This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION: PERSPECTIVE OF URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

presented by

JAMES DAVID SMITH

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration

Christopher Dembowski
Major Professor's Signature

5-2-2008
Date

URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION: PERSPECTIVE OF URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

By

James David Smith

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

2008

ABSTRACT

URBAN SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION:
PERSPECTIVE OF URBAN SCHOOLPRINCIPALS

By

James David Smith

The primary objective of this qualitative research study is to understand, What does it mean to be prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African American student population? Eight research findings emerged from analysis of focus group, interview, and case study data collected from the director of school leadership training and nine African American K-12 urban school principals – all working in the same urban school district in Michigan.

The first research finding provides evidence that between 2006 and 2016 a significant number of highly experienced baby boom generation principals will be leaving the principalship due to retirement, promotion, or career change. The second finding is that leadership training is not a program it is an on-going process that employs seven genres of training to develop participants skills, knowledge, and capacity for urban school leadership. Third, elementary, middle and high school principals place a different priority on the school leadership issues and challenges they face. Fourth, urban principals must focus on a myriad of diverse "nuts and bolts" issues and challenges affecting their urban school. The fifth finding is that principal preparation for urban school leadership is a continuous process with six distinct preparation activities. Sixth, principals in my participants school district are only measured, evaluated, and receive performance improvement feedback on three out of six critical areas of urban school leadership. And seventh, leadership training and preparation programs offered by school districts,

universities, and private sector organizations have significant differences in their leadership training and preparation activities, structure, and outcome objectives. Synthesizing these seven findings provides an answer to my research question.

My eighth finding is being prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African American student population means having the skills, knowledge, opportunity, and resources necessary and sufficient to provide leadership in seven critical areas of urban school leadership: implementing instructional, operational, staff, and student support strategies that help educate urban children; actively participating in preparing aspiring urban school leaders; meeting school stakeholder expectations; minimizing the effects of external forces on students and school staff; addressing multiple needs of urban students; and demonstrating a professional and personal commitment to urban education.

Unfortunately, only a scant amount of research literature is focused on preparing principals specifically for urban school leadership. This paucity of research suggests a fallacious operating assumption for school leadership training and preparation that the urban, suburban, or rural setting of the school does not matter - that K-12 school principals can and should be trained and prepared to address school issues and challenges and provide necessary and sufficient school leadership in any context. Based on the findings that emerged during this research, I offer a three point counter argument that, first, the urban setting and contextual school leadership does indeed matter. Second, training and preparation for urban school principals can and should be theoretically grounded, delivered, and practiced in an urban school setting. And third, based on my assumption that a significant number of baby boom generation urban school principals will be leaving, I believe a significant number of aspiring principals can and should be expeditiously trained and prepared for K-12 school leadership in an urban setting.

DEDICATION

This Ph.D. dissertation is dedicated to my parents George and Irma Smith,
who taught me to love reading and the value of life-long learning.

And

To my brothers and sisters Celestine, George, Ina and Hannibal,
all of whom loved books and learning.

And

To my wife Maryetta,
my two sons Julian and Jamil,
and my daughter-in-law Kenia Smith,
all of whom I love and value.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my wife Maryetta:

Thank you for your love, support, understanding, and patience as I pursued my dream of completing my Ph.D. program.

To my Ph.D. committee members Dr. Maenette Benham, Dr. Christopher Dunbar, committee chair, Dr. Susan Printy, and Dr. Francisco Villarruel:

I am grateful and forever indebted to each of you for serving as my intellectual adviser, confidant, critic, evaluator, shepherd, and mentor. Individually and collectively you gently, but firmly, nudged me along during my five year journey towards my PhD dissertation defense.

To Dr.Joyce Piert, my format coach, who provided me with content checks, context discussions, extensive mark-up, .05 paragraph indentations, and motivation to finish.

Thanks - to all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....x

LIST OF FIGURES.....xi

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION.....1
Statement of the Problem.....3
Purpose of this Research.....4
Research Questions.....5
Definition of Terms.....6

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....8
Literature Review Framework.....8
History and Evolution of Principal Preparation Programs.....9
Effective Schools Movement.....11
School Leadership Standards.....14
Why Urban Principal Preparation Programs are Needed.....15
Program Evaluation and research.....31
Program structure and components.....36
Program graduates.....39
Salient Features of Urban Principal Preparation Programs.....41

CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....47
Research Approach.....47
Participant Selection.....48
Data Collection.....50
Analytical Framework.....54
Data Analysis.....56

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS....58
Case Studies of Nine Urban School Principals....58
Ruby, Principal K-5 Elementary School....59
Mary, Principal K-8 Elementary School....69
Robert, Principal K-8 Elementary School....76
Paula, Principal K-8 Elementary School....82
Daniel, Principal 6-8 Middle School....91
Kathy, Principal 6-8 Middle School....101
George, Principal 9-12 High School....112
Henrietta, Principal 9-12 High School....128
Marietta, Principal 9-12 High School....137

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS....145
Participant Profile....147
Leadership Training....151
Leadership Priorities....161
Urban School Issues....171
Leadership Preparation....182
Leadership Programs....207
Urban District Training Program and Preparation Process....208
University Programs....210
New Leaders for New Schools....211
Similarities and Differences in Activities....213
Similarities and Differences in Structure....214
Similarities and Differences in Outcome Objectives....218

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS....220
Conclusions....221
Implications....225

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Participant focus group and interview consent form and confidentiality agreement.....229

Appendix B: District director of leadership training interview guide.....232

Appendix C: Urban school principal interview guide.....234

REFERENCES.....236

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.0: Percentage and number of Title 1 schools identified for improvement and improvement status by district type and size 2004-05.....21

Table 3.0: Participants Career History in Private Sector and Urban Education as of June 2006.....49

Table 3.1: Participant's Estimates of Student Population and School Staff.....51

Table 3.2: What School Procedures, Functions, or Activities Require your Involvement or Leadership as an Urban School Principal?.....53

Table 5.0: Estimate of Study Participants Age in 2006 and 2016.....148

Table 5.1: Participants Career History in Private Sector and Urban Education.....150

Table 5.2: University and District Leadership Training of Participants.....158

Table 5.3: Principals Leadership Priorities and Related Research 163

Table 5.4: Summary of Participants 2005-2006 Adequate Yearly Progress.....169

Table 5.5: Summary of Thirty-One Nuts-And-Bolts Issues and Challenges Affecting Participants Schools.....172

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.0: Michigan Geographic Areas Considered Urban.....6

Figure 2.0: A Typical Masters of School Administration Program in Mid 1990's.....23

Figure 2.1: Urban-13 Universities Offering Doctorate Level Degrees.....24

Figure 2.2: Cleveland State University Urban Education Ph.D. Conceptual Framework.....25

Figure 2.3: New Leaders for New Schools - Urban principal Preparation Program.....28

Figure 2.4: Three Categories of Principal Preparation Program Evaluation and Research.....32

Figure 2.5: Common Features of Five Urban School Leadership Preparation Programs.....45

Figure 5.0: Seven Genres of Urban School Leadership Training.....152

Figure 5.1: Summary of Urban School Principal's Grade Level Leadership Priorities.....165

Figure 5.2: Percentage of Time Participants Spend on Instructional or Administrative Leadership Activities.....167

Figure 5.3: Six Categories of "Nuts-And-Bolts" Issues and Challenges Mentioned by Participants 174

Figure 5.4: Urban School Personnel Classifications.....180

Figure 5.5: Urban school district leadership preparation process.....183

Figure 5.6: Urban School Principals Leadership Capacity.....193

Figure 5.7: Urban School Principal Leadership Preparation Process and Leadership Capacity Outcome Matrix.....206

Figure 5.8: Program and Process Activities, Structure, and Outcome Objectives of Three Different Provider of K-12 School Leadership Training and Preparation.....209

Figure 6.0: What Does it Mean to be Prepared to be an Urban School Principal With a Majority African American Student Copulation 225

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership provided by the school principal is a critical success factor for implementing academic reform and sustaining school improvement (Blase & Blase, 1998; Bruss, 1986; Chell, 1995; Fullan, 2001; P. Hallinger, 1992; Hoy & Hoy, 2003; Lashway, 2002; K. Leithwood, 1993; Levine, 2005; J. Murphy, 1991; Osterman & et al., 1993; Yukl, 1982). This notion of the leadership effect of the school principal is central to school effectiveness research that argues effective schools are more likely to have an instructional leader who sets high expectations for student achievement, maintains a school-wide focus on academics, creates a safe and orderly school environment, and clearly communicates the school vision and goals (Boysen, 1992; Cuban, 2001; Edmonds, 1979; Gooden, 2002; P. Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Reynolds, 2001; Sammons 2006; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Researchers specifically focused on understanding the leadership role, responsibility, and effect of principals of a K-12 public school located in an urban setting have concluded that, in addition to instructional leadership, urban principals must be trained and prepared to provide leadership on a plethora of political, economic, racial, psychological, physiological, and environmental issues and challenges facing their students, student families, the school, and school community (Carlin, 1992; Center on Education Policy, 2005; Cuban, 2004; Edmonds, 1979; Gooden, 2002; Jackson, 2005; Kozol, 1991; Ladd & Yinger, 1989; Levine, 2005; Lipman, 1998; Payne, 2005; B. S. Portin, 2000). Examples of issues and challenges facing urban principals include accountability for adequate yearly progress in student achievement despite insufficient

financial and human resources; less experienced or poor performing teachers; frustrated or angry parents; old school buildings in need of frequent repair and maintenance; inadequate professional staff support in the school; implementation responsibility for complex policy mandates that are under-funded; and not having enough time for important instructional leadership activities due to a myriad of operational activities and administrative procedures that require their involvement (Boysen, 1992; Dantley, 1990; Eikenberry, 1930; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Lipman, 1998; Reynold J. S. Macpherson, 1998; Reves, 2004; Shen, Rodriguez-Campos, & Rincones-Gomez, 2000; Taylor, 2002). A recurring theme emerging from research focused on the urban school principal is that university educational leadership programs and urban school district professional development are not training and preparing K-12 urban school principals for their changing role, complex leadership challenges, expanded responsibilities, and increased accountability as urban school leaders.

