falls under school operations challenges. Sixty percent of new principals mentioned school budget as being a major challenge for several reasons. The lack of funding to purchase additional staff, such as a nurse or an additional administrator, has had a huge impact on dealing with problems and meeting district expectations. Principal Easton said, "the lack of funding, it has eliminated positions that have had an enormous impact on my ability to solve problems to my satisfaction and what the district expects." Molly Tapia shared her fear of making budget mistakes due to her developing level of understanding. "I'm so afraid to make the wrong choice or the wrong decision or spend the money incorrectly, so I'm paranoid about that." First year principal Simon Abarca worried about spending the money wisely and on items that are beneficial for the teachers and students. Other principals struggled with less funding because of small school size made it difficult for them to purchase what they felt they needed. In addition, one challenge was finding funding for adequate and up to date technology schools needed in order for students to participate in state testing.

Time. Principals struggled with the issue of time. This study finds that fourteen out of twenty new principals (70%) believe that time is a major challenge for them: time management, not enough time spent in the classrooms because of competing priorities, balancing time spent on instruction and operations, and working extended hours. One new principal became emotional

during the interview when talking about how much time she is spending at home working on the new teacher evaluation system after she puts her young children to bed. Another spoke about working every day, including weekends, for the first three months of the school year, her first three months as a principal. At the time of the interview, she revealed that she still goes in to work on Saturdays because she does not have enough time during the week to get all her work done. Some principals grappled with delegating tasks to others so they will have time to accomplish the tasks they wish or need to accomplish. Commenting on delegation of tasks, second year elementary principal Diana Lucas said:

> I have a team here that helps me, an admin team, but I think as a new principal I'm very much like, I want to have my hands in everything, so I know what's going on and all of that. And then once, not that I don't trust my team, but once I can know what their skills are and all of that, then I can delegate a little bit better. I think that this year I'm doing a better job of that than I was last year when I started, because last year I was like, ah!

The ability to delegate goes a long way in helping new principals find the time needed to complete tasks they set for themselves. In addition, half of new principals who cited time as an issue reported they did not have enough time to go observe classrooms because they were pulled out for operations or other issues. This directly affects their ability to be the instructional leaders they wish to be.

   Instructional Leadership. This study finds that fifteen out of twenty new principals (75%) believe that instructional leadership is a challenge for them. Time was a challenge in the area of instructional leadership. Many competing priorities kept them from visiting classrooms to observe teachers and students. When principals were not able to be in classrooms to supervise instruction, especially with the new standards and new assessments, their ability to be effective

instructional leaders was affected. As a result, new principals were not able to fully evaluate what was going on in the classroom and provide the feedback needed to improve instruction and provide support. In addition to instruction, principals must support teachers with assessments by providing professional development on how to administer the assessments and by purchasing hardware necessary for test administration. Most of the current assessments are administered online and require students and teachers to use technology such as iPads to access and complete the tests. New principals struggled with implementing the assessment program without sufficient computers or tablets or up-to-date technology nor the tools or expertise to analyze the data to inform instructional decision-making.

Without the support of an instructional coach, for lack of funding, principals were expected to plan for and conduct teacher professional development on their own. Diana Lucas believed that "as principals we have to be experts" in order to support teachers with instruction. She said she attends as many teacher trainings possible in order to stay current on new instructional practices to share with her teachers. While Bella Barajas believed she needed to give her staff as much professional development as possible, Iris Patton found it challenging to plan and deliver professional development when she had no assistance. Bianca Nava must deal with resistance concerning professional development from veteran teachers because they have not had much over the last few years.

People. This study finds that 50% of new principals believe they have challenges with people. The category of people includes all school stakeholders (i.e., teachers, parents, and community members). First year principal Anna Huerta reported that she continued to smile when talking to people though she was emotionally drained. Similar to some new principals, Olivia Hurtado grappled with being liked and respected. She said:

Personally, as a principal, it was very difficult for me at the beginning, and I'm still kind

of letting it go, that you want to have that sense that you're liked, or that you're respected

in the school site. Even though you might make some decisions that might not

necessarily go well with everybody, but you kind of just go with it. For me it was a lot of

people respecting and ... it was kind of immature but even having people say that they

liked you or confusing it with respect.

Olivia also said that she has had to let go of the need to be liked and focus on what is best for

students. In the same vein, Simon Abarca struggles with understanding that he was not going to

please everyone. Other new principals mentioned the challenge of trusting people, dealing with

the existing school culture and teachers resistant to change. One new principal talked about the

challenges of being a public figure, being held accountable to the community, and having to be

in constant communication with the school's stakeholders. She described one of the challenges

she faced in her first principalship:

I never expected to face this and I was trying to understand what I needed to do as a

principal my first few months. In addition, I had this pressure of 'now you also have to

respond to us and what are your goals and how are you going to change the school?'

when I was just first stepping into the school, so that was very challenging for me.

In addition to struggling with their new role as a public figure, new principals also struggled with

not knowing the staff when they entered a new school or the change in relationships once they

stepped into an administrative position at a school site where they had worked for many years in

a different role.

New Principal Support. Beverly Easton said she was beginning to be able to manage

her challenges. "It really is still for me a day to day juggling but at least I don't feel that I'm

juggling with 18 balls and I've only got one hand. I feel I've got another hand." She

acknowledged that when she was at principal meetings and sees veteran principals and their

"sense of burntoutness" it affected her emotionally, making her feel discouraged. For this

reason, supporting new principals to meet the challenges of their position could help them be

successful and avoid the "burntoutness" mentioned earlier. New principals were willing to work

for that support. Bella Barajas illustrated the point:

> I do believe in seeking help. I do believe in calling people. I do believe in emailing after
>
> emailing after emailing. That I've learned that to some degree as principal, I do have a
>
> little bit of power there. I haven't met those challenges yet, but I think being persistent is
>
> certainly going to help me get to my goals.

This study discovered the areas that new principals need the most support are professional

development, additional on-site assistance, and school operations. Table 2 shows the specific

categories where new principals need support.

Table 2. New Principal Support Categories

New Principal Support		
Professional Development	**On-Site Support**	**School Operations**

• Training in instruction
• Training in operations
• Maintaining a safe school environment
• Time to reflect and process
• Delivery of PD to staff on CCSS in ELA and Math
• Assessment administration
• PD tailored to the needs of new principals
• Workshops
• Hands-on opportunities
	• Additional support personnel
	• Full-time assistant principal
	• Additional administrator
	• Psychiatric social worker
	• Attendance counselor
	• Mentor or veteran principal
	• Interim principal
	• Assistance with:
	  ○ Student Discipline
	  ○ Teacher Evaluations
	  ○ Instructional leadership
		• Budget management
		• School and student safety
		• Child abuse reporting and investigations
		• Non-violent crisis management
		• Hiring of certificated and classified employees
		• Conference memo writing
		• Teacher Contract
		• Staff relations
		• Human resources
		• Hands-on training
		• Master calendar of what is due for the year

Survey data in Appendix K corroborated these findings, showing that new principals believed they needed help with planning professional development and strongly agreed they needed support with school operations. These findings also show the need for assistance with instructional leadership, budget, and issues with teachers and staff.

Professional Development Support. Fourteen out of twenty new principals (70%) perceive they need support with professional development. New principals identified the need for professional development ranging from ongoing training for themselves in instruction and operations, as well as learning to maintain a safe school environment for students and staff. In addition, new principals believed they needed time to reflect on and process the information received in their own principal professional development. As instructional leaders they are expected to offer learning opportunities for their teachers. New principals needed support to offer school-site training to their staffs in instructional topics such as the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math and assessments. Several new principals shared the need for district and service center professional development specifically geared to new school administrators. One principal suggested surveying all new principals to find out what they need and offering workshops and hands-on opportunities tailored to what they need.

On-Site Support. Twelve out of twenty new principals (60%) perceive that additional on-site help would positively affect their first experiences as principals. The most often mentioned on-site support was additional support personnel. Suggestions include having a full-time assistant principal or additional administrator, a psychiatric social worker to support the emotional wellness of students, and an attendance counselor or other experienced person to provide added assistance with discipline, evaluations, and instructional leadership. Seven of the twelve new principals who believe they need additional support at the school site made several

specific suggestions for a mentor or veteran principal on site: someone to meet with him or her before the school year begins to help put systems in place, to clue the principal in on what's due to the district or what deadlines to be aware of, and to be present and lend support during the opening days of the school year. Anna Huerta talked about the important support a mentor would provide:

> The type of support that I would need from a mentor would be, 'These are your deadlines. Look this is the calendar. This is where you go. This is where you turn things in. Look at the [principal] portal. Let's read it together.'

> One new principal said she would appreciate having an interim principal for the first two weeks or month of the school year to show her where things are. She also said that having an existing assistant principal who understands the site could share their knowledge about the school with her. She referred to these two ideas as "gradual release" for new principals as they transition into their new leadership positions.

School Operations Support. The most significant finding under the category of perceived support needs shows new principals need help with school operations. Twenty out of twenty (100%) said Operations are a challenge for which they need support. New principals most often named fiscal/budget, school and student safety, staff relations, and human resources as areas of school operations for which they need support. They would like that support to be hands-on workshops at regularly scheduled meetings. Of these areas, help with budget was cited by 55% of this study's new principals. In addition to professional development support specifically in operations, Oscar Perez would appreciate training on how to manage the school's budget and expedite the budget process because "for new principals, it's a mystery". New

principals need extensive hands-on training and more timely responses from the fiscal department when they have questions or concerns.

In addition, new principals need support with the teacher evaluation system because of the time required to complete the process. They would value a master calendar for the year with what is due for operations, in contrast to the present practice of learning about requirements on a monthly basis. New principals also need support with school and student safety, more specifically, child abuse reporting and investigations, the district's student discipline policy, and professional development on non-violent crisis management. Lastly, new principals need support in hiring certificated and classified employees, support with difficult employees, how to write a conference memo and write up a teacher, and assist with reading and understanding the teacher contract.

Conclusion. Whether new principals struggled with the challenge of managing time, managing the school budget, being an instructional leader, providing solid professional development for their teachers, or dealing with their responsibilities to all school stakeholders, they undoubtedly need support from the school district. Although that support can come in various forms, it should be hands-on and targeted to where new principals need support. This is what they articulated as essential support to ensure success in the first years as new school administrators.

Current Professional Development Activities and New Principal Perceptions

The school district offers many professional development opportunities to principals through the central office and the service centers. The service centers hold regular meetings where all principals can meet in small groups, or networks, led by a director. Each service center has its own style and format for principal meetings. One way is meeting as an entire service

center and then breaking up into smaller networks for a more focused session on instruction. Another way is meeting by network at a school site of one of the network's principals to showcase the school's instructional program. The information about principal professional development explained here refers to principal meetings in general and is not separated by service center.

  Professional Development and Perceptions. New principals cited several types of meetings they attend and offered their perceptions of those meetings. Professional development opportunities cited by this study's participants is seen in Figure 9 showing a categorization of the types of meetings offered to new principals and what party is responsible for it: the service center, central district office, or professional organization.

Figure 9. New Principal Professional Development Offerings

Service Center PD
- **Network Meetings**
  - Held monthly
  - Required for all principals
- **Operations Meetings**
  - Both required and voluntary
- **Principals Institute**
  - Held during the summer
- **New Principal Meetings**
  - Optional for service center

School District PD
- **School Leaders Network**
- **New Principal Conference**
  - Held during the summer
- **Superintendent's New Principal Meetings**

Professional Organization PD
- Offered to members of professional administrator organizations
- Not affiliated with the school district

The service center is responsible for giving principals several professional development opportunities. They offer monthly network meetings that include an operation portion, stand-alone operations meetings, a principal institute, and possibly meetings exclusively for new principals. The central school district also offers professional development to principals including the School Leader's Network, which requires a recommendation, and two new principal-specific options, the New Principal Institute held at the service centers during the summer and meetings held by the school district's superintendent. The last professional development opportunity mentioned by new principals is offered by professional organizations for which they hold membership. This section is organized by the most significant findings according to interviews and a document analysis. It is based on data about current professional development activities new principals are involved in and their perceptions of those activities.

Service Center PD - Network Meeting Activities and Perceptions. All principals attend network meetings offered through the service centers. An analysis of network meeting agendas from the period of July 2014 to January 2015 found that these meetings typically consist of leadership building, instruction, operations, and reflection. Prior to November 2014, network meetings were held for a full day. The document analysis revealed that network meetings since November 2014 have been held for half-day sessions only. This change in time has resulted in the removal of the formal operations portion of the meetings making it challenging to support the operations-related issues new principals cited in the previous sections. When asked to describe network meetings in general, eleven out of twenty (55%) of new principals cited peer interaction as being a major part of what occurs during these meetings. Fifteen out of twenty new principals (75%) cited instructional content as being a main part of network meetings. Instructional content includes classroom walkthroughs to see instructional content at work, training in instructional

strategies to support teaching under the Common Core State Standards, and assessments.

Thirteen out of twenty new principals (65%) spoke about the structure of the network meetings affirming that meetings consistently have professional readings, leadership-building opportunities, or specific structures in place to support adult learning and collaboration. Some principals participate in campus walks and visit classrooms for focused observations followed by feedback.

The network meetings all principals are required to attend are offered on a regular, monthly basis; a majority of the qualitative data gathered about professional development options falls under this category. One-on-one interviews with new principals revealed there are aspects of network meetings new principals value and believe are beneficial. They also point out features of the meetings they would like to improve. The following items are most often mentioned when answering questions about their perceptions of network meetings and how they are helping them meet the challenges of their position: an area of concern or what they wish to improve, a comment about the instructional content covered during the meetings, and benefits of network meetings.