Statement of the Problem

School principals are being held publicly accountable for providing instructional leadership that result in both annual and sustained improvement in academic achievement for all students in their school. The Center on Education Policy (2005) reports that an increasing number of urban school principals, all across the country, are not providing the instructional leadership schools may require to achieve the adequate yearly progress objectives of their schools. One issue urban principal's face is the lack of a consistent or commonly accepted definition of instructional leadership. Another issue is principals may have difficulty translating a research-based theory of instructional leadership into their leadership practice in an urban school environment. An urban principal may have been exposed to instructional leadership theory during their university training; professional

development offered by their district; from mentoring experiences; or perhaps from their instructional leadership experience while a classroom teacher, department head or assistant principal. Many researchers believe the principal's training and experience, both before and after assuming the principalship, may not have prepared the principal to provide instructional leadership that is necessary, appropriate or sufficient for a public school situated in a lower income or high poverty urban environment (Anderson, 1991; Baker, 2004; Blase & Blase, 1998; Broad Foundation & Fordham Foundation, 2003; Cleveland State University, 2003; Cuban, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lee, 2004; National College for School Leadership, 2004b; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989). These two issues surrounding instructional leadership - the lack of common definition and insufficient training and preparation for urban school instructional leadership - may affect how a principal comes to think about and perform his or her job role as an instructional leader of an urban public school.

Another issue facing all urban school districts is the potential threat of losing a large number of highly experienced principals who are members of the baby boom generation. Principals born between 1946 and 1964 are considered to be members of the baby-boom generation and are referred to as baby-boomers. For example, in a report published by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO, 2006) the authors discussed the financial and healthcare implications of baby boomer retirement:

> The first wave of the baby-boom generation, the 78 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964 and alive as of 2005, will turn age 62 and become eligible for Social Security benefits beginning in 2008. The retirement of the relatively large baby-boom generation, combined with other demographic trends, is expected to strain the nation's retirement and health systems.

When baby-boom urban school principals do retire and leave urban education, the challenge for many urban school districts will be having enough candidates who aspire to

be an urban school principal. The question will be are the candidates adequately trained and prepared to assume the difficult, complex, and challenging role and responsibility of an urban elementary, middle, or high school principal. Baby boom school principal retirement may not be a cause for immediate concern in some urban districts, while in others, the issue may become evolve from a concern to a crisis. In either case, the results of this research will hopefully be of interest to all urban school districts interested in better understanding, improving, or developing and implementing a principal leadership training program and preparation process within their urban school district.

Purpose of this Research

The primary objective of this study is to understand how urban school principals, in one urban school district in Michigan, perceive their training, experience and preparation for leadership in urban schools with majority African-American student population. Patton (2002) advises that, "When a person, group, organization, or country is the unit of analysis qualitative methods involve observation and description focused directly on the unit" (p.228). Continuing, Patton argues that, "the key issue in selecting the unit of analysis is to decide what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study" (p. 229). Following Patton's advice, for this research project the urban school principal will be my unit of analysis.

Based on my decision to focus on the K-12 urban school principal, during the course of this study I conducted focus group, one-on-one structured interviews, document analysis, and cross case study analysis. This combination of data collection and analysis helped me to examine, understand, and explicate how a group of nine urban school principals - who work in the same urban school district in Michigan - perceive and understand their training and preparation for urban school leadership.

Research Questions

The central research question for this phenomenological research study is: What does it mean to be prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African-American student population? Creswell (1998) suggests that the central research or "issue question" in a phenomenological research study has a dual purpose. One purpose, he believes, is to uncover major concerns study participants may have with the phenomena being researched. For example, a major concern of the urban principals in this study is their leadership training did not prepare them to effectively manage their time. Second, Creswell believes participant's responses to questions in a phenomenological research study should help delineate and expose what he calls, "the invariant structure and essential meaning" of their individual and group experiences with the phenomena being examined – in this study, the structure and meaning of their leadership training and preparation. (Moustakas, 1994) provides a similar explanation of structure and meaning when he says:

> The aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience ….The understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience *in the context of a particular situation* is the primary target of phenomenological knowledge (p.13-14).

Participant's responses related to the following four research sub-questions provided critical data and contextual information that explicated "what happened?" and, "how?" (Creswell, 1998) participants experienced their preparation for urban school leadership:

(1) How do urban principals of majority African-American schools perceive and understand their role and responsibilities?

(2) How do principals of majority African-American urban schools

characterize the usefulness of their training, experience and preparation for urban school leadership?

(3) How does the urban school setting affect an urban school principalship?

(4) What are the implications of principals being trained and prepared for urban school leadership?

Definition of Terms

In this study instructional leadership and urban are defined as follows: First, instructional leadership is sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (Hoy and Hoy, 2003, p.1 citing from Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p.12). Second, the term urban is a U.S. Census designation applied to a geographical area based on population density. For example, for the 2000 census the U.S. Census Bureau classified "urban" as all territory, population, and housing units located within an urbanized area or urban cluster that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and surrounding census blocks with an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile. All territory, population, and housing units located outside of urbanized areas and urban clusters are considered rural. As shown in Figure 1.0, when that definition of urban was applied to Michigan during the 2000 Federal census, sixteen geographic areas in Michigan were classified as urban metropolitan statistical areas or urban metropolitan divisions - based on their population density.

Figure 1.0: Michigan geographic areas considered urban

Urban Metropolitan Statistical Areas (containing core area of 50,000 or more population)

Ann Arbor, MI - population 83,904
Battle Creek, MI - population 79,135
Bay City, MI - population 74,048
Flint, MI - population 365,096
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI - population 539,080
Holland-Grand Haven, MI - population 91,795
Jackson, MI - population 88,050
Kalamazoo-Portage, MI - population 187,961
Lansing-East Lansing, MI - population 300,032
Monroe, MI - population 53,153
Muskegon-Norton Shores, MI - population 154,729
Niles-Benton Harbor, MI - population 61,745
Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, MI - population 140,985
South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI (part) - population 34,201 in Michigan

Urban Metropolitan Divisions (total population approximately3,903 377)

Detroit - Livonia - Dearborn, MI
Warren – Troy - Farmington Hills, MI

Source: (US Office of Management and Budget, 2005). Office of management and budget: standards for defining Metropolitan and micropolitan and statistical areas; notice. Federal Register, 65(249), 12. http://www.michigan.gov/cgi/0,1607,7-158--36122--,00.html
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Battle_crek_25556_7.pdf

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Patton (2002) notes that, "there are decided advantages to reviewing the literature before, during, or after fieldwork – or on a continual basis through the study" (p. 226). For this researcher, conducting a review of related literature after developing my research questions and methodology, but prior to data collection and analysis, provided multiple benefits. One benefit was the vicarious opportunity to hear the voices and listen to the on-going conversation of other researchers interested in understanding "Why, what and how" principals are prepared for urban school leadership. Second, the multiplicity of books and peer-reviewed journal articles uncovered that related to school leadership provided different perspectives, research-based conclusions, alternative arguments, and several plausible explanations for the "phenomenological themes" emerged from my data analysis. Third, my review of related literature exposed me to research findings and conclusions that I was able to use as critical lens to examine and make sense of the large volume of qualitative data collected during this study. The fourth, and perhaps most important benefit was review of literature helped prepare me to ask my participants better questions, and then listen with an informed ear as my participants shared their perceptions of their experiences, training and preparation for urban school leadership.

Literature Review Framework

Seven areas of inquiry helped frame and focus my review of literature related to urban principal training and preparation:

- History and evolution of urban school principal leadership programs.
- How were programs impacted by the effective schools movement?
- Relationship between school leadership standards and preparation programs.
- Why urban principal preparation programs needed?
- How urban school leadership programs are structured?
- How urban school leadership programs are evaluated?
- How urban school leadership programs differ from other programs?

Unfortunately, I uncovered only a scant amount of research literature on the topic of preparing principals specifically for urban school leadership. Consequently, much of the research literature discussed in this paper discusses school leadership and preparation programs absent an urban prefix, urban school context or geographical urban setting.

History and Evolution of Principal Preparation Programs

Joseph Murphy (1998), in a journal article entitled *Preparation for the School Principalship, (1998)*discusses the evolution of principal training programs from 1820 until 1998. Murphy divides the 178 year period into four distinct eras - "ideological"; "prescriptive"; "scientific"; and "dialectic" – and discusses the dominant school leadership paradigm and primary preparation program objective for each period. During each of the four eras, it appears that the content, focus and outcome objectives of preparation programs attempt to reflect three national priorities for public education. Thomas Green (1983) argues that these priorities are enduring, conflicting and perhaps mutually exclusive - "equality, excellence, or equity." It is important to note that in 2007, these same three educational priorities continue to permeate and dominate our national discourse regarding our expectations and aspirations for education in this country –

especially K-12 urban public schools.

Murphy notes that during the "ideological era" from 1820 until 1899, "educational administration was not recognized as a distinct profession…school leaders were simply learned authority's, whose insights into the truth provided guidance to teachers, students and the public…little [leadership preparation] training was required" (1998, p.3). During the "prescriptive era" of 1900 to 1946, Murphy argues that university-based educational leadership programs emphasized instructional leadership skills and managing schools with a business-like efficiency. University education professors, he notes," attempted to prepare candidates for the principalship as it existed, not as it might be." (1998, p.3).Murphy characterizes 1947 until 1985 as the "scientific era." Education professors of this era, he says, were, "discipline-focused specialists with minimal practical school experience" and a strong affinity for "theory and research" (1998, p.4). Principal training during the scientific era focused on data collection and analysis as a sound basis for rational decision making and school leadership. During the "dialectic" period between 1986 and 1998, principal preparation programs received increasing amounts of criticism from, "diverse groups interested in the preparation of school leaders" (Murphy, 1998, p.4) who collectively advocated establishing standards for school leadership and changing the structure, curriculum, and content of principal preparation programs.

Principal preparation programs offered today have evolved from past efforts to transform and "re-culture" school leadership preparation programs (J. Murphy, 2003). Given the brevity of this paper, I have selected just two significant educational initiatives I believe have impacted the current design of principal leadership preparation programs: (1) the effective schools movement and (2) the development, adoption, and assimilation

of Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards into principal preparation programs and state criteria for principal certification.

Effective Schools Movement

Taylor (Taylor, 2002), executive director of the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development from 1986 until 1989, credits the expansion of the effective schools movement to the research efforts and contributions of multiple researchers including, for example, "Ronald Edmonds, Wilbur Brookover, Larry Lezotte, John Fredrickson, George Weber, Matthew Miles, Daniel Levine and Eugene Eubanks, and many others." Taylor believes that by the mid-1980s [the tail-end of the "scientific era" posited by Murphy] the correlates, or characteristics, of effective schools had become widely accepted as valid educational objectives and, she says, "over the decade that language of the correlates became the language of school improvement and school reform" (p.376).