Eleven out of twenty new principals (55%) cited an area of concern about network meetings while eighteen out of twenty (90%) shared benefits of the meetings. New principal Leonel Hernandez (PC) appreciated the professional readings offered because they gave him a chance to focus on developing trust, teamwork, and collaboration, concepts and activities he can bring back to his staff. However, he believed the meetings provide a great deal of information that is "a lot to digest", especially since the meetings had been shortened to half day. Diana Lucas agreed with the large amount of information covered in meetings and referred to them as "scattershot". She talked about trying to absorb as much as possible when she shared the

following expression, "You throw the feed out and then the chickens will eat as much as they can". Molly Tapia sometimes leaves meetings feeling "more overwhelmed" than when she arrived. For Anna Huerta the information was helpful for principals in general, but the specific areas where new principal need support were not being met. Similarly, Beverly Easton suggested having meetings differentiated for all participants since not everyone has the same level of understanding. Bella Barajas pointed out that the challenges with operations are not being met because the focus of network meetings is mainly on instruction. An analysis of network meeting agendas found that, post moratorium, operations items took up a small portion of the half-day agenda with some meetings having no operations section at all. When talking about the full day network meetings prior to November 2014, new principal Rachel Montgomery expressed how stressed she would be because the operations portion of the meeting was held toward the end of the meeting after a segment on instruction that she wanted to take back to her teachers. After hearing the deadlines for operations, Rachel Montgomery was forced to make a decision about how to proceed. She said this about the instructional content, "I can't do that. This report is late. I have to do this."

Eleven out of twenty new principals (55%) stated that the instructional content introduced at network meetings is helpful, well done, and beneficial because it is helping them build their capacity as instructional leaders. One of the service centers holds meetings at a school site where principals are able to do campus walkthroughs and classroom visits to observe instructional content and best practices for topics covered in the network meetings. Diana Lucas talked about her perception of classroom walkthroughs:

> We walked classrooms just to see how are things being done at other schools and what
>
> good things can you take back to your site. I think the same way when you are in the

classroom as a teacher and then when you become out of the classroom. Your eyes get

opened so much.

Jessica Nelson found classroom visits to be very helpful because she was able to make a

connection between the instructional content covered in meetings and what it should look like in

the classroom.

Diana Lucas talked about full-day network meetings, before the moratorium reduced

them to half days. Network meetings increased in value for this principal because the

instructional portion would be lead by a Common Core facilitator who is knowledgeable in either

English Language Arts or Math instruction. Darla Beltran enjoyed the instructional pieces and

talked about the connection she was making between her school site and the instructional content

of network meetings. "It builds on the work we are doing here. That was good." The

instructional content presented either by facilitators or through classroom observations was

supporting new principals in building their capacity as instructional leaders under Common

Core. They were able to see the work in action and later brought it back to their school sites to

share with their own teachers.

Eighteen out of twenty new principals (90%) had positive perceptions about network

meetings. Valuable features of the meetings include the benefits of the professional readings

grounded in research that provides quality information that informs their leadership at the school

site, that confirms the relevance of meeting topics, and that allows them to acquire new

knowledge and strategies they can use and share with teachers. Two principals mentioned how

the meetings afford them opportunities to refocus and rethink about what they need to do as

principals. The meetings also helped another reinforce why she does what she does. Principal

Huerta said, "They help you in terms of keeping you on track. Stay on track. Keeping your

focus." She identified one network meeting that was particularly inspiring for her because the superintendent's message about leadership matched her social justice philosophy:

It inspired me to continue with my work and it helps you cope with the sense of overwhelming or the sense of feeling overwhelmed when you are reminded of why you are here.

Principal Huerta felt both inspired and informed following this meeting, which stood as a strong reminder to her about why she had chosen to be a school leader.

Of the eighteen new principals who mentioned positive perceptions of network meetings, the most frequently stated benefit was the opportunity to interact with peers. Ten out of eighteen new principals (56%) cited peer interaction as a benefit to their growth as new school leaders. New principal Kelly Young named interaction with colleagues as the most beneficial aspect of network meetings. She appreciated the chance to speak with colleagues because they spoke the same language and had a sense of camaraderie. New principal Bianca Nava said, "The biggest thing is…the rapport with colleagues and listening to not only the information presented at the network meeting but the issues they're facing." During the meetings she has talked to principals in her network about issues she was having with starting a problem solving process at her site and had asked her colleagues advice on how she should begin. Other benefits of peer interaction cited by new principals include rapport, talking about individual challenges, working through how to solve them, having time to reflect together, getting ideas and best practices, and talking about how they would put what they have learned into practice at their school sites.

Service Center PD - Operations Meeting Activities and Perceptions. Generally, operations meetings have been held both outside of the network meetings, both required and voluntary. They have also been held during the latter portion of the full day network meeting,

which all principals are required to attend. The moratorium on professional development has resulted in the cancellation of the stand-alone operations meetings with a significant reduction of their portion of the network meeting. As of March 2015, stand-alone operations meetings had begun again: however, they were still not as significant a part of the network meetings as they once were since the network meetings continue to be only half-day. A document analysis of network meeting agendas between July 2014 and January 2015 found the most frequent topics across both service centers were student and staff attendance, staff relations, student discipline/student behavior, and child abuse reporting. Attendance topics presented during operations meetings included employee and student attendance, recognition of attendance for employees and students, absence prevention and early intervention, and staff absence monitoring. Staff relations topics presented were employee discipline, conference memo writing and holding conferences with employees, and handling employee allegations of child abuse administratively. Student discipline and behavior topics included creating a school discipline plan, alternatives to suspension, bullying, restorative justice, and the discipline foundation policy, which is comprised of school-wide positive behavior support, behavior interventions, and an evaluation of the discipline policy features. Another recurrent topic falls under child abuse and includes conducting investigations, child abuse reporting, and handling employee allegations of child abuse administratively.

When operations meetings were scheduled on a regular basis, they were typically a very short portion of the network meeting time, which was dominated by leadership building and instruction. The study's new principals perceived operations meetings as valuable, open opportunities to make connections with district personnel and ask questions, although the information may be given in a very quick manner. Of the comments made by new principals

during interviews about operations meetings, several were about the infrequency of the meetings post moratorium. One principal whose interview was in January 2015 said principals had not had an operations meeting in two months, while another, also a January interviewee, said the meetings were put on hold. One principal said the meetings had been cancelled since November 2014. The document analysis found that although there had not been formal operations meetings since November 2014, a brief segment for updates was presented during most network meetings. Principal Easton voiced her concerns about how the operations portion of some meetings is conducted because that is the area she believed she needed the most help. She said:

> That part of it as well is most impactful for me to the point where when we get to the end of the operations meeting. "Now, we're just going to do this as quickly as possible and the most important pieces of information. Buh-bye. Have a great afternoon." That leaves me usually so very sad and so very angry because that's what I need the most right now.

In addition to the quick updates Principal Easton mentioned, the lack of operations meetings due the professional development freeze was glaringly obvious to the study's new principals.

New Principal Meetings Activities and Perceptions. Many of the new principals in the study had been able to attend professional development offered specifically for them. These opportunities are accessible through either the service center or the central school district. One of the service centers held regular new principal meetings with the Instructional Superintendent until the moratorium canceled them. New principal Molly Tapia said, "I loved those because new principals have a different need and insecurity than vets." Another new principal perceived the meetings positively because they gave her hands-on time and helped her prepare for things that were coming up. It gave her "look fors".

The most significant number of responses about new principal specific meetings concerned those held by the school district's superintendent. Fifty percent of this study's principals attended these meetings, which offered an open, round table discussion format on topics such as teacher evaluations, assessments, support with parents, deadlines, compliance items, and budget. The monthly meetings allowed for new principals to hear about what was happening in the district directly from its leader. They also marked the union of the new principal with a district-provided or self-selected mentor. Unfortunately, along with other professional development opportunities, these meetings were cancelled when the moratorium began.

Although new principal Iris Patton felt the superintendent's new principal meetings were not helpful when she described them as "mostly people venting", a majority of new principals found the meetings valuable. One new principal said the meetings were useful because they provided an opportunity for her to connect with a mentor while another valued being able to meet other new principals. Second year principal Kelly Young appreciated how the retired principals were able to share "pearls of wisdom" with the new school leaders. Another new principal found the hands-on aspect of the meetings to be helpful. Anna Huerta said:

I really enjoyed [the superintendent's] meetings because he would really talk to us from an honest point of view where he would explain to us his challenges, share with us his challenges and then he would give us the opportunity to share the same with other new principals. When we were able to go to the new principals meetings I felt like I was getting a lot of support.

Principal Olivia Hurtado said, "He wanted to hear how we were doing. He actually showed an interest for wanting to care for how we were feeling and how we were doing."

Perceptions of Other Professional Development Activities. Aside from the previously

mentioned network, operations, and new principal specific meetings, new principals attended

other meetings through the district and through outside professional organizations. The study

finds that new principals believe that school district professional development meetings such as

the network for school leaders had good content, offered an opportunity to be reflective and had

a mix of new and veteran principals. Although the meetings were said to help maintain focus,

one principal commented on how there was not much time to process and implement the content.

One principal called the online seminar and podcasts offered by one of the service centers "very

helpful" and that the principal institute offered a lot of insight on academics and instruction. In

addition to district professional development and growth opportunities, new principals

mentioned taking part in book clubs and doing online reading as well as attending teacher

professional development to build capacity and credibility in educational leadership and

instruction. Some of the study's new principals are also members of professional organizations

for school administrators that offer valuable growth opportunities on timely topics that Principal

Young said helped her feel informed, educated, and aware.

Conclusion. When the district was not in the midst of a suspension of professional

development activities, new principals had several opportunities to grow professionally, received

support from district personnel and their peers, and learned how they might meet the challenges

of the principalship. Although some new principals reported leaving meetings feeling

overwhelmed, this study finds that new principals perceive professional development offerings

specifically geared toward learning that new school administrators need must be are hands-on,

and allow them to increase the benefits of peer interaction.

Useful Professional Development Delivery Models for New Principals

The service centers and the main school district use a combination of models and methods when delivering professional development, which new principals may or may not find useful. This section shows the current professional development models or methods that are being used and new principal perceptions of what models and methods would be the most useful. The findings for this section are based on an analysis of district meeting agendas and a survey of new principals from both service centers as well as new principal interviews.

The survey administered to new principals asked them to rate how often they participate in the following professional development models: teaming, professional learning communities, communities of practice, collegial inquiry, and mentoring. Figure 10 shows new principals' perceptions of how often new principals believe they are involved in these models: not sure, never, occasionally, or often. The survey found that new principals believe that all the methods are used occasionally. More specifically, 47% of respondents believe that teaming is used occasionally while 50% said mentoring, 56% said communities of practice, and 58% said collegial inquiry and professional learning communities respectively.

Figure 10. Current Use of Professional Development Models

	Mentoring (n=48)	Collegial Inquiry (n=48)	Community of Practice (n=48)	Professional Learning Community (n=48)	Teaming (n=47)
■ Not Sure	4%	2%	4%	4%	2%
■ Never	29%	8%	23%	13%	28%
■ Occasionally	50%	58%	56%	58%	47%
■ Often	17%	31%	17%	25%	23%
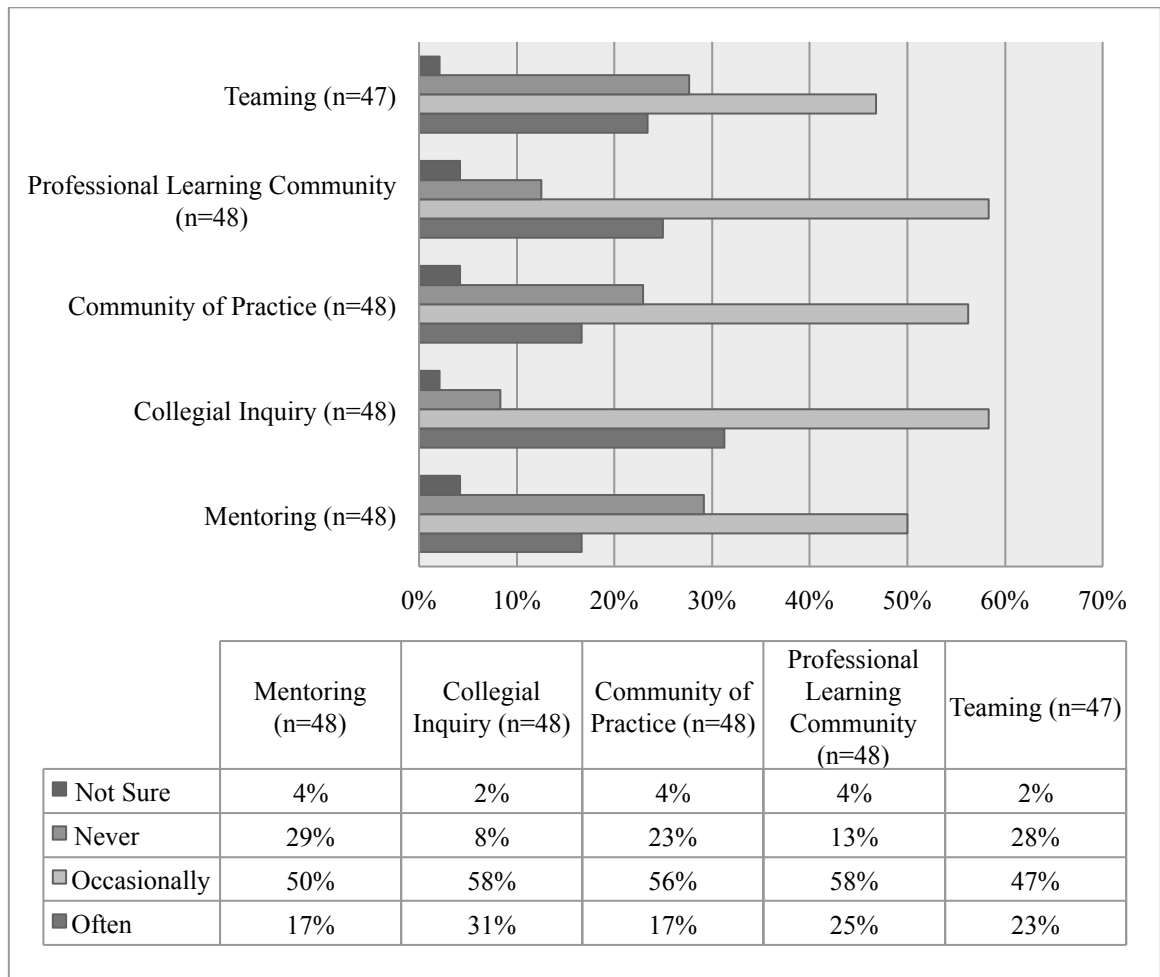
An analysis of meeting agendas from the two service centers found the most frequent strategies to promote adult learning: professional reading, small group interaction, discussion and planning, professional learning communities, and debriefing or reflection.