Taylor comments that the six correlates of effective schools attributed to Ronald Edmonds were published in a 1979 Educational Leadership journal article entitled *Effective Schools for the Urban Poor.* Taylor notes that, "since that time, seven newer, more broadly based correlates are now specified":

(1) Clearly stated and focused school mission;

(2) Safe and orderly climate for learning;

(3) High expectations for students, teachers, and administrators;

(4) Opportunity to learn and student time-on-task;

(5) Instructional leadership by all administrators and staff members;

(6) Frequent monitoring of student progress;

(7) Positive home and school relations (2002, p.377).

Emerging from school effectiveness research findings, conclusions, and recommendations, these seven correlates appear to have evolved into what could be called a, "research-based" or "school improvement process" approach to improving poor performing schools - particularly those schools with significant numbers of disadvantaged students.

Taylor estimates that since the early 1980's over 700 school districts have attempted to carry out school reform using the effective schools process and, she notes, from 1988 until 2002, "more than 300 school districts in the United States have implemented the effective schools process" (Taylor, 2002). Her research suggests that school principals may achieve better results if all seven of the correlates, versus only a few, are included in a school's strategic plan for change and student academic improvement.

In a paper prepared for the January 4, 2006 International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Pam Sammons of the University of Nottingham, School of Education in the UK, indicated that over the past decade, more attention is being paid to school effectiveness research and the school improvement process, as a possible means of addressing issues of social justice, inclusion, and the academic achievement gap between students in different ethnic groups and socioeconomic classifications. Sammons (2006) argues that, "attempts to define equality and equity in education draw on notions of social justice and social inclusion" and, as a result, four primary issues should be addressed: "equality of excess, equality of circumstance, equality of participation, and equality of outcome" (p.4). Referring to educational systems in different countries she notes that, "in most systems students from disadvantaged backgrounds (especially minority, ethnic backgrounds, those experiencing social disadvantage such as low

income, parents lacking qualifications, unemployed, in low SES work, poor housing etc) are more likely to experience educational failure or under-achievement" (p.4).

Sammons argues that the similarity of United States and United Kingdom school reform issues are reflected in nine correlates or characteristics of effective schools that emerged from research conducted in both countries. Effective schools, she notes:

1. Establish processes of effective leadership
2. Have effective teaching
3. Develop and maintain a pervasive focus on learning
4. Produce a positive school culture
5. Create high and appropriate expectations for all
6. Emphasize responsibilities and rights
7. Monitor progress at all levels
8. Develop staff skills at the school site and
9. Involve parents in productive and appropriate ways (Sammons, 2006, p.19).

In *City Schools: Leading the Way,* Forsyth (1993) notes that research funded by the Danforth Foundation and the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) was conducted by the Urban Initiative Project (UIP) in 1993 in an attempt to understand the "areas of greatest challenge" an urban school administrators might face leading an effective school. Drawing from this research Forsyth argues that a principal should be prepared to address, at a minimum, ten significant challenges developing an effective urban school. The ten leadership challenges are: Understanding the urban school context and conditions of practice; motivating urban children to learn; managing instructional diversity; building open climates; collecting and using information for problem-solving and decision-making; acquiring and using urban resources; governing urban schools; effecting change; establishing mission, vision, and goals; and principal accountability for all school activities and outcomes.

Many researchers have concluded that principal preparation and professional

development programs are exposing aspiring and experienced principals to effective schools research in an attempt to develop the knowledge and skills leadership program participants may need to implement, manage and lead change within their schools (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Joseph Murphy, 2002; National Commission for the Principalship, 1990; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; University of Wisconsin Madison, 1999). My concern is the school effectiveness research I reviewed appears to be more focused on school improvement strategies, process implementation, organizational effectiveness, and leadership style of the school staff than the critical social, economic, political, physiological, psychological and academic needs of the African American child that may be attending the urban school.

School Leadership Standards

In 1994, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), a consortium of multiple national school administration organizations including the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), commissioned the development of national standards for school leaders. Working under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the taskforce formed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Joseph Murphy, professor of education at Ohio University, served as chair of the task force and was responsible for coordinating task-force activities during the two-year project (J. Murphy, 2003). On November 2, 1996 the Council of Chief State School Officers approved and adopted the task force recommendation that educational leaders develop and demonstrate knowledge, disposition, skills and competencies in the following six areas of school leadership:

- Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members.
- Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Since their adoption and announcement in 1996 ISLLC standards are often used as the structural foundation for designing and developing school leadership preparation programs and State or district level certification criteria of school principals (Cornell, 2005; Coutts, 1997; E-Lead, 2004; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Lashway, 1998, 2001; Joesph Murphy, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Why Urban Principal Preparation Programs are Needed?

Today, based on a national trend of school district resegregation (Evans, 2004; Frankenberg, 2003; Lee, 2004; G. Orfield, Frankenberg, & Lee, 2003) more and more K-12 principals find themselves in urban school districts where the majority of the student population are children of color. Urban principal training programs are needed to prepare new and experienced principals to address the issues, challenges, and opportunities they may have as leaders of a K-12 urban school with a majority African American students population from low income families (Anderson, 1991; Cuban, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Lee, 2004). Using free and reduced lunch as a surrogate for low

income, the Center on Education Policy (CEO) explained that, "Children qualify for free lunches under the National School Lunch Act if their family income does not exceed 130% of the federal poverty level and for reduced-price lunches if their family income is above 130% but below 185% of the poverty level" (p.11). The Center on Education Policy (Center on Education Policy, 2006) reports that in many states, and in large urban school districts with 25,000 or more students, minority children from low-income families may, "make up the majority of public school enrollments."

Many researchers have reported that principals in urban schools encounter a population of students, particularly, African American children who have lower academic test scores than students in other ethnic groups; higher drop-out rates; lower graduation rates; and are too often taught by less experienced teachers. In addition, urban students often need a full range of non-instructional support services including free or reduced lunch; extended day care before and after school, pre-kindergarten programs; a school nurse; psychologists; social workers; or student counselors (Brown, 2005; Carlin, 1992; Center on Education Policy, 2005; Cotton, 1991; Cuban, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Frankenberg, 2003; Haberman, 2000; Lytle, 1992; McAdoo, 1997; G. Orfield, Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C., 2004; B. S. Portin, 2000; Tate, 1997).

In addition to issues related to race and poverty, urban principals will be pressured to achieve tactical objectives of increasing student academic achievement and improving graduation rates. External issues will include district superintendents attempting to optimize dwindling economic resources, school board members attempting to improve a school system situated in a declining urban setting, and the omnipresent mandate of No Child Left Behind.

D.H. Eikenberry (1930), an education professor at The Ohio State University, argued in *The Professional Training of Secondary-School Principals* that high school principal preparation and training is needed to ensure that principals focus on student growth and development versus academic subject matter. Eikenberry contended that:

> We are witnessing in America a spectacle never witnessed before in the history of the world - an attempt to provide universal secondary education. The experiment has progressed so far that it is no mere trite remark to say that the high schools of the country hold in their keeping the destinies of our social, political, commercial, mechanical, religious, and cultural leaders of tomorrow.
>
> The century-old idea of secondary education as preparation for college and as discipline has been discarded, and in its place has been substituted a philosophy which emphasizes the necessity of leading each individual to formulate for himself a social program which will function constructively in a modern, dynamic world. In the modern secondary school the principal becomes a social engineer, directing the activities of his school in the direction of pupil growth rather than in the direction of formal mastery of traditional subject matter. This responsibility of the principalship makes it imperative that much attention and thought be devoted to the professional training of the high school principal. (Eikenberry, 1930).

Murphy and Schwartz (2000) are representative of a growing body of researchers who believe principal preparation programs are required to "adequately" train replacements for a significant number of school principals who may be retiring or otherwise leaving the education profession over the next several years. In *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship,* Murphy and Schwartz state:

> In the next 10 years, 2.2 million new teachers will be needed, more students will be added to the nation's school systems and additional administrative positions will be created as the systems grow. In a 1998 survey of 403 school district superintendents, half reported a shortage of qualified candidates for principal vacancies. The study cites a wave of principal retirements as the major cause for the shortage…37 percent were over age 50 by the 1993–94 school year. For example, a 1999 University of Minnesota study estimated that, by 2010, about 75 percent of Minnesota principals will be lost through retirement or attrition, even as school enrollments are expected to grow by 10 to 20 percent. Yet the problem in Minnesota and elsewhere is not a shortage of credentialed job candidates. For every administrator leading a school in Minnesota, there are three additional licensed administrators who do not hold school leadership positions. Still, 86 percent of Minnesota superintendents reported in 1998 that filling principal positions was "difficult" or "very difficult." Too few credentialed people are prepared adequately for the job. And too few qualified educators want to be principals. Why? (p.5).

Multiple researchers (Dantley, 1990; Gooden, 2002; K. A. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; J. Murphy & Schwarz, 2000) posit that principals of urban schools have not been adequately trained or prepared to deal with the multiplicity and complexity of issues

related to race, politics, economics and social justice they will face as urban school leaders. In fact, these researchers suggest that …Two areas of preparation that needs particular attention are: (A) providing leadership appropriate for an urban school and (B) standards-based principal accountability.

Appropriate and applicable leadership in urban schools. Leithwood & Riehl (2003) note in *What Do We Already Know About Successful School Leadership(K. A. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)* that, "a recent review of literature was able to locate a total of 121 articles addressing forms of primary principal leadership in just four prominent education administration journals within the past decade alone. These articles described 20 distinct forms of leadership…that the reviewers classified into six generic leadership approaches… instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial, and contingent forms of leadership" (p.13).

Leithwood argues that preparation program curricula and field-based experiences should help aspiring principals understand, "research about different forms and effects of leadership" and the practice of always "remaining sensitive to the context" and diverse needs of urban school faculty, students and parents (K. A. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)(Leithwood, 2003). Leithwood says:(K. A. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)

> The challenges for leaders in diverse school context call for two distinct approaches to leadership. The first approach includes practices aimed at implementing policies and other initiatives that would serve well, those populations of children about which we have been concerned. The second approach to leadership aims to ensuring, at a minimum, that those policies and other initiatives…are implemented in just and equitable ways. This usually means building on the forms of social capital that students do possess rather than being restricted by the social capital they do not possess. Such an approach to leadership is referred to variously as emancipatory leadership, leadership for social justice, and critical leadership (p.36).

Noting that, "these two approaches to leadership often seem to live in different worlds" Leithwood concludes that, "diverse schools [I interpret as urban schools] demand both

sets of leadership practices, if they are to serve their pupils well"(p.36).

Mark Gooden (2002) provides additional support for the notion of 'appropriate and applicable' urban school leadership in the journal article *Stewardship and critical leadership - Sufficient for leadership in urban schools?* Building on Tate's (1997) concept of "raced people" [people who have faced discrimination because of race and/or class – and been historically oppressed psychologically, physically, educationally, or economically] Gooden argues that because raced people, "have been omitted from the conversation in the construction of models for leadership"(Gooden, 2002), p.135) we should reconsider the appropriateness and applicability of commonly accepted theories of leadership for the urban school environment. And, he suggests, the "rigid application" of commonly accepted leadership models have, "the tendency to control rather than educate raced people" (p.135).

Urban principals may be required to perform in the role of "servant leader" and, according to Gooden, "must surely have a calling to serve in such an environment" (p.133). Building on research by Michael Dantley (1990), Gooden suggests that urban principals must become adept at, "questioning the way things are and setting new precedents where necessary for the sake of advancing organizational knowledge" (p.140). "Unfortunately," Gooden notes, "many urban school teachers and administrators have not subscribed to this notion of stewardship, and they are unaware or unconvinced of using critical leadership as a guide to their pedagogy or leadership" (p.140). Continuing, he warns us that, "research studies using traditional, empirical, and positivist frameworks often offer school leaders recipe-like recommendations for producing effective educational institutions . . . .Unfortunately, these frameworks and models fail to address many of the unique challenges facing urban schools" (p.133).

Murphy and Schwartz; Leithwood and Riehl; Dantley; and Gooden all present compelling arguments for exposing leadership program participants to a school leadership theory and practice that may be more appropriate and applicable for urban school leadership. Equally important, preparation program participants should have internship experience, mentoring, and in-service exposure to a variety of urban school leadership styles and approaches.

Standards-based principal accountability. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates each state to hold school administrators accountable for annual academic improvement of all students within their school. The Center on Education Policy (2005) makes it clear that academic improvement continues to be a major challenge for urban principals. We see in Table 2.0 that in school year 2004-05 there were 5,765 Title 1 schools [13% of 42,723 Title 1 schools in the United States] that were identified for improvement. It is important to note in column two of the table that, "urban districts have 27% [11,288] of the Title 1 schools in the nation, but 42% [2,408] of the Title 1 schools identified for improvement." Conversely, while only 28% [489] of the urban schools "exited improvement status" 69% [1230] of suburban schools were able to improve. This data supports the disturbing notion that, "urban districts are being identified for improvement at a disproportionate rate" (Center on Education Policy, 2005).

Data in Table 2.0 supports the argument made multiple researchers (Brown, 2005; Chrispeels, 2002; Cuban, 2001; Druian & Butler, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Forsyth, 1993; Gantner, Daresh, Dunlap, & Newsom, 1999; P. Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Lam, 1999; Reynold J. S. Macpherson, 1998; Sammons 2006) that urban school principals must be prepared to provide appropriate and applicable leadership that is necessary and sufficient to achieve annual school improvement objectives and sustained student academic

achievement.

Table 2.0: Percentage and number of Title 1 schools identified for improvement and improvement status by district type and size, 2004-05.

	Estimated number of Title 1 schools	Percentage of all Title 1 schools	Estimated number of Title 1 schools identified for improvement	Percentage of all Title 1 schools identified for improvement	Estimated number of Title 1 schools that exited improvement status	Percentage of all Title 1 schools that exited improvement status
All districts	42,723	100%	5,765	100%	1,774	100%
District type:						
Urban	11,288	27%	2,408	42%	489	28%
Suburban	17,666	41%	2,307	40%	1,230	69%
Rural	13,769	32%	1,051	18%	55	3%
District size:						
Very large	6,436	15%	1,628	28%	251	14%
Large	7,483	16%	1,104	19%	618	35%
Medium	10,544	25%	1,459	25%	626	35%
Small	18,259	43%	1,574	27%	279	16%

Source: Center on Education Policy, December 2004, districts survey, Item 4 (Table 3b) and Item 7 (Table 6a) (www.cep-dc.org/nclb/NCLBPolicybriefs2005/CEPPB1web.pdf)

Structure of Principal Preparation Programs

There is a wide disparity in the reported number of university-based or alternative preparation programs for aspiring principals in the United States (Anderson, 1991; Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005; Michelle D. Young & Creighton, 2002). For example, Arthur Levine (2005), the president of Teachers College, Columbia University, used the Carnegie Foundation topology of university-based programs - baccalaureate, Masters, and doctorate degree – to classify, survey, and evaluate educational leadership preparation programs offered by, "the nation's 1206 schools, colleges, and departments of education" (p.9). In contrast,

Michelle Young (2002), Executive Director of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), indicated there were, "approximately 500 colleges and universities, and yet to be counted, alternative programs that provide pre-service education leadership preparation" (p. 8).

Masters preparation programs

The current structure of university-based Masters level school administration programs appear to be the result of a gradual, incremental buildup of ideas, concepts, and theories borrowed from professions and disciplines outside of the school administration profession. Murphy (2003) shares that prior to World War II, school administrators borrowed ideas for improving organizational efficiency from the business sector. Following World War II, there was, he said, "a clamoring for scientifically based underpinnings for the [school administration] profession" (p.5). One result, Murphy posits is that, "knowledge blocks from the behavioral and social sciences were laid into the foundation of school administration" (p.5). To illustrate his point Murphy provides, in Figure 2.0, what he believes was the "typical Masters of School Administration degree program in the mid-1990's" reflecting a twin-tier foundation of management and behavioral science courses(J. Murphy, 2003).

Structure of Doctorate level urban school leadership programs. During February 2006, I called Cleveland State University (CSU) to get information about the CSU Urban Education PhD program. The program administrator explained how and why the CSU Urban Education program was started and suggested I review the "Urban-13" web site http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwire/peer/urban13.htm (Urban-13, 2006) for additional information about the genesis of the program. The CSU administrator did explain that Urban-13, formed in the early 1970s, originally consisted of 13 universities that were located in

major urban cities and also offered doctorate degrees. The intent of the program was for

Figure 2.0: A typical Masters of School Administration program in mid 1990's

Management	Behavioral sciences
School business administration	Research methods statistics (psychology)
School personnel administration	School community relations and/or politics of education (political science)
School facilities	Organizational theory (sociology)
Supervision of employees	School finance and/or economies of education (economics)
People personnel administration	Qualitative methods (anthropology)
	History and/or philosophy of education (history, philosophy)

Source: Murphy, J. (2003). *Reculturing Educational Leadership: The ISLLC Standards Ten Years Out* (Information Analyses General (070)). U.S.; Virginia: National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Fairfax, VA. http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED481619

members of Urban-13 to share data about programs, students, staff, and fiscal matters. As of February 2006, the Urban-13 membership included the 21 doctorate degree granting universities shown in Figure 2.1.

Review of six different universities listed on the Urban 13 website confirmed that a doctorate level degree specifically focused on "urban education" is not offered at all 21 universities. For example, the University of Alabama Birmingham offers a Ph.D. in educational leadership, however, their website reveals that the program is not designated or identified as being specific to "urban education." Due to the attempted brevity of this paper, I will only discuss the structure of one Urban-13 urban education preparation program – the Ph.D. program offered by Cleveland State University.

Figure 2.1: Urban-13 universities offering doctorate level degrees	
University of Alabama-Birmingham	University of Missouri-St. Louis
University of Cincinnati	University of New Orleans
Cleveland State University	City College of New York
Florida Agriculture & Mechanical University (A&M)	Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis
Georgia State University	Portland State University
University of Houston	Temple University
University of Illinois-Chicago	University of Toledo
University of Pittsburgh	Virginia Commonwealth University
University of Massachusetts at Boston	Wayne State University
The University of Memphis	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Missouri-Kansas City	
Source: Urban-13 website http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwire/peer/urban13.htm	

Cleveland State University (2003) began offering the Urban Education Ph.D. program in 1987 to provide program participant's the knowledge and skills required to provide leadership and effect change in "urban K-12 schools, colleges and adult learning settings" (p.1). The program is structured to help participants (A) enhance their knowledge of the urban learner; (B) understand the social context of urban education; and (C) develop an urban perspective. Participants develop their research skills and knowledge in one of four specialized roles in urban education: teaching, counseling, administration, or policy studies. As shown in Figure 2.2, the CSU program's conceptual framework - reproduced from http://www.csuohio.edu/coehs/college/model/DoctoralProgramFramework.pdf - defines twelve skill-based urban school leadership competencies each program participant is expected to develop.

Participants completing the program are expected to, "have a broad knowledge of the environmental impact of the urban school and community on learning opportunities"

Figure 2.2: Cleveland State University, Urban Education Ph.D. Conceptual Framework	
Course number and Title: _____ The table below lists the program outcomes for the Ph.D. Program in Urban Education conceptual framework. Your instructor has indicated with a code of E, D, RA, or N how this course prepares you for these outcomes.	
Program outcomes code: E= Explore, D= Develop, RA= Refine/Apply, N= Not a Focus	Code
Knowledge of scientific inquiry: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will possess knowledge and understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methodology and ability to conduct research (Knowledge Base: Research Skills)	
Technology: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will understand and utilize current technology in order to enhance research designed to promote change across all aspects of the urban educational environment (Knowledge Bases: Research Skills, The Urban Perspective)	
Knowledge of the research ethical standards: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will understand and implement the ethical principles regarding the conduct of research in an urban setting (Knowledge Bases: Research Skills, Social Context of Urban Education, The Urban Learner)	
Understanding of the Urban Environment: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will possess knowledge of urban theory, and public policy that drives urban change (Knowledge Bases: The Urban Perspective, The Urban Learner)	
Assessment of policy process: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will acquire an understanding of public policy formation process, and identify areas of resistance to policy reform (Knowledge Base: The Urban Perspective)	
Diversity: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will gain knowledge of the origins and nature of multiculturalism and its contributions to the nature of urban life (Knowledge Base: Social Context of Urban Education)	
Integration of humanities, social sciences, and education issues: The CSU Urban Ph.D. graduate will be able to draw from a rich educational background to implement change in the urban setting (Knowledge Base: Social Context of Urban Education)	
Contextualism: The CSU Urban Ph.D. graduate will understand how environmental context, race, and gender impact an individual's educational opportunities and identity construct (Knowledge Bases: Social Context of Urban Education, The Urban Learner)	
Knowledge of human development over the life span: The CSU Urban Ph.D. graduate will articulate an understanding of inter-individual and intra-individual differences and change in human behavior, adjustment, learning, and development across the life span (Knowledge Bases: Social Context of Urban Education, The Urban Learner)	
Leadership Skills: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will assume a leadership role in the urban community and workplace based on knowledge of leadership concepts and theories (Knowledge Bases: Social Context of Urban Education, Organizational Change and Development)	
Systems Perspective: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will view problem-solving and change from the perspective of the individual, organization, and larger social system (Knowledge Bases: The Urban Perspective, Social Context of Urban Education, Organizational Change and Development)	
An agent of change: The CSU Urban Education Ph.D. graduate will possess knowledge of organizational processes and change strategies (Knowledge Base: Organizational Change and Development)	
SOURCE: Cleveland State University http://www.csuohio.edu/coehs/college/model/DoctoralProgramFramework.pdf	

and "drawing upon his or her knowledge base as a teacher, counselor, or use this administrator…knowledge to create new systems of intervention that "are institutionalized through processes of organizational development" (p.1). The CSU program appears to be focused on enhancing participant's knowledge and understanding of the urban student learner and how children might experience education in an urban learning environment.