Interview questions prompted new principals to describe what professional development models or methods were currently being used. They were then asked to share what they believed to be the most useful. The most frequently mentioned models being used include PowerPoint presentations to deliver information, dialogue and interaction in small groups, and strategies for supporting adult learning, collaboration, and community building. The study finds that new principals perceive networking as the most preferred professional development model or method,

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while classroom observations, strategies for supporting adult learning, and hands-on, practical activities were mentioned frequently but not enough to constitute a finding.

Fourteen out of twenty new principals (70%) perceive networking to be the most useful professional development model. Within the fourteen, thirteen new principals mentioned their preference for small group interaction that allowed for more personal discussions with experienced colleagues and where they can share issues and stories. They would also like to work in cooperative groups. Brandy Combs described why it is important to her to be able to meet with other principals and share challenges:
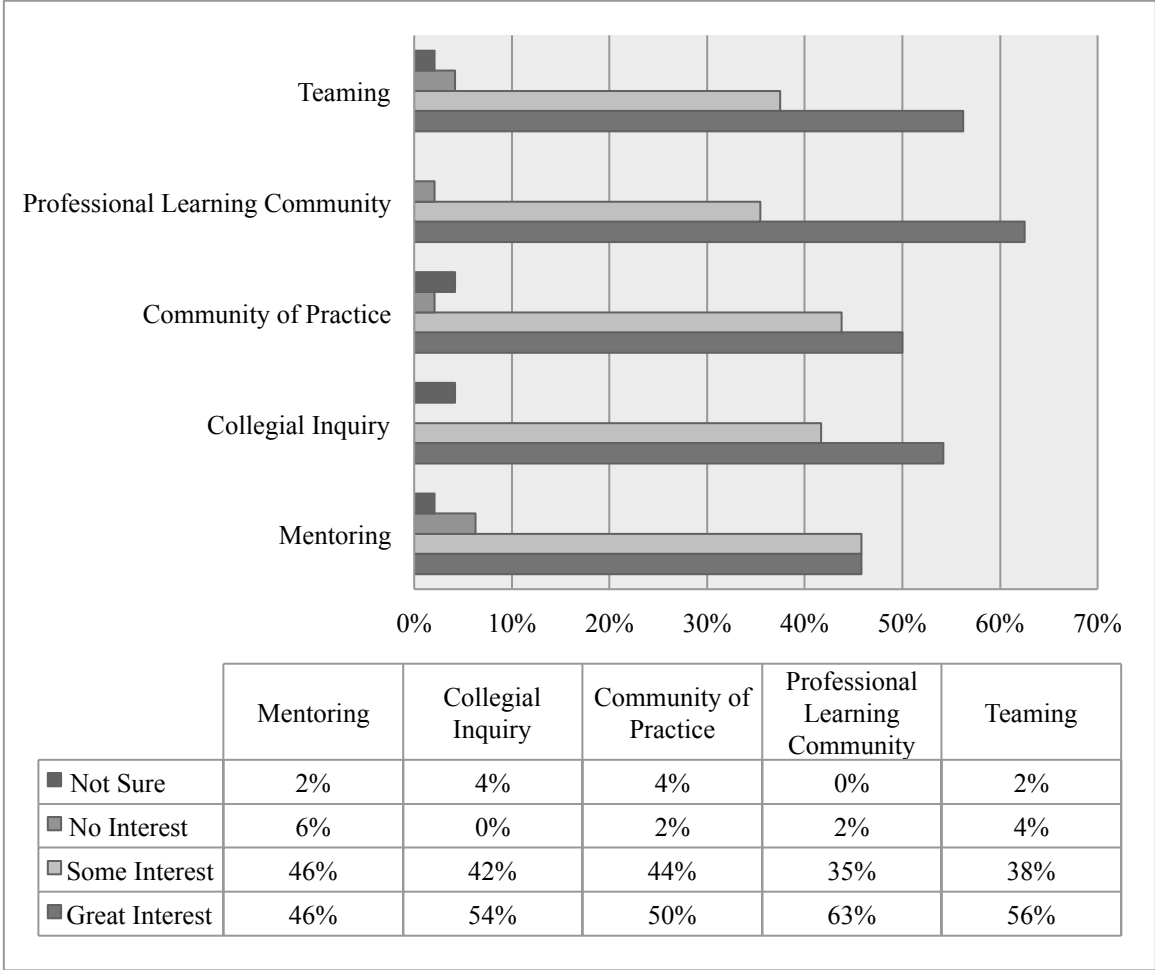
> I think to get away from the school site for a little while and just talk about some of the things you're dealing with at your school, share bet practices with other people, and just know that you're not the only one who's doing through this.

One new principal said she would like to have a professional learning community for principals. Principal Huerta, who called professional learning communities her "number one choice", spoke from personal experience about professional learning communities being "effective" and "very helpful". She said:

> We would present to each other the type of work that we were carrying out at our school and we model for one another. In the process, we inform each other as to the most effective ways to help students to be successful.

In those communities, principals learn from their peers and share best practices, an important area for the study's new principals. This finding was corroborated by survey data shown in Figure 11. The figure shows a majority of new principals have some or great interest in participating in teaming, professional learning communities, communities of practice, collegial inquiry, and mentoring.

Figure 11. New Principal Perception of Useful Professional Development Models

	Mentoring	Collegial Inquiry	Community of Practice	Professional Learning Community	Teaming
■ Not Sure	2%	4%	4%	0%	2%
■ No Interest	6%	0%	2%	2%	4%
■ Some Interest	46%	42%	44%	35%	38%
■ Great Interest	46%	54%	50%	63%	56%

None of these models can be utilized individually but are dependent on peer interaction, found in previous sections of this chapter to be a highly valued form of support voiced by new principals. Each of these models allows principals to interact with and be reflective with their peers as well as give and receive feedback from one another.

The study also finds that new principals believe being able to visit other principals' schools and visit classrooms would be a useful professional development practice. This would allow them to see in action what schools are doing on a daily basis, see best instructional practices in action, and take what they are learning during professional development. Iris Patton recommended that a survey be given to determine the specific professional development new

principals need while others expressed their interest in having hands-on, workshop style meetings where they can choose topics they wish to view. This would go a long way towards tailoring to principals' professional development meetings to the needs and interests they have, as well as addressing the challenges they face as new school administrators.

Summary of the Findings

The data collection for this study produced provocative findings. While analyzing data of principal perceptions it became clear where new principals need support, which often stemmed from how well prepared they felt they were for their first principalship. In addition, the knowledge and skills new principals believe they should have to be successful is related to their perceived need for support. With a large number of new principals saying their PASC preparation programs were not hands on and practical, it is not surprising that they feel they need hands-on experiences with professional development models that have peer interaction embedded. The challenges new principals face relate to the type of support they perceive they need. New principals believe they need to have knowledge of instruction and school operations as well as managerial and soft skills. This directly relates to the challenges they face with instructional leadership, operations issues, people, and time. Furthermore, the stated challenges fit with the areas they need support: professional development or training in instruction and operations topics, on-site support so they have time to be instructional leaders, and support with budget management, student safety, student and staff discipline, and other areas of operations.

The recurring findings uncovered in this study are difficult to ignore. They call attention what new principals need, which veteran principals may not share. However, in order to know what support a new principal needs, they must to be asked. New principals want to have the opportunity to share their struggles and this should be a recurring conversation. As new

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principals work through the challenges of their first years as a school administrator, it behooves a school district to find out how to fully support them. District support may accomplish a great deal in fostering longevity in the position. This concern is clearly surfaced by the study's new principals: the concern about being able to continue working such long hours just to stay afloat.

All students, and perhaps especially students in large, urban school districts need to have stability. This stability will not be attained if a principal is constantly struggling not to sink and decides to leave the position or the school. New principals aspire to be the best school leaders they can be; however, they cannot be expected to do so without adequate support. The voices of new principals in this study represent a portion of new administrators in a large, urban school district who accept and confront the immensely difficult task of facing real issues, striving to galvanize the entire school community to help students thrive in school and function as educated citizens of the world.

CHAPTER 5: Implications

Summary of Background

The evidence in this research study shows that new principals in a large, urban school district have specific support needs that must be met in order for them to meet the numerous challenges that come with being a school leader. These implications are specific to new elementary school principals, the school level of a majority of this study's respondents. The data collected in this study suggests new elementary school principals struggle with and need targeted support with being instructional leaders for their teachers especially in the midst of the introduction of the Common Core State Standards. New principals need to understand the implications the standards have on the way that teachers teach and a new awareness of what is expected of students. The data also suggest new elementary school principals are challenged with maintaining a safe school environment due to credential programs not covering these operations issues in depth and the lack of regular support meetings where strategies and procedures could be explained. Evidence in this study points to the possibility that new elementary principals may feel supported in meeting the challenges of their first principalship if professional development and support opportunities offered by a school district were specifically geared toward assisting new principals in meeting those challenges. Although school districts have priorities that they must prepare principals to meet, they must integrate those with addressing the interests and needs of new principals (Knowles, 1980). By focusing on the needs of adult learners and how to further their learning, new principals might better feel supported, able to meet the challenges of their position, and less likely to burn out, in essence, ensuring longevity in the position.

This chapter will provide a discussion of the major findings in this study as they answer the research questions. The first section will be about the researcher's interpretation of the study's findings followed by unanticipated findings. The next section will talk about what this study adds to current research on new principal professional development and where new principals feel they need support. The next section will discuss the implications of this study and recommendations to school districts and policy makers by both the researcher and the members of the New Principal Research Team (NPRT) on how to better assist new principals. The final sections of this chapter cover the limitations of the study and implications for future study that should be done in the area of new principal support, and concluding remarks. Andragogical concepts are weaved throughout the chapter as a way of highlighting the importance of assisting the adult learner in gaining new knowledge that will help them be successful in the principalship.

Interpretation of Findings: Researcher's Insights

This study's new principals were asked a series of questions via survey and interviews about their principal preparation, knowledge and skills necessary for success, specific support needs, and professional development models they believe are the most useful. Many new principals shared their challenges and areas where they need support or professional development and told the researcher post-interview how happy they were to share their story. The new principals' hopes were that the information they shared would be communicated to the individuals who are responsible for making decisions about the support and professional development that is offered to the district's new school administrators. This study uncovered three major findings for new elementary school principals: new principals feel unprepared with the knowledge and skills necessary for being successful in the principal position, the challenges new principals face are directly related to the support they perceive they need from the school

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district, and professional development models for new principals must provide new learning that is focused on what new principals need and intentionally incorporate peer interaction and networking opportunities into every meeting. If these findings are considered when planning for future professional development and support offerings for new principals, they will feel they are gaining the knowledge and skills they believe they need to be successful in their first principalship.

Finding 1 – Principal Preparation and Knowledge and Skills. *Prior to and after new principals are selected, they have several ways to gain knowledge and skills they perceive are necessary to be successful as school administrators; however, they leave preparation and pre-service programs as well as out-of-classroom positions unprepared for the realities of the principalship.*

This finding confirms previous research reporting that a high percentage of new principals cite knowledge of instruction and school operations as well as management and soft skills as what they need to be successful as new school leaders. Daresh (1986) conducted a study nearly 30 years ago where first and second year principals said they felt ill prepared for the operations-type part of the job. He wrote "it is nice to be called 'the boss,' but nobody could imagine the responsibility associated with that title until living the role" (p. 169). The principals in the study thought they would learn the skills necessary to work through the daily challenges but said they should be given "a toolkit of skills that could be used in predictable situations" (p. 170) which Daresh suggested could be given to them when they are in preparation programs.

Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, and Foley (2005) conducted surveys and interviews of urban, suburban, and rural superintendents and principals and found that 69% of principals believed that preparation programs are "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run

today's school districts" (p. 31). Crow (2006) made the argument for an induction program once the principal begins the principalship. Since new principals are immediately placed in command of a school, this program would offer mentor support as a way of helping new principals who may not have the full set of skills necessary to manage successfully. Crow writes "The lack of mediated entry creates burnout, stress, and ineffective performance as beginning principals develop quick fixes and unreflective practices—responses that are counter productive to the type of effective leadership needed in a complex society" (p. 319). New principals are entering the position with the same responsibilities of veterans and must be supported in gaining the knowledge and skills to solve daily problems the way their veteran colleagues have learned to do.

Finding 2 – Correlation Between Challenges and Support. *Identifying the challenges that new principals face will inform a school district about the type of support they need to provide to help school administrators to be successful in their first principalship.*

This study found that principals face many challenges related to the categories of instructional leadership, school operations, time management, and dealing with people. Additionally, the support that new principals perceive they need professional development, on-site support, and support with school operations directly related to the challenges they face. Since these challenges can impede a principal from being successful in their first principalship, identifying what new principals struggle with and purposefully planning for how to support their needs becomes vital. In addition, the support offered to new principals must be differentiated.

New principals do not enter the position with their knowledge and skills at the same level as their experienced peers making differentiating professional development crucial. Some may be in a state of dependency on others while moving toward being more self-directing (Knowles,

1980). With a gap in experience and knowledge between dependency and self-directedness, school districts must plan for professional development and support for individuals at different stages of learning. Knowles wrote, "adults have a deep psychological need to be generally self-directing" (p. 43). It is for this reason that anyone in charge of planning for principal support must nurture this need and build participants up to being self-directing and in less need for help. This includes both looking at the physical environment, which Knowles says should put participants at ease and the psychological climate, which allows participants to feel accepted and respected. One way Knowles suggests this be done is by having the learners help with the planning of their learning so they have input about what is presented.