Alternative principal preparation programs. In 2004, Rod Paige, the United States Secretary of Education, (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) acknowledged that "entrepreneurial school districts, states, higher education institutions, and others have developed promising programs that draw new talent into leadership roles and provide job embedded preparation and support" (p.5) – all in an attempt to address the critical need for high quality urban school leaders. Paige noted that partnerships consisting of for-profit, nonprofit, philanthropic organizations, universities, and school districts are being formed in a concerted effort to provide alternative leadership preparation and training programs for aspiring urban school principals.

The term alternative preparation program refers to school leadership programs that are not run by a university or college – instead they tend to be partnerships that are facilitated and run by private-sector profit or not-for-profit organizations. The only estimate of alternative preparation programs was in the methodology section of the U.S. Department of Education (2004) report *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership.* While discussing the sample and target population for their research project, the authors explained that they had identified, "60 potential sites" for alternative preparation programs for aspiring principals by using a variety of search terms that included, "alternative leadership preparation; alternative principal certification; alternative

administrative certification; expedited certification; and accelerated certification" (p.8).

In *Review of Research School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* (Davis et al., 2005), Christine DeVita, President of the Wallace Foundation, is quoted on the importance of school leadership preparation and the Wallace foundation's commitment to establishing collaborative partnerships to get the job done. She said, "Better training alone won't solve America's mounting school leadership challenges. Well trained leaders, placed in near-impossible job conditions aren't likely to succeed in improving learning. But if better training isn't the whole answer, it is surely a big part of it" (p. 1).

A key finding of Davis's research is that effective school principal preparation programs should be, "research-based, have curriculum coherence, provide experience in authentic context, use cohort groupings and mentors, and are structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and area schools" (2005, p.3). The U.S. Department of Education (2004) *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* research report provided detailed data and information regarding program objectives, participants, structure, components, and accomplishments of five alternative programs that meet the effective preparation program criteria as suggested by Davis. New Leader for New Schools (2005) is one of the alternative preparation program highlighted in the *Innovations* report.

Key details of the New Leader for New Schools (NLNS) urban school principal preparation program are summarized in Figure 2.3. As shown in the second column of the figure, the NLNS consists of a public and private sector partnership between the Kirkland and Ellis foundation; Broad foundation; New Schools Venture Fund; Boeing; New Profit Inc.; and urban school districts and local universities in five major cities and states: New

Figure 2.3: New Leaders for New Schools - Urban principal preparation program (1of 2)

Program name and focus	Program partners	Participant selection and admission criteria	Number of applicants and program participants	Percent of participants placed following program
NEW LEADERS FOR NEW SCHOOLS New York, N.Y., Chicago, Ill., Washington, D.C., Memphis, Tenn., and San Francisco Bay Area, Calif. Started: 2000 Focus: Recruiting and developing the next generation of outstanding leaders of the nation's urban public schools	Public and private sector partnership of Kirkland and Ellis; Broad foundation; New Schools Venture Fund; Boeing; and New Profit, Inc. with urban school districts and local universities in New York City, Chicago, Washington D.C., Memphis and the San Francisco Bay area	Bachelor's degree; five years professional experience; two years teaching experience; demonstrated leadership Vision of leader: Coaches and inspires every teacher to reach and teach every child Applicant screening: Fourteen complex questions used as an applicant "weeding tool" Two phase interviews: First, a one hour interview with two program staff plus a written case study analysis and response Second, a full day interview	Applicants: (2004) 1,100 Program participants: (2005) 90 (2004) 56 (2003) 52 (2002) 31 (2001) 13 Total = 242 Recruiting objective: Nontraditional candidates from outside of education 2004: Gender 60% female 2004: Ethnicity 60% African American 30% White 7% Hispanic 3% Asian Am.	2001 to 2004: 60% principals and 35% assistant principals . 95% placement rate of program participants – 230 since 2001 Participant is committed to spend minimum of three years in their urban district after program completion

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership,* Washington, D.C.: Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Figure 2.3: New Leaders for New Schools - Urban principal preparation program (cont'd) (2of 2)

Standards-based program curriculum	Program design	Program participants induction	Program cohort	Program school-based practicum
Standards based on 12 essential competencies that reflect research on successful urban school "turnaround" principals All program participants attend four five-day transformational and instructional leadership seminars during the first 12 months of the program Program coaches conduct assessment of participant proficiency in each of the 12 essential competency standards	Certification: Participation of local University provides credentialing required for certification Principal certification based on program completion Data analysis to track, graduate placements; candidates, professional growth and achievement of students in program participants schools On-going evaluation of program and participants used for continuous improvement	Concept of participant's intellectual accountability provides self-reward for learning and continued effort Six-week summer institute at Wharton school of management in Philadelphia facilitates participants networking and bonding. Two years of coaching and mentoring in each participants first new principalship position	Support: Five years of program support On-site coaching from a veteran urban principal Cohort coaches required to attend six-week summer session and four foundation seminars throughout the year Coaches help each cohort member develop individual leadership development plans and portfolios	Full-year urban school residency with a mentor principal Coach support provided for both mentor and mentee at least once each week Internship integrates classroom theory with day-to-day urban school leadership challenges

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership,* Washington, D.C.: Office of Innovation and Improvement.

York City; Chicago; Washington DC; Memphis, Tennessee; and San Francisco Bay area in California. The New Leaders program started in 2000 with a clear objective to, "recruit and develop the next generation of outstanding leaders of the nation's urban public schools" (2005). It is important to note that non-traditional candidates from outside the education profession are actively recruited for participation in the program.

Program curriculum and content. Hess & Kelly (2005) reported a similar experience when they, "set out to examine what candidates are taught in the core courses

that constitute principal preparation and established principal preparation programs" (p.4) After an extensive search Hess reported, "Unfortunately, there exists no systematic information addressing this question" (p.4). In an effort to better understand the content of university educational leadership programs, Hess and Kelly surveyed 56 educational leadership programs and collected at least four 'core' course syllabi from 31 programs - a total of 210 syllabi. Data analysis included a statistical estimation of the relative amount of attention seven major strands of school leadership was receiving in university-based principal preparation courses. Hess reported that the strand labeled, "managing for results received 16%; managing personnel 15%, technical knowledge 30%; external leadership 8%; norms and values 12%; leadership and school culture 6%;managing classroom instruction 11%; other 3%" (p. 17). Hess concluded that "the evidence indicates that [school leadership] preparation has not kept pace with changes in the larger world of schooling, leaving graduates of principal preparation programs, ill-equipped for the challenges and opportunities posed by an era of accountability" (p. 35). And, he continued, "Meaningful reform of principal preparation programs must retool the content so that it matches the challenges confronting principals in 21st-century schooling" (p.38).

Building on research by Bradley Portin (2000), Lashway (2003a) suggests that preparation programs should teach aspiring principals how to, "diagnose and act on a school's needs" and the importance of deciding how they can provide, distribute, or share leadership across, "seven domains of leadership: instructional; cultural; managerial; HR; strategic; external development; and micro-political" (p.7).

The Southern Regional Education Board (2005) has taken the initiative to design and make available to universities and school organizations, 14 Leadership Curriculum Modules that could be used in the curriculum of aspiring principal preparation programs.

The modules, listed on the second page of the report, include:

- Using data to lead change
- Standards-based curriculum development
- Assessment and instruction
- Standards-driven student work
- Creating a school culture of high expectations
- Results-based professional development
- Literacy leadership
- Numeracy leadership
- Leading change
- Creating a personalized learning environment
- Organizing the learning environment
- Building and leading effective teams
- Communicating effectively in a high-performing school and
- Coaching for school improvement

SREB indicates the modules are being used in preparation programs at "Western Kentucky University, University of Rhode Island, East Tennessee State University and other universities…to redesign their leadership preparation programs" (p.2). In addition, "many states, including Alabama, Florida and Louisiana are using the modules statewide, while a number of school districts such as Charleston, South Carolina and Ringgold and Macon, Georgia, are turning around their low performing schools by using strategies recommended in the modules" (p.2).

Program Evaluation and research

Three approaches to principal preparation programs evaluation and research appear in the research literature: (1) research focused on understanding how external forces effect principal preparation programs; (2) research investigating program structure and components; and (3) research attempting to evaluate the effect program graduates have on school improvement and student academic achievement. Figure 2.4 outlines the three approaches to program evaluation and research.

Educational reform movements.

External forces research focuses on understanding and evaluating the effect

Figure 2.4: Three categories of principal preparation program evaluation and research

Category one: Program external forces

- Educational reform movements
- State licensure and certification
- Educational policy
- Program competition
- Stakeholder pressures

Category two: Program structure and components

Program structure	Program components
Partnership arrangements	Faculty selection, training and support
Program vision	Participant recruitment
Program theory-of-action	Summer residency
School context – urban, suburban or rural	Participant selection and admission
Curriculum design and content: e.g., problem based learning	Participant evaluation
Program certification	Participant reflection and assessment
Financial resources and support	Curriculum content and delivery
Single or multiple year	e-learning, practicum, internship, etc.
Research-based training	Program standards
	Participant competency requirements
	Mentors
	Mentorship agreements
	Professional development for aspiring, new and experienced principals
	Cohort learning groups
	Program self-assessment and monitoring
	Participant performance evaluation, assessment and feedback
	New principal induction period of 2-3 years
	New principal on-going support
	Participant's salary

Category three: Program graduates effect on student academic achievement

- Principal leadership effects
- School improvement and student academic achievement.

"outside" forces - educational reform movements; educational policy; state certification requirements; program competition; or pressure from key stakeholders to modify or

improve the program - may have on a principal preparation program (see, for example, Center on Education Policy, 2005; Education Commission of the States, (2005); Maxey, (1999); Murphy, 1991; National Center for Education Information, (2003); US Department of Education, 2004; and Young, Mountford and Crow, (2005)).