Finding 3 – Peer interaction. *If a school district offers professional development that allows for a blend of new learning and peer interaction, new principals will feel supported with the challenges they face in their first years of the principalship.*

By concentrating on the needs of new principals described in Chapter 4 of this study around instruction, school operations, and on-site support, school districts need to work to build the new principals' capacity. New principals must learn how to be instructional leaders that are adept at school operations procedures and can balance these two time consuming areas while being a school leader that is accountable to all school stakeholders. Seeing this as a possibly daunting task for a school district to undertake, allowing new principals to interact with one another on a regular basis will allow them opportunities to share their challenges with one another and ask each other for support. Peer interaction can come in many forms with networking being the most often mentioned by participants of this study.

This finding about the need for peer interaction supports the argument for a program that focuses on connecting novice principals with their peers or with an experienced principal as well

as creating opportunities for principals to team. Principals need patient mentors so they are not left to deal with problems on their own (Daresh, 1986) and have someone that will check in on them periodically, listen to them, and give affirmation and encouragement (Boerema, 2011). Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) conducted a study focusing on developing principals that are successful. When referring to purpose of mentoring relationships, the authors said, "Mentoring relationships should serve to reduce the distance between the learner's independent problem-solving performance and his/her potential developmental level achieved through problem solving with guidance from an expert" (p. 10). They went on to say that mentors are there to guide learners as they "search for strategies to resolve dilemmas, to boost self-confidence, and to construct a broad repertoire of leadership skills" (p. 10). Often new principals are overwhelmed from the job and unsure who to ask for the assistance (Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, & Tripps, 2009) making a mentorship program an important way to give new principals access to help.

Unanticipated Findings

In 2012, I completed a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) program to receive a masters and the preliminary credential through a university program. I felt as though I gained a significant amount of knowledge about being an educational leader through the program. The program focused on field experience as a way to build knowledge of educational theory. I developed a portfolio showcasing leadership building activities I completed to fulfill state requirements for the PASC. In conjunction with schooling, I held an out of classroom position at a school site for over three years. While collecting data for this study, I was surprised by the number of participants who perceived they were not well prepared for their first principalship by the program they attended because the programs did not prepare them for the

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realities of the position. I also did not anticipate the large number of individuals that struggled

with school operations, more specifically, budget management. I did not anticipate how

prominent the issues were with operations. Although I knew the moratorium affected

professional development offerings for all district employees, I did not anticipate how deep new

principal concerns were about the lack of district operations meetings. This realization made the

concerns expressed by new principals about the lack of operations meetings understandable.

Finally, I was excited to see networking and peer interaction as a finding. Since principals tend

to be somewhat isolated at their own school sites, my assumption was that they were comfortable

being that way; I was pleasantly surprised by how many new principals were interested in

collaboration with peers.

Contribution to Research

Although there are studies that discuss support for principals in general, there is a lack of

studies on how to support new or beginning principals specifically based on their expressed

needs. This study adds the principal perspective to determining what they need by using their

voices to describe what they are experiencing. The principals in this study stated exactly what

they believed they needed in order to feel successful in their first principalship. They also shared

how they felt they were prepared for the principalship by the pre-service programs they

completed.

This research study covered much ground about how to best help new principals

transition into school leadership positions by looking at how they perceive they were prepared,

how they felt about the current professional development offerings, and what professional

development models and methods they thought would be of most benefit for them. Although

other studies may go deeper into some areas included in this study such as mentoring, my

research adds the voices of new principal to these issues; a compelling addition to current research. This study attempted to update the current literature by offering a broad look into what new principal struggle with and documenting the support they believed they needed from the experienced principals that are on school campuses doing the work.

Implications

The study's action research team, the New Principal Research Team (NPRT), was charged with several responsibilities throughout the course of the study. These responsibilities included creating the study's data collection tools (the survey and interview protocols), providing feedback once the tools were generated by the researcher, and providing recommendations based on the study's findings about how a school district might best support new elementary school principals. The implications and recommendations of the findings given by team members as well as by the researcher are documented in this section.

NPRT recommendations. After hearing a report of the study's findings, the research team members provided recommendations about what a school district, most importantly the individuals whose job it is to support new principals, can do to support new school leaders with challenges they face and where principals perceive they need support. The most frequently mentioned areas of support were mentoring and providing information about School Operations although many other ideas were also shared that would support the new principals' interests in peer interaction and mentoring.

Mentoring. Although LMSD currently has a mentoring program that most of the study's principals take part in, the NPRT members made suggestions on how it might be improved to better serve new principals. One member said budgeting for a mentoring program is "critical". She said that there needs to be a thorough selection process to ensure that all mentors are

qualified to be offering support to new principals. This suggestion stems from what she believes

is a level of trust that must be established between the mentor and the mentee since confidential

information might be shared. If the mentee is reluctant to call their supervisor for help, they

know they can depend on and trust their mentor. From my experience with some new principals

that I interviewed, I can see how important trust is to them. I was asked on more than one

occasion about the safeguards I have in place to protect them from any repercussions based on

what they shared with me. That level of trust is imperative.

Peer interaction/networking. One member of the research team was struck by the

percentage of new principals who said they wanted peer interaction and networking on a regular

basis. She recommended the district create a mechanism that will allow time during professional

development sessions for small group interaction where new principals can connect on a

personal level with one another and dialogue about issues and challenges they are facing. In the

same vein as mentoring mentioned previously, this member shared that opportunities need to be

created that allow new principals to build rapport amongst their network principal peers since

they may feel more comfortable reaching out to their peers than to their Instructional Director.

This member and I shared ideas about creating a "buddy system" within principal networks that

would join a new principal with a veteran principal. With a partnering model, if the new

principal has a question or needs support in any way, they have someone other than the person

that supervises them to reach out to. The new principals would not be left to solve their problem

in isolation (Daresh, 1986) but rather have a sounding board in the form of an individual they can

trust who has either been through or is also going through the same issues as the new principal

they are linked with. Another member said that he believes new principals need to have an

opportunity for interacting with their peers. He noted that sharing their problems of practice is key. New principals need to be given time to talk and share concerns with one another.

School Operations. This study found that 100% of interviewed new principals perceive that they need support in operations. It is not surprising then that NPRT members would make recommendations on how to support new principals with operations. One member suggested having operations meetings that are specifically designed for new principals since most veterans may have already mastered the material and may find a meeting for all principals to be unnecessary. Another member said that there need to be more operations meetings than there currently are and the meetings need to be facilitated. One member expressed how he was not surprised that budget was mentioned with such frequency and acknowledged that budget is typically a concern for principals. He said special attention must be paid to budget.

One member recommended that the district find a way to create a balance between instructional and operations priorities. She mentioned that one of the previous superintendents chose to focus more on instruction but went on to say that, "Operations is what gets people fired." In order to stay out of trouble, a principal has to "drop everything" to deal with operations matters since it may be a matter of student or staff safety, which may pull them from classroom observations or teacher evaluations, a concern that many of the study's principals had.

Professional development practices for new principals. Several recommendations were made about how to conduct meetings and what topics are important to the development of new school leaders. One idea was to make a conscious effort during professional development sessions to ask principals what they are going to do with the information they received as well as differentiating the content for the various levels school administrators may be in their development. Another was to provide real scenarios, ones that actually took place in the past at a

school site, to small groups of principals. The new principals would then be asked what they would do in those situations. Because the scenario is something that did happen, after the groups have had a chance to dialogue, the workshop facilitator the workshop can reveal to the groups how the situation was dealt with. This task would help new principals understand that they are at the developmental stage of being a school leader but can learn by talking through their ideas and listening to the ideas of others. They can also learn that there may be more than one way to solve a problem. One member recommended new principals have training in soft skills, or interpersonal skills, because, as she put it, soft skills "will do you in if you don't have them". She commented that, at present, the school district does not offer training in these skills.

One team member recommended that a school district hold pre-planned monthly meetings at various geographic locations around the district. In a district as large as LMSD, with five sub-districts, this would allow principals from around the district to interact on a regular basis, something that is not currently happening. She added that these meetings must be voluntary and on one topic at a time and personalized for both new and veteran principals. Every meeting should begin by letting the principals know that they are in a safe, confidential environment that is only for learning purposes. This information may help put the principals' minds at ease and allow them to be more open with what they share. These meetings would include the previously mentioned practical and real scenarios that small groups work through and would be a regular part of the agenda. In addition, principals will have an opportunity to bring their own issues that their peer group can help them think through. The meetings would be planned out for the year and advertised well in advance to allow principals ample time to choose which sessions they would like to attend.

Support practices for new principals. Based on the findings, a research team member recommended an anonymous survey be administered to 1st and 2nd year principals at the beginning and end of the each school year. She said the survey should ask three questions only: What was your biggest challenge this year? How could the district help you handle this challenge? What would you tell a brand new principal that you learned this year? She said the survey results would be published for all principals to see and the principals would be allowed to vent and make comments. I believe a survey of new principals is an excellent way to gauge their needs. It would give a school district a clearer picture of the problems new principals face and assist in planning for their support. Information from the survey can be used to plan the years worth of meetings for principals that were previously mentioned. I would also add that this survey should be given to 3rd year principals as well since that population was the focus of this study. Another recommendation was that the new principal meetings that were cancelled due to the moratorium on professional development must be reinstated. This would give the sub-district superintendents an opportunity to integrate theory and practice for leadership building, building trust, communication skills, time management skills, doing teacher evaluations, and being an instructional leader.

Additional implications. In addition to the recommendations of the NPRT documented above, I will add several others to either complement the team's ideas or add new ones. I believe beginning principals should be required to complete an induction program similar to the one that teachers must complete. An induction program would connect a new principal with a support provider who will work with them (Crow, 2006). The new principal and support provider would work together to complete tasks to build the new school leader's capacity to lead. In addition to the comments made above by the NPRT, a mentoring program is an excellent way to directly

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connect a beginning principal with a veteran. The veteran can either be a working principal or one who has retired. What I would add to the recommendations made by the research team members is that a clear check and balance system be initiated that will not allow any new principals to slip through the cracks. A few of the principals in this study that did not start their work at the beginning of the school year still did not have a mentors by the time my interviews took place over halfway through the school year.

Although important information was revealed from this study, I recommend that school districts conduct regular needs assessments or surveys of principals at the following times: during the summer, halfway through the first semester, at the start of second semester, halfway through second semester, and at the end of the year as a way of planning for the subsequent school year. Given that not all principals start their positions at the beginning of the school year, a survey that occurs on a regular basis will capture the needs of all principals. This survey must include an area where participants indicate when their year as a principal began. As indicated previously, special attention should be placed on instruction, school operations, time management, and how to develop people skills. The results must be disaggregated by experience levels in order for data from new principals can be used to design professional development tailored to the areas where new principals need support. The survey results can also be used to provide a boot camp for principals during the summer as a way fulfilling "the need to strengthen the quality of those presently in the trenches and provide crash courses for the 'would-be leaders'" (Farkas, et al., 2001, p. 32).

Each LSC should consider offering meetings, workshops, and hands-on opportunities for new principals based on the information gathered by the principal needs assessment or survey. Knowles (1980) found that, for adults, the learning must have immediate, real world application

in order for it to meaningful. Adult learners should be given choice, which is possible if workshop and meeting sessions are offered on various topics allowing new principals to select what they would like to learn. Additionally, Knowles suggests adult learners should be given time to rehearse their new learning in order to better understand how it will be applied in their daily lives. As previously mentioned, Knowles acknowledged that districts have a set agenda of what they must inform principals about; however, district needs must be joined with the issues and concerns new principals in order to orient and support their learning. A school district can create conditions and provide tools to new principals that will help them feel ready to learn and discover what they feel they need to learn or know about (Knowles, 1980).

Finally, school districts must make a conscious effort to embed networking and peer interaction opportunities during every meeting session, not just prior to the start of the meeting when principals are arriving as evidenced by district meeting agendas. If a principal is unable to arrive earlier than the meeting start time, they might miss the chance to dialogue, share challenges, seek advice about issues they are facing, and support one another. Peer interaction and networking, as regular practice at professional development meetings, will help new principals meet the challenges of their first principalship.

Limitations

Although this study brings to light the challenges new principals face and the professional development and support needs they have, its implications are somewhat limited. It is possible that some new principal participants may have had a fear there could be consequences to their providing information that could be perceived to be critical of the district. Several individuals paused during the interviews to be assured that what they were saying would not be traced back to them. After reassuring them that I would keep the information confidential, one

said, "Oh, okay. A few of us were wondering about that." Even if my statement about confidentiality put some participants at ease, others might have remained reserved about what they said while others may have chosen not to participate in the study at all. This may have resulted in a limitation on the qualitative data that was gathered.

The creation of the New Principal Research Team was very promising given that the members included individuals who could influence the way that the study's data could be used to inform support practices for new principals. One additional limitation for this study was the challenge of finding a common time for the team to meet. Several of the members are in high profile positions, which carry with them extremely demanding schedules. Two out of three of the meetings had less than 50% member attendance. Due to scheduling issues, the third and final NPRT meeting where the findings would be revealed had to be modified. Instead of the whole team meeting together, I conducted individual meetings where I shared the findings and gathered recommendations for principal support and ideas for further study from them. Even with this change, 83% of members were able to participate. If the entire team were present during each session, the input on data collection tools would have been more significant with multiple perspectives coming together. Although the sessions were not fully attended, all members provided feedback on the data collection tools after they were created via an online questionnaire. This allowed for all members to provide input on the tools before they were used.

Implications for Research

Conducting this research study was both challenging and gratifying. As the time passed, I thought of other studies that could be done that would complement this one or give deeper information about issues new principals have that this study may have scratched the surface of. Below are several research studies that would add to the analysis of support for new principals.