In the early 1980's, educational reform movements focused on improving educational systems and leadership preparation programs received a significant boost after the release of the A Nation at Risk report in 1983. Murphy (1991) observed that following the report's release, "efforts to improve education has been occurring at an unbroken pace for nearly a decade" (p.49). In 1988, Murphy conducted research to evaluate the impact of school reform movements on university-based school administration and leadership preparation programs. For example, survey responses Murphy received from, "74 chairpersons of Department of Educational Leadership" provided good insights into the amount of change that had or had not occurred in university-based preparation programs. Programmatic improvements reported by survey respondents included "stiffening entrance requirements, especially test scores; increased attention to recruiting women and minorities; reduced reliance on student self-selection into the program; establishing closer working relationships with school districts and practitioners who became partners in the identification and selection of students; greater weight on applicant's classroom teaching experience; and more stress on participants demonstrated leadership in instructional areas"(p.52). Only modest improvement was reported by respondents in the recruitment and selection of program participants.

Murphy observed that the program modifications and improvements reported were consistent with recommended program changes outlined in, "two reports at the forefront of reform in preparation programs -- the 1987 National Commission on

Excellence in Educational Administration's (NCEEA) report *Leaders for America's schools* and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) report released in 1989" (p.53).

Department chair survey responses also indicated that new preparation courses being added, "tended to be idiosyncratic"- one program might emphasize policy analysis or computers, while another might prioritize school planning. For example, universities reported adding courses or content on instructional leadership, managing school change, and implementing school improvement. Moderate change was also reported in program clinical components. Some departments established "new field based requirements" while others, Murphy noted, "added field-based requirements to specific certification or degree areas (e.g., the EdS) where they [field-based requirements] previously had not been required" (p.54).

Murphy argues that school reform movements "had only a modest overall effect on preparation programs" and on "the way they prepared school administrators" (p.51). And, he conjectured, key reasons for the lack of significant reform were, (1) "a time lag between environmental pressure and internal responses" (2) "pressure for improving preparation programs was coming from outside versus inside the Academy" (3) "these [preparation] programs have historically been fairly well buffered from external interference" and (4) insufficient motivation and incentive for universities to change because of, "a wide-spread perception among professors that there were few problems in their field" (p.52). It is important to note that respondents to Murphy's survey said that recruitment and selection of minority candidates was a high priority for program improvement. Murphy concluded that external pressures for reform had had only modest impact on "the curriculum, and the quality of clinical experiences programs offered" and

equally important, "it is hard to imagine how we will develop the needed number of minority school administrators absent more vigorous attention to equity issues in recruiting and selecting students for our preparation programs" (p.53).

State licensure and certification. State certification requirements and school district criteria for the principalship can also exert significant external influence on preparation program curriculum, content and program participants exit skill requirements. For example, two internet sites that provide certification prerequisites and licensure requirements for school principal or superintendent positions in each of the 50 states: (1) http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=878&map=0 the Education Commission of the States (ECS) web site and (2) the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) http://ncei.com/2003_Principals_Superintendents/index.htm. While both sites provide similar information, the NCEI site provides additional information on candidate supply and demand information. The following information is an example of principal licensure, certification and preparation information available on the NCEI website:

> OHIO: SUPPLY/DEMAND CONSIDERATIONS - Ohio is experiencing shortages of principals. State officials say that there is an oversupply of people who earn a master's degree in educational administration, but who never intend to use the credential to become a school principal. State officials say that this overage is a contributing factor to the shortage of administrators in the state. Ohio should have a sufficient administrator pool, but they don't want to serve. Teachers get the administrator degree to qualify for higher teacher pay, and some of them would actually take a cut in pay if they opted to become school administrators. In addition, they often don't want the time commitment required of a principal, and some school districts tie administrators' pay to their performance on proficiency tests. In addition, the state has also identified an equity and distribution issue among school administrators by gender and race.
>
> REGULAR PATH PRINCIPAL - Provisional Principal License Prerequisites: A candidate for the Entry Year Program for Principals must:
> • Have 2 years of successful teaching experience under a Professional Teacher License at the level for which the Principal License is sought;
> • Have a master's degree;
> • Complete an approved college or university principal preparation program;
> • Be recommended by the dean or head of teacher education at a college or university approved to prepare principals; and
> • Successfully complete an examination prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Research by Young 2002; Levine 2005; and Kottkamp & Orr, 2005 are prime examples

of research attempting to evaluate and recommend improvements for the curriculum, content and outcome objectives of principal training and preparation programs provided by universities or school districts.

Program structure and components.

In *Who is Framing the National Understanding of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice?* Michelle Young (2002), Executive Director of UCEA, expressed strong support for a two-pronged approach to examining the structure and components of principal preparation programs: (1) conducting best practice inventory of existing preparation programs and (2) modifying and improving the structure of principal preparation programs. Referring to preparation program research studies conducted by researchers like Murphy and Louis, (1999), Young comments that:

> A thorough review of the literature reveals that reform is needed in six major areas: (1) recruitment and selection; (2) program content; (3) delivery methods; (4) program standards; (5) faculty professional development; and (6) institutional support. Additionally, because we know little about the effectiveness of the majority of university educational leadership preparation programs, we have no basis for a response to critics who argue that leadership training should be taken out of universities (p.11).

Program partnership arrangements. While university leadership programs may or may not be structured to operate in a partnership arrangement, each of the alternative principal preparation programs previously mentioned in this paper, for example, the New Leaders for New Schools program, involve some form of collaboration or formal structured partnership between one or more school districts, universities, state organizations, nonprofit, or for-profit organizations (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In *Fixing Urban School Systems* (Grantmakers for Education, 2003) philanthropic, nonprofit and for-profit organizations are encouraged to thoughtfully evaluate and consider the potential risks and rewards of partnering with urban school

districts to provide leadership preparation training for aspiring urban school principals. The report advises, for example:

> While the work of helping urban systems improve is routinely messy and unpredictable, it is still worthwhile. But grant-makers must become more explicit up-front about the kind of partnership they want with school boards and administrators, the goals they want to pursue, the changes they expect to see, how their investments will help, and the results they expect to get (p.1).

The report cautions that organizations establishing partnership programs with urban school districts will likely face a unique set of challenges because, "urban schools are part governmental agency and part community project" (Grantmakers for Education, 2003). Potential partners are warned that political challenges will likely include, "vested interest groups, school board election politics, and the demands of parents and community members." The report notes that Stanford University professor James Marsh once referred to urban school systems as "organized anarchies" where people come and go "in unpredictable patterns" and, he continued, "goals are often unclear and stated in high-minded vague generalities" and school capacity and technologies required for change "is weak or unpervasive at best" (p.3). The report advises partners to establish a "plausible strategy" for school improvement, constantly monitor for expected results, and not depend on a "superman" school administrator or district superintendent, for the success or continuation of the school improvement project and partnership (p.4).

Program components. Research conducted by Arthur Levine (2005), president of Teachers College, Columbia University was focused on examining the components and overall framework of, he said, "the programs themselves and their capacity to educate principals and superintendents in the skills and knowledge necessary to lead today's schools and school systems." Entitled *Educating School Leaders,* Levine's research included developing and analyzing case studies of 25 college and university departments

of education, and reviewing responses to, "a national survey of deans, chairs, and directors of education schools; education school faculty members; education school alumni and school principals" (p.7). Levine's survey collected data regarding nine structural components of university and college of education leadership programs:

1. Program's purpose, goals, and definitions of success;
2. Curricular coherence and ability to teach school leadership, knowledge and skills;
3. Curricular balance of theory and practice;
4. Faculty composition of scholars and practitioners;
5. Admissions criteria;
6. Graduation standards and degrees awarded;
7. Is education research high-quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and policymakers?
8. Are finances adequate to support the program and?
9. Is there continuing program self-assessment and performance improvement?

Levine concluded that, "collectively, the field of educational administration is not successful." Commenting on the survey results, Levine noted that, "there were programs that were successful in meeting one or more of the criteria" (p. 48), however, Levine is adamant that university-based leadership preparation programs are not preparing school leaders for the complex school environments and difficult challenges they will face – today and in the future. He said:

> In a rapidly changing environment, principals and superintendents no longer serve primarily as supervisors. They are being called on to lead the redesign of their schools and school systems; lead their schools in rethinking goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space; recruit and retain top staff members; educate newcomers and veterans; ensure professional development for teachers and administrators; prepare parents and students for new realities...school improvement; create a sense of community; and build morale in a time of transformation. Few of today's 250,000 school leaders are prepared to carry out this agenda. Neither they nor the programs that prepared them should be faulted for this. Put simply, they were appointed to and educated for jobs that do not exist any longer (p.12).

Program self-assessment and monitoring. In 2003, a research taskforce on educational leadership preparation was, "developed to make widely available the conceptual and research base on leadership education" (UCEA, AERA, & NCPEA, 2005). The joint-taskforce was sponsored by the University Council for Educational

Administration (UCEA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA) - Division A, AERA Teaching in Educational Administration Sig., and the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA). Kottkamp and Orr (2005) make the point that, "Leadership preparation programs, despite their prevalence (over 500 nationwide) and importance to school improvement, have rarely been evaluated in a systematic and comparative manner, nor have their long-range impact's been measured" (p.1).

The two co-chairs of the taskforce, Robert Kottkamp, Hofstra University and Margaret Terry Orr from Teachers College (Kottkamp & Orr, 2005), say the task force has three primary objectives: First, conduct comparative evaluations of leadership preparation programs' impact on students served, the schools their graduates lead and the schools' educational outcomes. Second, develop research designs, methods and instruments that can be replicated and refined through study in multiple institutions and settings to facilitate on-going knowledge development of leadership preparation - nationally and internationally. And third, engage the leadership preparation field more broadly in the individual and comparative study of their effectiveness and impact. According to Kottkamp, members of the task force have identified ten discrete "domains of research" and "agreed on four evaluation studies" (Kottkamp & Orr, 2005, p.2-3). The UCEA web site http://ucea.org/ provided helpful detail on research activity within each research domain.

Program graduates

A third category of research attempts to understand and evaluate the leadership effect of preparation program graduates and the academic achievement of students that attend their schools (Gates, Kallio, & Young., 2001; P. Hallinger & Leithwood, 1994;

Heck, 1992; K. Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998; Mitchell, 1990; Nunley, 2003; Parra & Daresh, 1997; Reynolds, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Waters et al., 2003). For example, the U.S. Department of Education (2004) research report indicates that each of the five alternative urban principal preparation programs they investigated are committed to collecting and analyzing three to five years of student test data in urban schools where program graduates become principals. The data and analysis will help program designers and developers (1) identify opportunities for program improvement and (2) assess the leadership effect of principal preparation program graduates on student achievement.