Study 1. For this research study, ninety-five percent of the participating new principals were from elementary schools with most overseeing transitional kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade students and one from a primary center that serves kindergarten through second grade. It is not surprising then that LMSD has a majority of elementary schools. Although this fact made for a large elementary new principal sample on both the survey and the one-on-one interviews, future study on new principal support would benefit from a cross section of elementary and secondary principals or a study of just secondary principals. The information gleaned from a study on secondary new principal professional development and support would be compared with the findings in this study to give a fuller picture of the specific needs of principals in a large, urban school district. One would then be able to see if the needs of elementary and secondary principals are similar and, if they are different, ensure that not all new principals are receiving the same support but that the support is differentiated by school level.

Study 2. This research study included a survey of 55 new principals and interviews of 20, but was conducted in only two of the five LSCs of the LMSD. A study of the challenges and areas where new principals need support should be done with principals from all of the five LSCs. Doing a study like this would allow for a broader view of what new principals in a large, urban school district need. The results would inform the main school district, LMSD in the case of this study, about how to best plan for assisting them. This information would then be directly applicable to any school district seeking to better support new principals; a goal that all school districts must have.

Study 3. This research study was conducted over a nine-month period. Although that was ample time to gather data and analyze the findings, a long-term study in this area would be a great contribution to the area of new principal support. I believe it would be very interesting to

conduct a longitudinal study that started with a group of aspiring principals and followed them through the first two to three years of their principalship. A study like this would show the growth process of new school leaders as they move through what Kearney (2010) calls the principal pipeline, the continuum of developmental stages of the principal from aspiring to expert. The information gleaned from a study of this type would make a significant contribution to the development of school administrators.

Study 4. During the final session of the NPRT, a research team member asked if the data I gathered was disaggregated by LSC. After telling her that the purpose of the study was not to compare the two LSCs but rather to give a glimpse into the realities that a large cross section of new principals face, she said that it might be valuable to conduct a study of the LSCs where the data was disaggregated to allow for the identification of specific needs in each of the LSC. In the capacity this individual works, that information would help her focus her efforts where the most need exists. An additional benefit of a study like this is that it would give the LSCs an idea of exactly what *their* principals need as opposed to principals in general.

Study 5. In response to the data about new principal preparation through pre-service programs offered by the district, a NPRT member stated that he is interested in seeing how new principals who completed a district pre-service program are fairing. He would like them to reflect on their experience in the program and how they are or are not applying the concepts learned.

Study 6. My research study highlights the needs of new principals from instruction to operations. One research team member reflected on the finding that 70% of the study's new principals believed they need support with instruction. She expressed how surprised she was by this percentage since the main focus of the district for some time has been on instruction over

other topics such as operations. She proposed a study be conducted about what challenges new

principals have with being instructional leaders and why these challenges exist. She believes

that great benefit would be gained from digging deeper into the instructional leadership

challenges that new principals are confronted with.

Concluding Remarks

"No one can force another person to be successful and effective, and all the best plans made to

support people will not work if the people themselves do not take steps to succeed."

(Daresh, 1986, p. 171)

None of the new principals that were interviewed for this study implied that they were

ready to give up and leave the position because of the challenges they were having. However,

some said it was not sustainable to continue to keep the hours they were spending on the job if

they wanted to do the best at their work. The fact that they wanted to participate in this study

told me they are willing to work to help themselves. They volunteered to participate because

they wanted their voices to be heard. It is my belief that the participants of this study wanted to

share their challenges in hopes of finding out they are not alone. As stated in an early chapter of

this study, it was focused on the social constructivist worldview in which "individuals seek

understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). This worldview

has a dual connection not only to understanding the real-life experiences of the new principals

that work for the large, urban school district in this study but also to my personal interests as a

school district employee who one day will work alongside the new principals that participated in

this study. It is my hope that the information uncovered in this study will help to improve the

professional development and support offered to new principals in order to allow them to have a

long and fulfilling career as school administrators as they work tirelessly to improve schools, be

instruction leaders for their teachers, and create the conditions necessary for students to be college and career ready or equipped for whatever the future holds for them. This is possible if school districts take this study's findings and ensure that new principals are provided with targeted support and professional development to help them be successful in their first years of the principalship.

Appendix A. Action Plan Matrix

DATE	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
8/1/14	Memorandum of Understanding from the Research Site	• To get a commitment from the school site to conduce the action research project
9/1/14 – 9/30/15	Attend principal's meeting	• To introduce myself to the district's principals • To share the purpose of the study • To introduce the online survey
10/1/14 – 10/15/14	New principals complete an online survey through Qualtrics	• To gain insight into the experiences of teachers in regards to professional development opportunities and collaboration
10/15/14	Compile survey results	• To gather initial information from new principals to answer the research questions
10/15/14	Identify new principal participants for study	• To compile a list of interviewees that fit the study criteria
10/30/14	Meet with New Principal Research Team (NPRT)	• To discuss survey results and get recommendations for interviews
10/30/14	Schedule one-on-one interviews with participants	• To organize an interview calendar
11/15/14 – 12/15/14	Acquire consent forms from each participant	• To have the consent of the participants to conduct an interview
11/15/14 – 1/15/15	One-on-one new principal Interviews	• To gain knowledge about the participants' perceptions of their specific professional development and support needs from the district
11/15/14 – 2/15/15	Transcribe and Code Interviews	• To make connections between the participants' responses and the research questions
1/15/15	District Document Review	• To go through district memos, bulletins, and professional development plans
3/15/13	Meet with NPRT	• To share with team members the responses that new principals made to the interview questions • To engage in dialogue about next steps in planning professional development and district support offerings based on interview and survey results

Appendix B. Data Collection Matrix based on Research Questions

RESEARCH QUESTION	DATA COLLECTON METHOD	PARTICIPANTS
What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?	New Principal Survey	All new principals
	One-on-One Interview	New principal participants
What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?	New Principal Survey	All new principals
	One-on-One Interview	New principal participants
In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?	New Principal Survey	All new principals
	One-on-One Interview	New principal participants
	Document Review	None
What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?	New Principal Survey	All new principals
	One-on-One Interview	New principal participants
	Document Review	None

Appendix C. Memorandum of Understanding - Study Site

Memorandum of Understanding
August 1, 2014

TO: _____

FROM: Lindsay Burt

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding between _____, Las Mariposas School District and Lindsay Burt, UCLA Educational Leadership Program Doctoral Candidate, for dissertation research

Statement of Problem and Need for the Study
I am concentrating the perceptions of new principals about the professional development and support they receive from the school district and what they believe they need in order to be successful. This focus is significant because there is very little research on support for new principals. This study will help the district design professional development and support opportunities that will meet the needs of new principals and foster success in educational leadership in the district's schools.

Research Questions
The study will focus on investigating the following questions: What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?; What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?; In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?; and What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

Data Collection Methods and Instruments
> Survey for new principals using Qualtrics.com
> Audio recorded, transcribed, and coded open-ended One-on-One Interviews with participants
> Review of district documents pertaining to principal professional development

Brief summary of the research process
This research study will focus on the perceptions of new principals by using a survey and one-on-one interviews to highlights the voices of these new educational leaders. By working as a research team, we will design the survey, discuss survey findings, and use that to design the interview protocol. After interviews are conducted and district documents are reviewed, the NPRT will reconvene to dialogue about the results and discuss next steps and recommendations.

The documents that will be provided to the site/site representative:
Findings
> Survey Results

> One-on-One Interview Results
> District Document Findings

Recommendations

Project Timeline

September 1 – 30, 2014	Attend a principal's meeting
September 30, 20144	New Principal Research Team Meeting #1
Nov/Dec 2014	New Principal Online Survey
November 13, 2014	New Principal Research Team Meeting #2
Dec 2014 – Feb 2015	One-on-One Interviews with Participants
Jan/Feb 2015	District Document Review
April 23, 2015	New Principal Research Team Meeting #3

LMSD SITE SIGNATURE   **GRADUATE STUDENT SIGNATURE**

_____   _____

DISSERTATION CO-CHAIR   **DISSERTATION CO-CHAIR**

_____   _____

Appendix D. Memorandum of Understanding - New Principal Research Team

Memorandum of Understanding
New Principal Research Team
October 30, 2014

TO: New Principal Research Team
FROM: Lindsay Burt
SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding with the New Principal Research Team and Lindsay Burt, UCLA Educational Leadership Program Doctoral Candidate, for a dissertation study

Statement of Problem and Need for the Study
I am concentrating the perceptions of new principals about the professional development and support they receive from the school district and what they believe they need in order to be successful. This focus is significant because there is very little research on support for new principals. This study will help the district design professional development and support opportunities that will meet the needs of new principals and foster success in educational leadership in the district's schools.

Research Questions
The study will focus on investigating the following questions: What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?; What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?; In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?; and What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

Data Collection Methods and Instruments
　　Survey for new principals using Qualtrics.com
　　Audio recorded, transcribed, and coded open-ended One-on-One Interviews with participants
　　Review of district documents pertaining to principal professional development

Brief summary of the research process
This research study will focus on the perceptions of new principals by using a survey and one-on-one interviews to highlights the voices of these new educational leaders. By working as a research team, we will design the survey, discuss survey findings, and use that to design the interview protocol. After interviews are conducted and district documents are reviewed, the NPRT will reconvene to dialogue about the results and discuss next steps and recommendations.

The documents that will be provided to the NPRT members
Findings

Questionnaire Results
    One-on-One Interview Results
    District Document Findings
Recommendations

Project Timeline

September 1 – 30, 2014	Attend a principal's meeting
September 30, 20144	New Principal Research Team Meeting #1
Nov/Dec 2014	New Principal Online Survey
November 13, 2014	New Principal Research Team Meeting #2
Dec 2014 – Feb 2015	One-on-One Interviews with Participants
Jan/Feb 2015	District Document Review
April 23, 2015	New Principal Research Team Meeting #3

NPRT MEMBER SIGNATURE   **GRADUATE STUDENT SIGNATURE**

_____   _____

_____

_____

_____

DISSERTATION CO-CHAIR   **DISSERTATION CO-CHAIR**

_____   _____

Appendix E. Consent to Participate in Research

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

*Voices of New Principals: Documenting the Needs of New Principals as they
Transition Into Leadership*

Lindsay Burt, graduate student from the Educational Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, is conducting a research study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Note that all new principals will complete an online survey however only 20 from this site will take part in one-on-one interviews. Both the survey and interviews should be completed outside of work hours.

Why is this study being done?

For this study, I am studying the perceptions of new principals about the professional development and support they receive from the school district and what they believe they need in order to be successful. This study is significant because there is very little research on support for new principals. This study may help the district design professional development and support opportunities that will meet the needs of new principals and foster success in educational leadership in the district's schools.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

• Participate in an online survey via qualtrics.com
• Participate in a open-ended, one-on-one interview with the researcher
• Review interview transcripts for accuracy

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation in the study will last approximately 1 month, or the time between the online survey and the completion of the one-on-one interview. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and the interview will last up to 30 minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

• There are no anticipated risks or discomforts.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

- The opportunity to reflect on your principalship by sharing the successes and struggles
- The opportunity to share about the challenges and needs as a new principal
- The opportunity to have your professional development and support needs influence future PD and support offerings from the district

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms when writing up the results of the study, codes rather than names will be used on documents, and deletion of any files that identify individual participants.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
- If you participate in the one-on-one interview process, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to view and edit the transcription and erase tape recordings if you choose to. You may also opt out of having the interview recorded if you so choose.

    ☐ I agree to have my interview recorded.
    ☐ I do not with for my interview to be recorded.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The Researcher:** Lindsay Burt – lburt@ucla.edu; (323) 578-4081

- **Dissertation Co-Chairs:** Dr. Eugene Tucker – etucker@ucla.edu; (310) 206-1879
                                Dr. Welford Wilms – wilms@ucla.edu

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
    If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

    UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
    11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
    Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant   Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent   Contact Number

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix F. New Principal Contact Information Form

Participant Information

Mark all activities you wish to participate in then provide your contact information. Please note that only 20 individuals will be chosen to participate in the interview and one new principal will be chosen to be part of the research team.

☐ One-on-One Interview (Approximately 30 minutes)

☐ Research Team (Three meetings of 1-2 hours in length)

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Research Questions

Lindsay Burt

New Principal Professional
Development & Support

Research Question 1

What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?

Research Question 2

What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

Research Question 3

In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

Research Question 4

What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

Survey Objectives Based on Research Questions

- Demographic Information

  - School Level

  - Preparation

  - Years as principal

- Current Professional Development and Support

- Desired Professional Development and Support

NPRT Meeting 1 Objectives

- Review the sample survey

- Feedback from team about sample survey

- Dialogue about possible questions

- Draft a survey

Appendix H. New Principal Survey Draft Feedback Form for NPRT

New Principal Survey Draft Feedback

1. **Name**

   ....

2. **What questions or concerns do you have about the survey draft?** *

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

3. **Are there any questions that are confusing?** *
   Please indicate the question number and write why it is confusing.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

4. **Any additional comments?**

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

Appendix I. New Principal Survey

Default Question Block

.

The following is a consent form that accompanies the survey. Please take a minute to review the questions on the consent form then mark Yes or No at the bottom.

* * * *

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

*Voices of New Principals: Documenting the Needs of New Principals as they
Transition Into Leadership*

Lindsay Burt, graduate student from the Educational Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, is conducting a research study.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Note that all new principals will complete an online survey however only 20 from this site will take part in one-on-one interviews. Both the survey and interviews should be completed outside of work hours.

Why is this study being done?

For this study, I am studying the perceptions of new principals about the professional development and support they receive from the school district and what they believe they need in order to be successful. This study is significant because there is very little research on support for new principals. This study may help the district design professional development and support opportunities that will meet the needs of new principals and foster success in educational leadership in the district's schools.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in an online survey
- Participate in a open-ended, one-on-one interview with the researcher if you choose to be interviewed
- Review interview transcripts for accuracy if you participate in the interview

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation in the study will last approximately <u>1</u> month, or the time between the online survey and the completion of the one-on-one interview, if you choose to be interviewed. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. If interviewed, the interview will last up to 30 minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- There are no anticipated risks or discomfort.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

- - The opportunity to reflect on your principalship by sharing the successes and struggles
- - The opportunity to share about the challenges and needs as a new principal
- - The opportunity to have your professional development and support needs influence future professional development and support offerings from the district

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms when writing up the results of the study, codes rather than names will be used on documents, and deletion of any files that identify individual participants.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. If you participate in the one-on-one interview process, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to view and edit the transcription and erase tape recordings if you choose to. You may also opt out of having the interview recorded if you so choose.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The Researcher:** Lindsay Burt – lburt@ucla.edu; (323) 578-4081
- **Dissertation Co-Chairs:** Dr. Eugene Tucker – etucker@ucla.edu, (310) 206-1879; Dr. Welford Wilms – wilms@ucla.edu
- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

. Do you consent to participate in this study by completing this survey?

○ Yes

○ No

1. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

2. What Educational Service Center are you affiliated with?

○ Educational Service Center East

○ Educational Service Center South

3. How many years experience do you have in education?

○ 0-5 years

○ 6-10 years

○ 11-15 years

○ 16-20 years

○ 21-25 years

○ 26 years or more

4. How many years have you been a principal?

○ I am in my first year.

○ I am in my second year.

○ I am in my third year.

○ I am past my third year.

5. In what school level do you hold a principal position?

○ Primary Center

○ Elementary School

○ Middle School (6-8)

○ K-8 Span School

○ K-12 Span School

○ 6-12 Span School

○ High School (9-12)

○ Other

[   ]

6. What type(s) of administrative credential(s) do you hold?

○ Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (Tier 1)

○ Clear Administrative Services Credential (Tier 2)

7. For the following questions, think about where your credential preparation took place (before becoming a principal; through a university, district, etc.). Respond to the following statement as truthfully as possible by choosing *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree,* or *Strongly Disagree*.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The pre-service program I attended provided me with tools to be a well-prepared as a new principal.	○	○	○	○

8. Respond to the following question by choosing *Mainly Theory, Equally Theory and Practice*, or *Mainly Practice*.

	Mainly Theory	Equally Theory and Practice	Mainly Practice
To what extent did your pre-service program focus on educational leadership theory and/or practice?	○	○	○

9. Respond to the following statements as truthfully as possible regarding **district support you feel you will need** by choosing *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree*, or *Strongly Disagree*.

I will need support from my educational service center with....

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Issues with parents	○	○	○	○
Issues with students	○	○	○	○
Issues with teachers and other staff members	○	○	○	○
Planning professional development	○	○	○	○
Delivering professional development	○	○	○	○
Operations issues	○	○	○	○
Budget development and management	○	○	○	○

Being an instructional leader	○	○	○	○
Master schedule or matrix development	○	○	○	○
Master plan compliance	○	○	○	○
I believe that I am successfully meeting the challenges of my position.	○	○	○	○

10. How often do you participate in professional development opportunities delivered by LAUSD?

○ Never

○ Once a Month

○ 2 Times a Month

○ 3 Times a Month

○ More than 3 Times a Month

11. Separate from Principal Network Meetings, how often do you engage in professional development?

○ Never

○ Once a Month

○ 2 Times a Month

○ 3 Times a Month

○ More than 3 Times a Month

12. Respond to the following statement as truthfully as possible by choosing *Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree,* or *Strongly Disagree*.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Principal Network Meetings provide me with professional development.	○	○	○	○
District professional development meets my needs as a principal.	○	○	○	○

. **Glossary of Terms:**

Mentoring: being paired with an experienced colleague
Collegial or Collaborative Inquiry: *reflective practice* and *shared dialogue* of a group
Community of Practice: a group of individuals that share a profession and shared interests
Professional Learning Community: a *collaborative learning group* that *fosters learning* amongst colleagues
Teaming: adult learners participate in *reflective* work with others; individuals are placed in teams

13. Respond to the following statements regarding **professional development models utilized by this district** as truthfully as possible by choosing *Often, Occasionally, Never,* or *Not Sure*.

At my educational service center, I participate in....

	Often	Occasionally	Never	Not Sure
Mentoring	○	○	○	○
Collegial or Collaborative inquiry	○	○	○	○

Community of Practice	○	○	○	○
Professional Learning Community	○	○	○	○
Teaming	○	○	○	○

14. List any other professional development models you are engaged in through the educational service center that are not listed above.

```


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15. Indicate your interest in participating in the following **professional development models with this district** as truthfully as possible by choosing *Great Interest, Some Interest, No Interest,* or *Not Sure.*

I am interested in participating in....

	Great Interest	Some Interest	No Interest	Not Sure
Mentoring	○	○	○	○
Collegial or Collaborative Inquiry	○	○	○	○
Community of Practice	○	○	○	○
Professional Learning Community	○	○	○	○
Teaming	○	○	○	○

16. List any other professional development models you would like to participate in that are not listed above and briefly explain why you would like to participate in them.

```


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17. **Are you interested in participating in a 30 minute one-on-one interview about this topic?** Your participation in the interview may help the district design professional development and support opportunities that will meet the needs of new principals and foster success in educational leadership in the district's schools.

○ Yes

○ No

. Please enter your information below so I may contact you to schedule an interview.

Name [   ]

Email Address

Phone Number

Best way to reach you

Appendix J. New Principal Survey Demographics

Gender
(n=52)

73%

27%

Female

Male

Service Center Affiliation
(n=52)

52%

48%

A

B

School Level
(n=52)

73%

2%

13%

4%

6%

2%

Primary Ctr

Elementary

Middle (6-8)

High

K-8 Span

K-12 Span

Year as Principal
(n=52)

60%

23%

17%

1st yr   2nd yr   3rd yr

Years in Education
(n=52)

31%

27%

21%

19%

2%

0%

0-5 yrs   6-10 yrs   11-15 yrs   16-20 yrs   21-25 yrs   26+ yrs
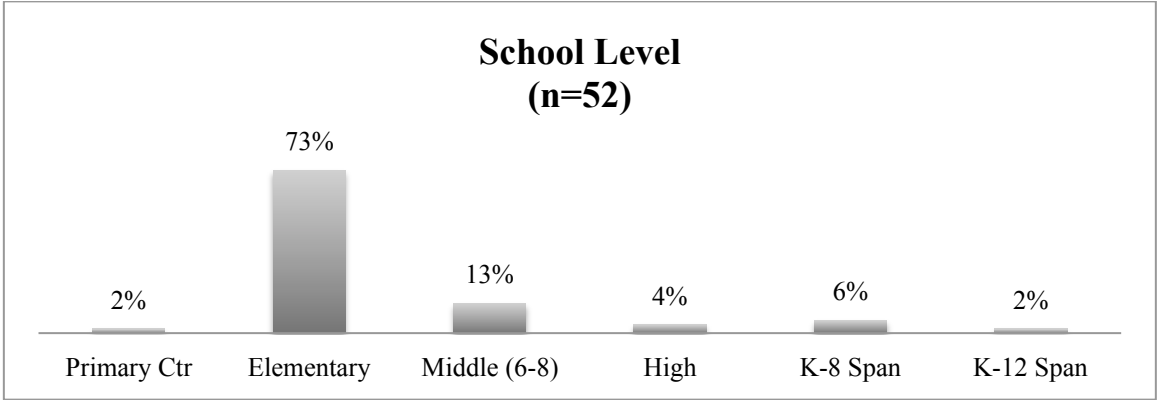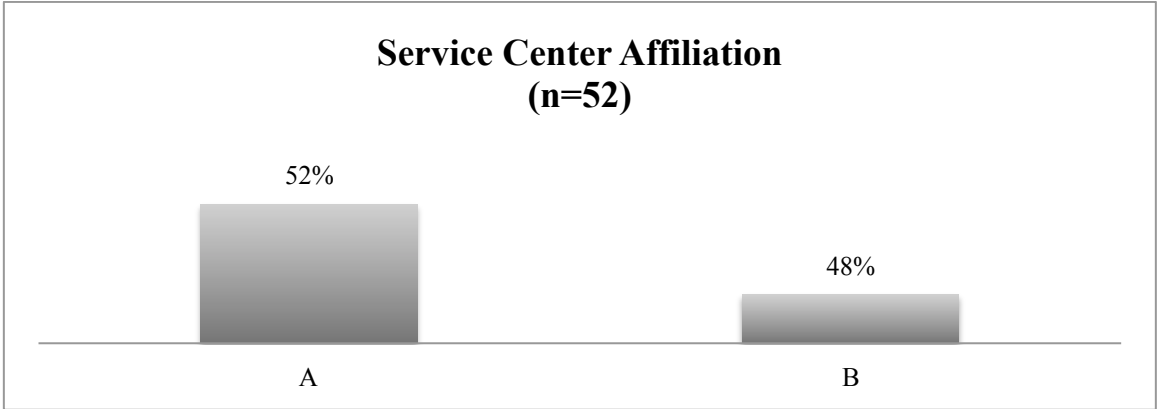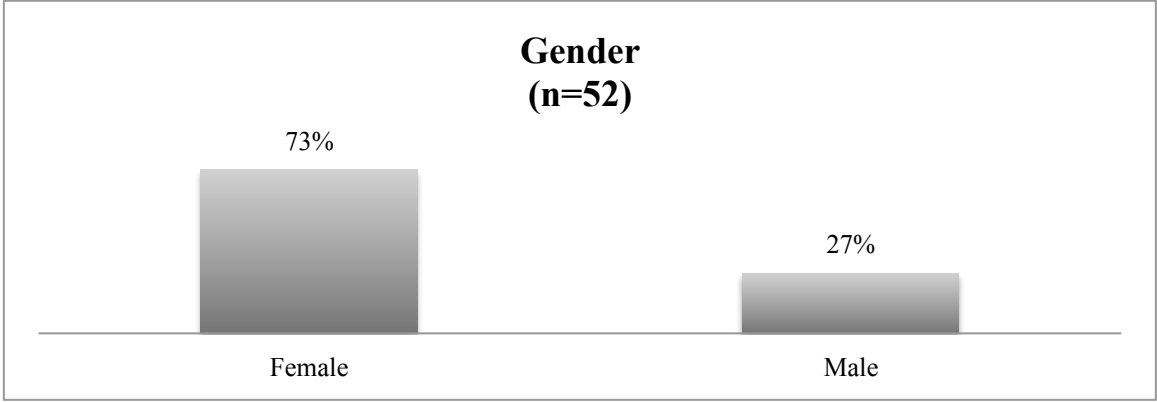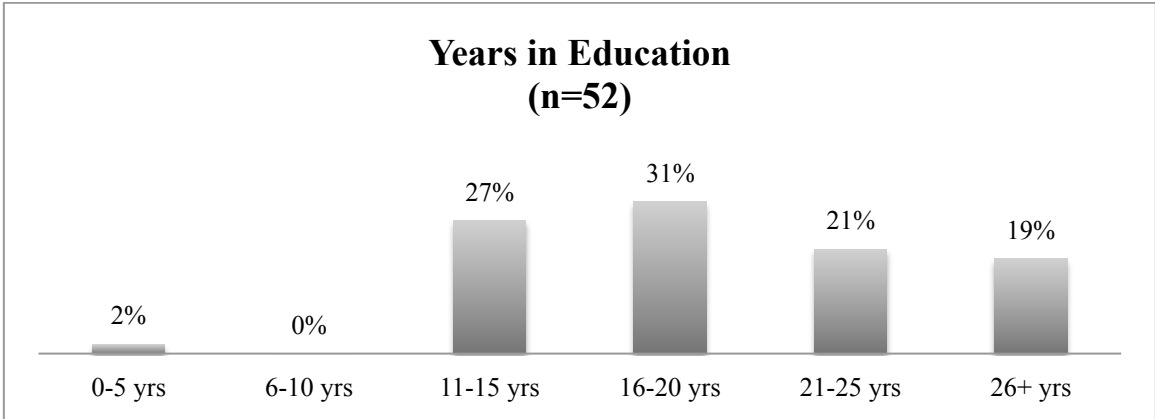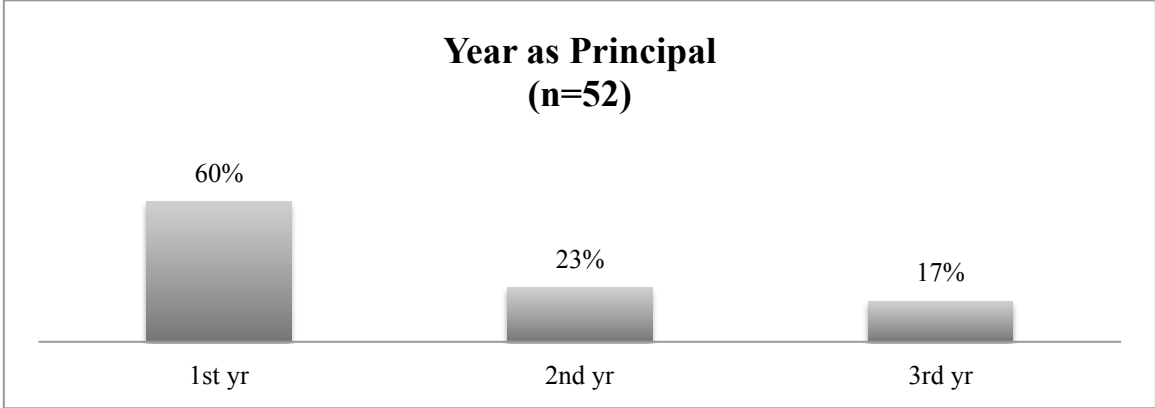
Appendix K. New Principal Survey Results

Administrative Credential Type
(n=52)

38%	62%
PASC	CASC

Administrative Preparation Program Focus
(n=52)

42%	58%	0%
Mainly Theory	Equally	Mainly Practice

Well Prepared for First Principalship
(n=52)