In *Distributed Leadership and Student Engagement in School,* Leithwood and Jantzi (1998) argue that, "evidence suggests teacher and principal leadership effects are modest, largely indirect, and account for comparable amounts of variation in student engagement" (p. 3). Leithwood notes that Ogawa and Hart reported in 1985 that, "principal leadership explained 2 - 8% of the variation in student performance" (p.26). Leithwood concluded that, "teacher leadership effects far outweigh principal leadership effects before taking into account the moderating effects of family educational culture" (p.26). And, he continues, evidence from this study is similar to Heller and Firestone's 1995 conclusion that "principal leadership does not stand out as a critical part of the change process" (p.27).

In their educational research report entitled *Balanced Leadership,* Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) claim to have identified 21 principal leadership responsibilities and actions that can directly effect school improvement and student achievement. Their meta-analysis of 70 studies included, "an exhaustive review of leadership literature - including institutional theory, systems theory, organizational learning theory, transition theory,

change theory, and diffusion theory - to help school leaders understand how to effectively carry out the 21 key leadership responsibilities identified" (p.3). A key research finding is, "a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement...an average effect size (expressed as a correlation) between leadership and student achievement is .25" (p.3).

The 21 principal leadership responsibilities and activities identified in *Balanced Leadership* are: culture; order; discipline; resources; curriculum, instruction and assessment; focus; knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment; visibility; contingent rewards; communication; outreach; teacher input; affirmation; relationship; change agent; optimizer; ideals and beliefs; monitors and evaluates; flexibility; situational awareness; and intellectual stimulation" (p.4). Waters asserts that each of these leadership actions and responsibilities may have a positive or negative impact on student achievement (p.5). After reviewing the report it was not clear to me how, or to what extent, urban schools, urban school principals, or urban school students were represented in the 70 studies included in the meta-analysis.

There appears to be little agreement or consensus among researchers on the relationship, impact, or effect principal leadership has on urban student academic achievement. Clearly, this presents both an opportunity and challenge for persons attempting to design and offer an urban school leadership preparation program. A major challenge is that key program stakeholders will likely expect the program to be "research-based" when, in fact, the research knowledge base relating to principal leadership effect on student achievement and school improvement contains a wide range of research-based findings and conclusions.

Salient Features of Urban Principal Preparation Programs

In the research literature, training and preparation programs for urban principals are portrayed as having three common features and characteristics. First, urban school leadership preparation programs make positive versus deficit or negative assumptions about urban children's capacity and ability to learn. Second, urban preparation programs help participants understand the urban setting and prepare them for the difficult political, social, economic and instructional leadership issues and challenges they will face. And third, urban programs are focused on developing principals for urban K-12 school leadership - versus suburban or rural. An excellent example are the five alternative preparation programs discussed in *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Each program was specifically designed to recruit, train and prepare participants to serve as urban school principals.

Positive assumptions about urban children. The Cleveland State University (CSU) urban Ph.D. program discussed earlier in this paper is a good example of a university-based urban school leadership program that places the concept of urban children as "urban learners" at the core of their program activities. One of the CSU program administrators emphasized that the number one program priority is to help PhD program participants, "deepen their knowledge and understanding of the urban learner" (Cleveland State University, 2003).

Jean Baker (2004), a professor in the Michigan State University, College of Education, believes urban children will be better served when their teachers and principal have a positive versus negative perception of the urban students attending their school. The Urban Learner Framework (ULF) is framed by four conceptual themes that, Baker argues, can help school leaders develop, "a new vision of the urban learner as culturally diverse, capable, motivated, and resilient." She explained:

> This view represents a major paradigm shift in research and theories of intelligence, learning, and instruction that could lead to a new order of results for urban learners. This new view challenges former sweeping generalizations of urban learners as deprived, underachieving, unmotivated, and at risk. It suggests that urban educators build on the strengths of the urban learner by embracing change that utilizes research on cultural diversity and learning, unrecognized ability and underdeveloped potential, enhancing ability development through motivation and effort, and resilience. The ULF is grounded in the belief that focused educational change that gives special attention to urban leaner issues can heighten opportunities for students to achieve academic success and life-long productivity.
>
> - Theme 1: Cultural Diversity and Learning - seeing, understanding, valuing, and using the knowledge students acquire from their daily home and community experiences in a way that builds on their strengths and weaves this essential information into instructional activities in the formal curriculum.
>
> - Theme 2: Unrecognized abilities and underdeveloped potential - recognizing the multiple abilities that students possess and using diverse approaches to connect to students' musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence
>
> - Theme 3: Enhancing ability development through motivation and effort - creating optimal learning experiences by connecting to issues, events, and activities that peak student' interests; using student errors as opportunities to learn; and promoting the use of problem-solving activities and project-focused tasks.
>
> - Theme 4: Resilience - having a classroom environment based on high expectations for all students that provides caring, challenging, and meaningful experiences; serves as a healthy response to risk situations which may occur outside of school; and bolsters the students' own coping abilities (Baker, 2004).

Urban school issues and challenges. In *Accountability in City Schools*

Macpherson (1998) argues that administrators of schools located in urban areas face a complex and diverse set of political, social, and economic challenges they must be prepared to address. To emphasize his point Macpherson, borrowed the following quote from *Safe Schools: Policies and Practices* by Rossman and Morley (1996):

> Citizens often recognize that schools are microcosms of society, reflecting the larger communities in which they are located.... Nevertheless, the public expects schools will be somehow more exemplary than other social institutions. Thus schools are expected to not only ensure students academic achievement, but also impart socially appropriate values, attitudes, and behavior. In addition, Americans, and members of many other societies as well, expect that schools will function as safe havens -- protecting youth and inculcating them against the adverse conditions of the larger environment, such as poverty and crime (Macpherson, 1998, pp.395-396).

Urban school principals must be prepared to provide leadership necessary and sufficient to address a myriad of internal and external issues that affect their school.

Internal issues may be related to school culture, building operations, teacher quality and experience levels, inadequate student health-care, growing special-education population, low graduation rates, and sustained improvement in student achievement. External challenges will likely include attempting to minimize or offset the hazardous effects of toxic neighborhoods and an urban community with high rates of crime, domestic violence, generational poverty, poor housing conditions, high unemployment, and inadequate health care.

Developing principals for urban K-12 school leadership. Fifteen distinguishing features of five alternative urban principal preparation programs discussed in *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) are summarized in Figure 2.5. Common features across the five programs are: structured and formalized partnerships; multi-year program duration; vision of the urban principalship; program design and development based on a clear vision; performance standards and assessments for school leaders; candidate selection and screening criteria; cohort learning groups; authentic hands-on experience and exposure to principal job responsibilities and urban school leadership; frequent participant reflection; and monitoring and assessment of participant's performance and success – both before and after completing the program (p.29).

The importance of urban principal training and preparation programs was voiced by (Carlin, 1992) who, like many other educational researchers, believes a critical requirement for urban school reform and sustained academic improvement are school principals who have been well trained and prepared to provide building level educational

Figure 2.5: Common features of five urban school leadership preparation programs

1. Urban school focus: Program focused on preparing "quality" principals for urban school leadership. 2. Summer workshops /seminars: Required and critical component of the new principal induction process. 3. Problem based learning approach: Program includes a mix of case study, scenario, or action research. 4. Principal certification or preparation: Program completion meets State's criteria for school administrator certification or recertification. 5. Curriculum design and content: Curriculum conceptual framework focuses on the urban learner, urban school settings, and organizational change. 6. Partnerships and financing: Initial base of support including partnerships with key stakeholders and funders to finance planning, development, and early implementation "start-up" costs. 7. Multiyear program: Program developers make a commitment to developing, establishing, and implementing the program a minimum of three to five years. 8. Research-based program: Research-based vision of what and how an effective principal leads instructional improvement and student achievement gains.	9. Program vision: Focused theory of action about program development and instructional design based on a clear program vision. 10. School leadership performance standards and outcome assessments: Aligned with the vision and theory of action. 11. Candidate selection criteria and screening process: Reflects the vision and capability of the program. 12. Participant cohort learning groups: Structuring participant groups into continuing cohorts that frequently meet to discuss what they are experiencing and learning about the principal's job. 13. Authentic learning: Experiences that incorporate on-the-job and practical realities of the principal's work. 14. Reflection and assessment: Frequent structured opportunities for participants to do personal reflection and performance assessment. 15. Monitoring and assessment: Structured program monitoring and assessment feedback of participants' performance in the program, and success on the job after the program.

Source: U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership,* (p. 29).

leadership (Elmore, 2000; Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003; P. Hallinger, 1992; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; J. Murphy & Schwarz, 2000; Osterman & et al., 1993; B. Portin, 2004; Reves, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2000; Thomson, 1993; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wanzare & Da Costa, 2001; Waters et al., 2003; Wolcott, 1973; Michelle D. Young et al., 2005; Yukl,

1982). In *The Principal's Role in Urban School Reform* Carlin (1992) emphasizes the importance of urban school principals being prepared to provide building level leadership:

> There is one area of reform, however, that almost all reformers agree on as needing immediate attention. That area is leadership, especially at the school building level....Reformed education requires principals with vision who have the opportunity to communicate and infuse it....The role of the principal receives special attention because it offers the single most immediate route to school reform. If that role can change, if it can be strengthened and its incumbent held accountable, what marvels may be worked in the improvement of each school building (p.46).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Approach

Marshall and Rossman (1999) believe the selection of a particular research approach can help the researcher select an appropriate method for data collection and analysis -depending on the assumptions and objectives of the research (p.105). My research objective is to understand, from the perspective of nine urban school principals, "What it means to be principal of an urban school with a majority African American student population." Based on this objective, I decided that a phenomenological research approach was appropriate for this study.

Four philosophical underpinnings posited by Creswell (1998) helped me frame, structure and implement this research project. First, I focused on listening and learning from the "lived experiences" of my study participants. Second, I did not challenge or pass judgment on participants' statements regarding how they perceived or experienced their training and preparation for urban school principalship. Third, I understood that my participants' perception of their preparation for school leadership would be based on their conscious awareness of the preparation process itself. And fourth, understanding that each participant's consciousness of the reality of their school leadership training, experiences and preparation was perceived based on the meaning each participant attributed to their set of preparation experiences.

Using these four precepts as a methodological frame, I was able to develop and narrate, in Chapter 5 of this paper, the meaning this group of nine urban school principals ascribed to their preparation for urban school leadership.