2%	23%	65%	10%
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

126
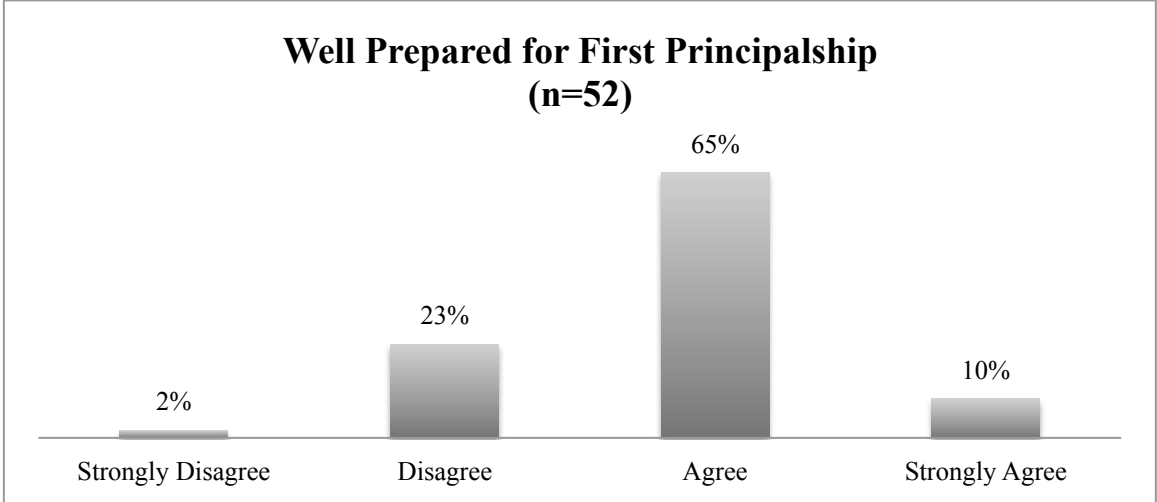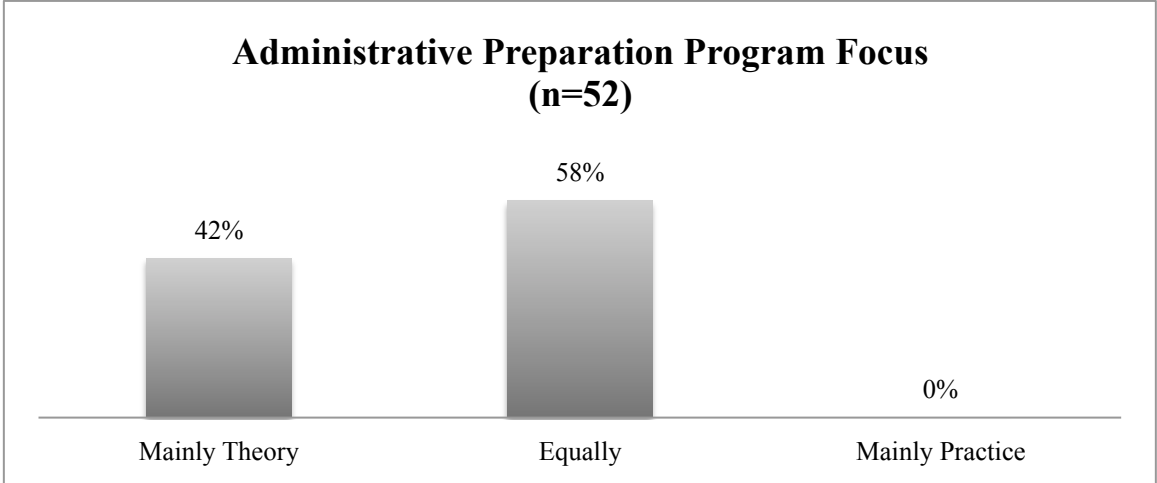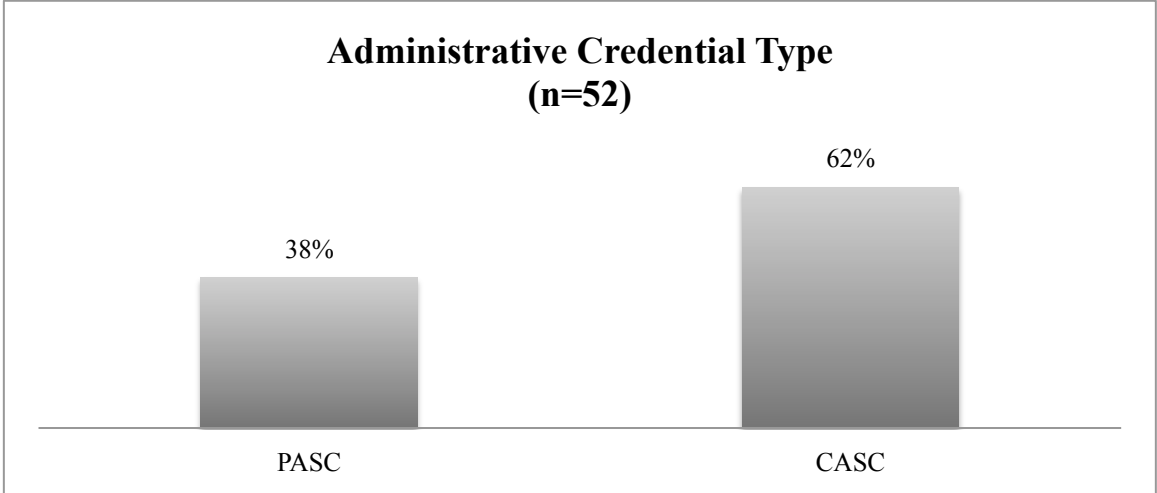
New Principal Support Needs
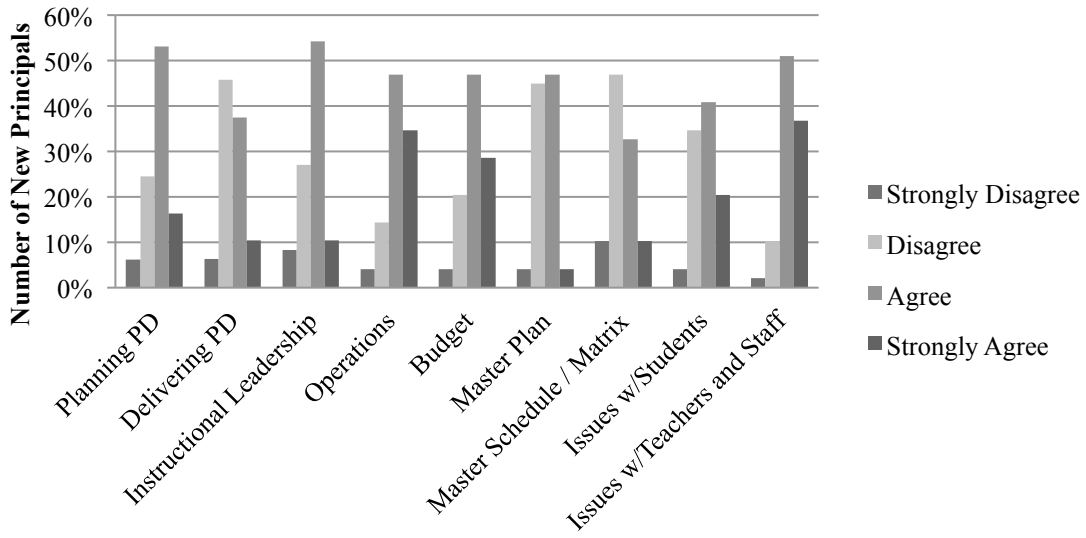
	Planning Professional Development	Delivering Professional Development	Instructional Leadership	Operations	Budget	Master Plan	Master Schedule / Matrix	Issues w/Students	Issues w/Teachers and Staff
n =	49	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49
Strongly Disagree	6%	6%	8%	4%	4%	4%	10%	4%	2%
Disagree	24%	**46%**	27%	14%	20%	45%	**47%**	35%	10%
Agree	**53%**	38%	**54%**	**47%**	**47%**	**47%**	33%	**41%**	**51%**
Strongly Agree	16%	10%	10%	35%	29%	4%	10%	20%	37%

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Professional Development Models Utilized
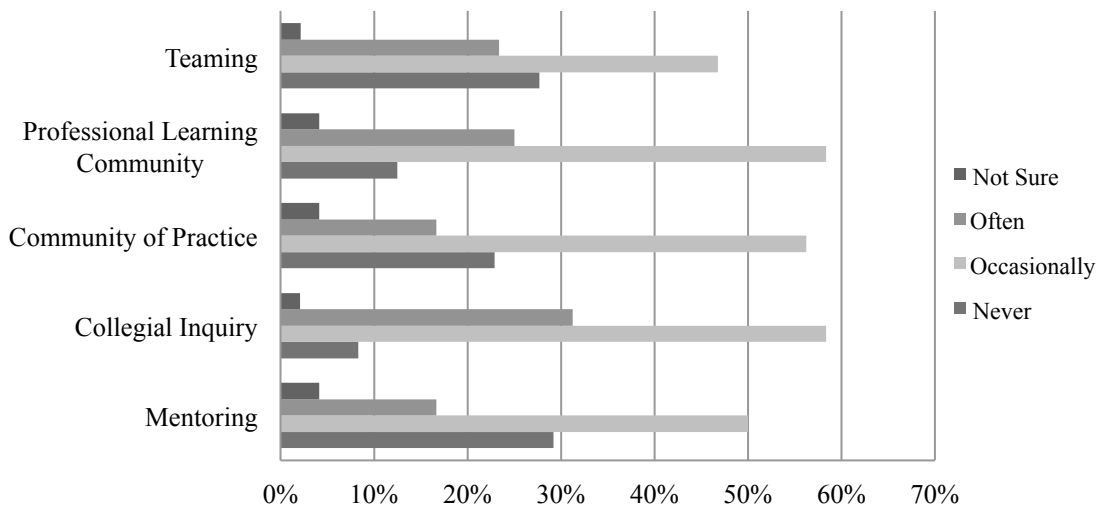
	Teaming	Professional Learning Community	Community of Practice	Collegial Inquiry	Mentoring
n =	47	48	48	48	48
Never	28%	13%	23%	8%	29%
Occasionally	47%	58%	56%	58%	50%
Often	23%	25%	17%	31%	17%
Not Sure	2%	4%	4%	2%	4%

Useful Professional Development Models
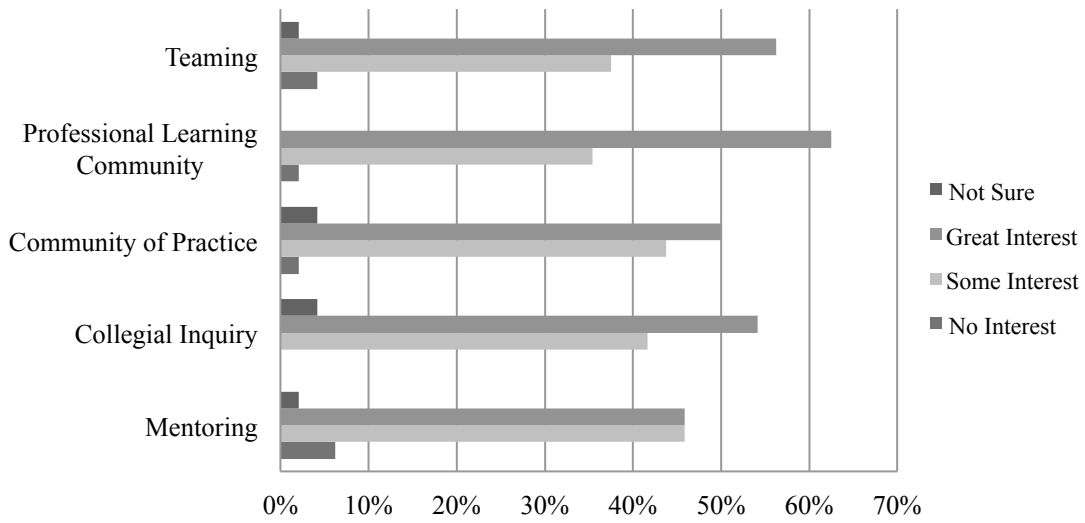
	Teaming	Professional Learning Community	Community of Practice	Collegial Inquiry	Mentoring
No Interest	4%	2%	2%	0%	6%
Some Interest	38%	35%	44%	42%	46%
Great Interest	56%	63%	50%	54%	46%
Not Sure	2%	0%	4%	4%	2%

Appendix L. New Principal Research Team Meeting 2 Agenda

Lindsay Burt

New Principal Professional
Development & Support

Research Questions

**Interview Protocol
Objectives Based on
Research Questions**

Research Question 1

What knowledge and skills do new principals, those with three years or less in their first principalship, in large, urban school districts perceive they will need to be successful in their work and how well do they believe they were prepared for the principal assignment?

- Perception of principal preparation

- Assistance needed to meet challenges of principalship by school level

- Perception of current professional development

Research Question 2

What assistance do new principals perceive they will need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

- Perception of most useful forms of professional development

Research Question 3

In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

NPRT Meeting 2 Objectives

- Review available survey results

- Review Research Questions

Research Question 4

What types of professional development do new principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching, professional learning communities, etc.)?

- Review sample interview questions

- Dialogue and discuss possible questions

- Draft an interview script

Appendix M. One-on-One Interview Protocol Feedback Form for NPRT

New Principal Interview Protocol Feedback

1. **Name**

   ....

2. **Are there any questions that are confusing?**
   Please indicate the question number in your response.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

3. **Are there any questions you feel should be removed?**
   Please indicate the question number in your response.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

4. **Are there any questions you feel should be added?**
   Please indicate the question number in your response.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

5. **What questions or comments do you have about the interview protocol draft?**

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

Appendix N. New Principal One-on-One Interview Protocol

NEW PRINCIPAL ON-ON-ONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Researcher Introduction

My name is Lindsay Burt and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am conducting a dissertation on the professional development and support needs of new principals as they transition into new educational leadership positions.

Statement about the Research Project

This interview is being conducted as a follow up to the survey you completed. The questions are being asked to understand your perception of your professional development and support needs as a new principal. Throughout the interview, you will be asked to respond to questions that will be based on the project's research questions. After the interview is completed, it will be transcribed, and the script will be given to you in order for you to change any of your responses or elaborate on them if you choose to.

Consent and Confidentiality

What you share with me will be confidential. By signing the consent form you agree to participate in this interview and I am agreeing to protect any and all of the information you share with me. This interview will be recorded on two separate devices. Do you consent to have this interview recorded? Do you have any questions about the consent form or the interview process?

RQ 1 – Principal Preparation

1. How did you acquire your Tier 1 administrative credential?
    a. Option 1 Probe – Describe the prep program you attended.
        i. How well do you feel the prep program you attended prepared you for your first principalship?
    b. Option 2 Probe – Why did you choose to take the district exam as opposed to attending a prep program?

2. Do you have a Tier 2 administrative credential?
    a. Probe – How did you acquire your Tier 2 credential?

3. Did you attend a pre-service program in addition to a credential program? If so, which program?
    a. Probe – How well do you feel the pre-service program you attended prepared you for your first principalship?

4. How well do you believe you were prepared to be a principal by the pre-service or preparation program you attended?

5. What knowledge and skills do you believe you will need to be successful as a new administrator?

RQ 2, RQ 2a – Challenges/School Level

6. In what school level are you a principal?

7. What challenges do you face as a principal?
   a. Probe – How are you meeting these challenges?
   b. Probe – Are your principal's meetings addressing these challenges? If not, what topics would you like to be covered?

8. Describe a typical week at your school site.
   a. Possible probes – Student behavior, staff relations, instructional leadership, professional development, operations, etc.

Support Needs

9. How often do you reach out to the district for support with issues happening at your school site?
   a. Probe – What response do you receive?
   b. Probe – Do you feel satisfied with the response you receive from the ESC or district? Why or why not?
   c. Probe – Describe the most recent request for support you made to the ESC or district?
   d. Probe – What would you improve, if anything, about the support received?
   e. Probe – How often does the district reach out to you to provide support with issues happening at your school? Who is reaching out – Central district, ESC, your Instructional Director, Operations Coordinator, other? Are they reaching out as a matter of routine or to help address a specific issue?

10. What type of supports do you feel you need from the ESC or district as a new principal?

11. Besides what you said you needed from the ESC or district, what do you feel would help you to better meet the challenges of your position?

RQ3 – Perceptions of PD received

12. How would you describe the last principal network meeting you attended?
    a. Probe – What topic(s) were covered?
    b. Probe – What delivery method(s) was/were used?
    c. Probe – Is this typical to your network meetings?

13. What do you believe is the most beneficial thing about the principal's meeting?

14. How would you describe any other professional development you have engaged in as a
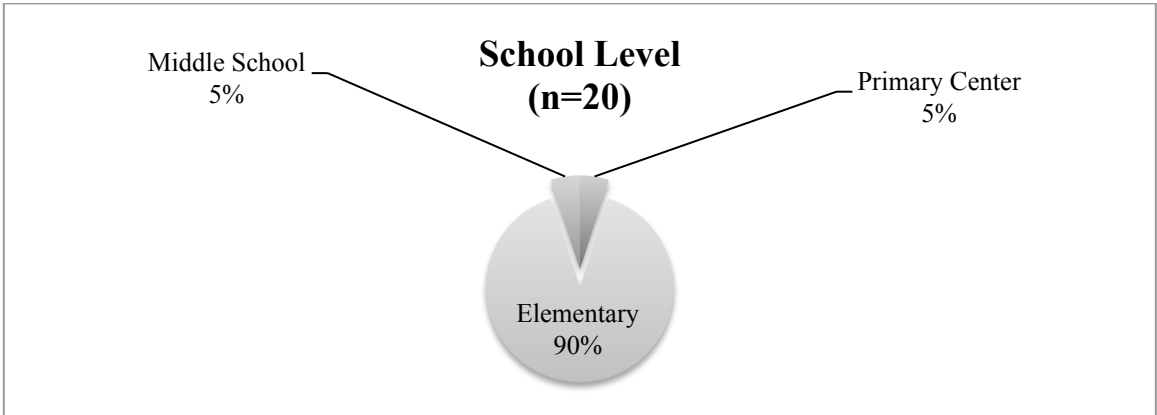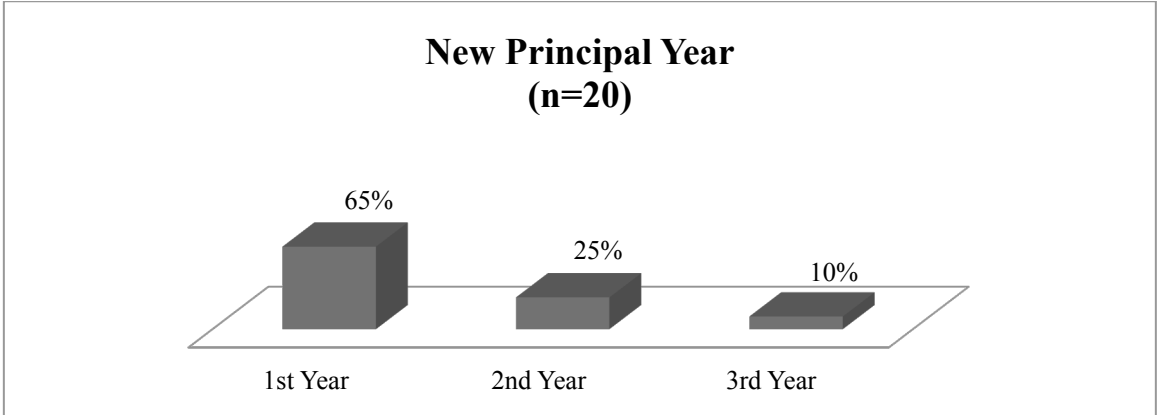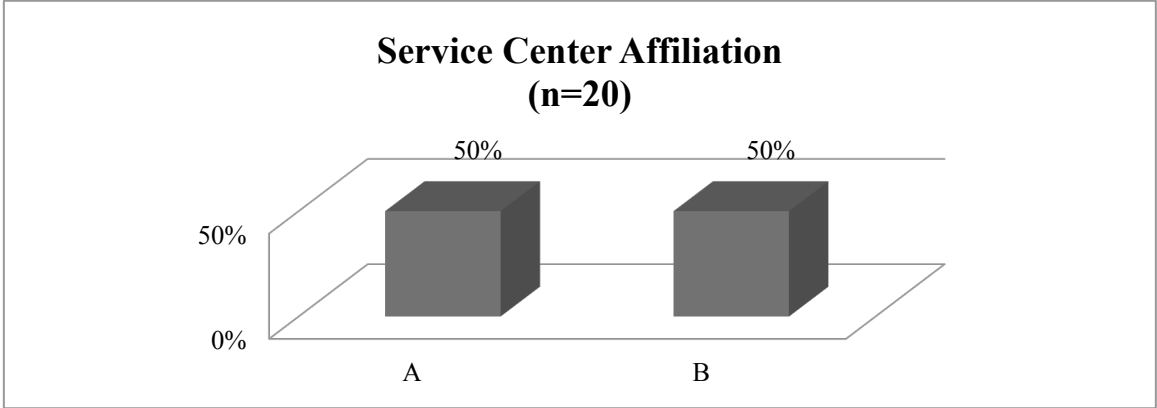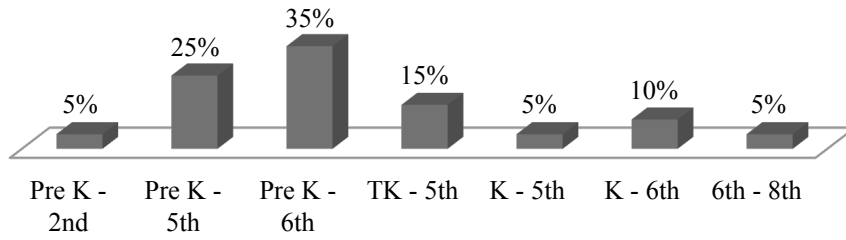
new principal?

RQ 4 – PD methods desired

15. If you could change anything about principal professional development, what would they be?
    a. Probe – Why would you change _____?
    b. Probe – Is there anything else you would change?

16. What professional development delivery models do you believe you need from the ESC or district?

Thank you for your time. As I mentioned before the interview, I will transcribe the interview and provide you with the script so you may review it make any changes you with. Thank you again.
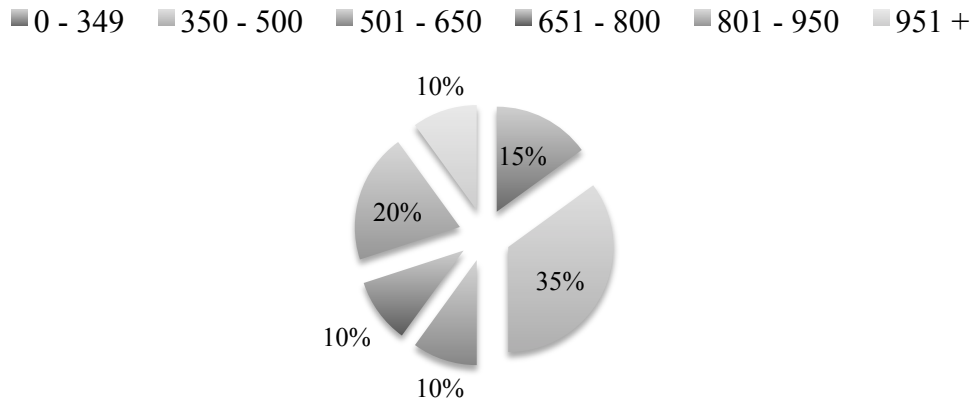
Appendix O. New Principal Interview Demographics

**Service Center Affiliation
(n=20)**

50%   50%

50%

0%

A   B

**New Principal Year
(n=20)**

65%

25%

10%

1st Year   2nd Year   3rd Year

**School Level
(n=20)**

Middle School
5%

Primary Center
5%

Elementary
90%

School Grade Span
(n=20)

Category	Percentage
Pre K - 2nd	5%
Pre K - 5th	25%
Pre K - 6th	35%
TK - 5th	15%
K - 5th	5%
K - 6th	10%
6th - 8th	5%

Number of Students
(n=20)

■ 0 - 349   ■ 350 - 500   ■ 501 - 650   ■ 651 - 800   ■ 801 - 950   ■ 951 +

Category	Percentage
15%
35%
10%
10%
20%
10%

Appendix P. Document Analysis Protocol

Title:	Date(s):	
Author(s):	Acquired From:	
Intended Audience:	RQ Connection:	

NOTES	CODES
Agenda Items:	
Instruction Specific Agenda Items:	
Operations Specific Agenda Items:	

Appendix Q. Document Analysis Sample

Title: **Service Center X Network X Meeting Agenda**	Date(s): **8-27-14**
Author(s): **Network X Instructional Director**	Acquired From:
Intended Audience: **Network X Principals**	RQ Connection: RQ3 - <u>In what professional development activities are new principals currently engaged</u> and what are their perceptions of those professional development activities?

NOTES	CODES
• **Meeting was a full day from 8:00am – 4:30pm** • Meeting location was _____ Elementary School. • Operations portion was held from 3:00pm – 4:00pm (1 hr)	--
Meeting Objective Given: • To develop a deeper understanding of CCSS aligned instructional practices and the implementation of effective practices through high quality professional development	
Agenda Items: • Welcome, Networking and Sign In • Review of the Aspen guide indicators as a frame of reference • **CCSS Aligned instructional practices – informational text, words their way word study, math thinking tools** • **TGDC Updates** • **Writers workshop principal expectations** • **PD Plan** – use of teacher facilitators and other resources – **break out – small group discussion/planning** • **Tech Time – using outlook calendar** • **SPED Updates** • **Title I Updates** • **Attendance Data – student incentives, staff FMLA policy review** • **Operations Updates** • **Closing and Reflections**	**PGEN** **LDEV** **INST** **PDM** **PDR**
Instruction Specific Agenda Items: • CCSS Aligned instructional practices – informational text, Words Their Way word study, math thinking tools • Writers workshop principal expectations	**INST**
Operations Specific Agenda Items: • Teacher Growth and Development Cycle (TGDC) Updates • Special Education Updates • Title I Updates • Attendance Data – student incentives, staff Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy review • Operations Updates	**OPER**

Appendix R. Document Analysis Codes

INST	Instruction
OPER	Operations
PDM	Professional Development Delivery Model
PDR	Reflection
NPS	New Principal Specific
PGEN	Principals in General
NPSUP	New Principal Support Offered
PSUP	Principal Support Offered (not specific to new principal)
LDEV	Leadership Development

Appendix S. New Principal Research Team Meeting 3 Agenda

Research Questions

Lindsay Burt

New Principal Professional
Development & Support

Research Question 1

What knowledge and skills do new principals, those
with three years or less in their first principalship, in
large, urban school districts perceive they will need to
be successful in their work and how well do they
believe they were prepared for the principal
assignment?

Research Question 2

What assistance do new principals perceive they will
need to meet the challenges of the principalship?

Research Question 3

In what professional development activities are new
principals currently engaged and what are their
perceptions of those professional development
activities?

Research Question 4

What types of professional development do new
principals feel would be most useful to them in terms of
delivery models (mentoring, peer coaching,
professional learning communities, etc.)?

**Interview Protocol
Objectives Based on
Research Questions**

- Perception of
  principal preparation

- Assistance needed to
  meet challenges of
  principalship by
  school level

- Perception of current
  professional
  development

- Perception of most
  useful forms of
  professional
  development

NPRT Meeting 2 Objectives

- Review available
  survey results

- Review Research
  Questions

- Review sample
  interview questions

- Dialogue and discuss
  possible questions

- Draft an interview
  script

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