Participant selection

Patton (2002) advises that, "When a person, group, organization, or country is the unit of analysis qualitative methods involve observation and description focused directly on the unit" (p.228). Continuing, Patton argues that, "the key issue in selecting the unit of analysis is to decide what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study" (p. 229). Following Patton's advice, for this research project the urban school principal is my unit of analysis.

After receiving university approval to conduct my research, I met with a district executive in an urban school district in Michigan who agreed to invite nine school principals and the district's director of leadership training to participate in my research. The nine school principals that agreed to participate in this research project all report to the same director. A copy of the voluntary consent form and confidentiality agreement each participant signed is shown as Figure 3.0 in the appendix.

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to help ensure their confidentiality. For example, the alias name for the district director of training is Francis. Her 30 year work history in this urban district includes 11 years as an elementary school special education teacher; 3 years as an elementary school assistant principal; 13 years as a K-8 elementary school principal and 3 years in her current role as district director of training. Francis is responsible for providing leadership training programs for teachers who may want to become assistant principals and assistant principals who aspire to become school principals.

Table 3.0 provides a summary of the alias names, grade levels and private and public sector work history of the nine urban school principals. As shown, three principals are male and six are female. All are African-American and school grade level

responsibility is mixed: one principal is K-5 elementary; three are K-8 elementary; two are 6-8 middle school; and three are grades 9-12 high school. This mix of participant grade level responsibility helped illuminate grade level differences in school culture, building operations, administrative procedures, instructional leadership challenges, and school or student issues created or exacerbated by the urban school setting.

In column five of Table 3.0 we see that the work experience of the nine principals ranges from 14 to 40 years of total service in urban education. Classroom teaching or school staff experience of the nine principals ranged from 10 to 18 years; district staff

Table 3.0: Participant's career history in private sector and urban education as of June 2006

Participant alias name	School grade level	Years working in private sector	Urban education							
			Year started	Total years in urban education	Teacher or school staff	District staff	Curriculum leader or Dean of students	Assistant principal	Principal	Years before been selected principal
Male										
Robert	K-8 elementary		1966	40	11	20		2	7	33
Daniel	6-8 middle school		1972	34	18	13*		2	1	33
George	9-12 high school	1	1976	29	16		1**	9	3	26
Female										
Ruby	K-5 elementary		1980	26	13	5		4	4	22
Mary	K-8 elementary		1970	36	16			4	16	20
Paula	K-8 elementary		1973	33	13	4		3	13	20
Kathy	6-8 middle school		1986	20	14			2	4	16
Henrietta	9-12 high school	15	1990	14	10	2		1	1	13
Marietta	9-12 high school		1968	38	15			15	8	30
Average:				30	14			4.6	6	24

Note: All data supplied by participants
* Served 10 years as assistant superintendent and 3 years as district superintendent in a smaller urban school district.
** Dean of students

from 2 to 20 years; and 2 to 15 years of experience serving as curriculum leader or

assistant principal. Column ten shows that the nine principals have been in their job an average of 6 years and, as shown in column eleven, had worked in urban education an average of 24 years before being selected for the principalship.

Table 3.1 shows student populations ranging from 350 students in one of the four elementary schools to 1000 students in one of the three high schools. In seven of the nine schools over 90% of the students are African-Americans, while the two remaining schools have a 50% or 55% African-American student population. The percentage of all students in each school receiving free or reduced lunch ranged from 63% to 94%. Additional descriptive data and school related information is included in Chapter 4 in the form of a brief case study of each of the nine principals.

The rich diversity of my participant's urban education work experiences, grade level responsibilities and school building challenges helped me collect a large quantity of qualitative data to analyze and digest.

Data Collection

Data collection activities included conducting one focus group, eleven participant interviews, and reviewing multiple documents provided by participants. Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that focus groups provide participants the opportunity to, "listen to others opinions and understanding in order to form their own "(p.114). This notion fully supported the phenomenological intent and objective of this study - to understand the individual and collective perceptions, essential structure and meaning of the lived experiences of the individual participant and the group. During May of 2006, I conducted a 90-minute focus group with six of the nine school principals. During the focus group

Table 3.1: Participant's estimates of student population and school staff

Participant alias name	School grade level	Student population			School staff						
		Total students	% free or reduced lunch	% African-American	Total	Regular education teacher	Ratio of students to regular education teacher	Special education teacher and aides	Other teachers	Staff support personnel	School administrators
Elementary school											
Ruby	K-5	482	94%	50%	44	18 (41%)	22:1	0	4 (9%)	21 (49%)	1 (2%)
Robert	K-8	720	87%	95%	(Information not available)						
Mary	K-8	587	90%	90%	984	21 (22%)	28:1	16 (17%)	4 (4%)	50 (53%)	3 (3%)
Paula	K-8	350	84%	99%	54	20 (37%)	18: 1	7 (13%)	4 (7%)	21 (39%)	2 (4%)
Middle school											
Daniel	6-8	652	81%	100%	104	34 (33%)	19: 1	26 (25%)	6 (6%)	32 (31%)	6 (6%)
Kathy	6-8	480	80%	98%	71	19 (27%)	25: 1	13 (18%)	2 (3%)	34 (48%)	3 (4%)
High school											
George	9-12	1000	75%	99%	136	60 (44%)	17: 1	10 (7%)	9 (7%)	47 (35%)	10 (7%)
Henrietta	9-12	700	Not avail.	98%	79	33 (42%)	21: 1	5 (6%)	6 (8%)	30 (38%)	5 (6%)
Marietta	9-12	850	63%	55%	107	55 (51%)	16: 1	10 (9%)	5 (5%)	30 (28%)	7 (7%)

Notes: Estimates provided by participants

participants responded to the following six focus group questions.

- Q1: What does it mean to be the instructional leader of an urban school?
- Q2: How, when, and where were you trained for school principalship?
- Q3: What school procedures, functions, or activities require your direct involvement or leadership as an urban school principal?

- Q4: Are there issues and challenges that you believe are unique to urban public school principals? Please describe.
- Q5: What does it mean for a principal to be "adequately" prepared for urban school leadership?
- Q6: How would you characterize your training, experience, and preparation for urban school leadership?

Before participants responded to question number three, I showed each participant a copy of Table 3.2 and asked the participant(s) to identify the top three instructional and top three administrative activities that require their direct involvement and leadership in their respective schools. During May and June of 2006, I met with each of the nine school principals at their respective school building and conducted a 60-minute one-on-one interview using the open-ended structured interview guide (Patton, 2002)shown as Appendix C in the Appendix. The six focus group questions were included as questions during interviews with the three principals who could not attend the focus group session.

During June of 2006, I also conducted two separate 90 minute interviews with Francis, the district director of training. A copy of the district director interview guide is included as Appendix B in the appendix. I interviewed Francis to understand (1) the districts approach to principal selection, training and preparation and (2) how Francis perceived the issues, challenges, roles and responsibilities of school principals working in this urban school district. The focus group and interviews with all participants were audio-taped and transcribed for my review and analysis.

During each interview participants gave me copies of documents and artifacts relevant to their school leadership training, experience and preparation. Reviewing these documents (1) provided important insights into the districts approach to principal preparation, (2) served to triangulate focus group and interview data and (3) helped me

Table 3.2: What school procedures, functions, or activities require your involvement or leadership as an urban school principal?		
Instructional leadership	Administrative leadership	
1. Translation of test and assessment data into effective instructional strategies (4)	1. Student discipline (5)	22. Attending school sports events
2. Assessment of stakeholder wants, needs, and demands.	2. Parent concerns (5)	23. School assemblies
3. Research based curriculum development and instructional delivery (3)	3. Student registration	24. Student registration
4. School choice communication and student transportation	4. Building maintenance and appearance	25. Lunchroom monitoring (1)
5. Staff standards, certification and evaluation (1)	5. Paperwork and reports (3)	26. Building security and safety (1)
6. Staff professional development	6. District meeting	27. Legal issues
7. Staff morale (4)	7. Returning telephone calls	28. Communicating with family social services agencies (1)
8. School improvement plan(s) development and implementation (3)	8. Fire drills	29. Student records management
9. Funding stream allocation and reporting	9. Teacher hiring (1)	30. Crisis planning, training, and management
10. Stakeholder communications strategy, plan, content	10. Substitute teachers	31. School vision, strategic direction, and goal setting (4)
11. Students and staff safety (6)	11. Budget development and control (2)	32. School improvement teams (1)
12. Parent and community involvement (2)	12. Staff professional development (1)	33. Administrative technology and support
13. NCA accreditation	13. School committees	34. Leadership team meetings
14. Student recognition	14. Student attendance (1)	35. Staff meetings
15. Special education	15. Staff assignments and scheduling	36. Food and food services
16. Textbook reviews	16. Meeting with parents	37. Student transportation
17. Student graduation	17. Parking concerns	38. Cash management and security
18. Bilingual education	18. Staff communication	39. Union interactions
19. Classroom technology	19. Student dress code	40. Communication with local television, newspaper and radio reporters
20. Library resources	20. Attend school band concerts	41. Other administrative leadership components?
21. Student counseling and support services (1)	21. Attending community events	
22. Principal personal professional development (1)		
23.Individual student academic needs (1)		
Note: (x) = Number in parentheses is the number of x of 9 participants selecting this item.		

better understand the school leadership training and preparation experiences of each

participant.

Analytical framework

Four categories of research helped me frame, analyze and better understand the qualitative data I collected regarding the training and preparation of the nine urban school principals participating in this research study. The four research categories are:

- Urban principal role, responsibility and approach to leadership
- Urban children attending school in toxic urban settings
- Structure, curriculum, and content of urban principal preparation programs
- Urban school effectiveness

The first category of research focused on understanding or recommending an appropriate leadership role, responsibility or approach for an urban school principal. Researchers in this category discussed a myriad of findings and espoused theories related to instructional leadership, leading change, critical leadership, servant leadership, critical race leadership, moral leadership or the effects of school principal leadership on student achievement (Bogotch, Miron, & Joseph Murphy Jr., 1998; Dantley, 1990; Gooden, 2002; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Tate, 1997; Waters et al., 2003). For example, critical race theory, espoused by William Tate (1997) provides an ideological construct for considering what might constitute appropriate leadership training, experience and preparation for an aspiring urban school leader. Tate offers the concept of "raced people" - people who have faced discrimination because of race and/or class and been historically oppressed psychologically, physically, educationally, or economically. Building on Tate's notion, (Gooden, 2002) argues that because raced people, "have been omitted from the conversation in the construction of models for leadership" we should reconsider the

appropriateness and applicability of commonly accepted theories of leadership for the urban school environment. Employing raced people as an analytical lens during data analysis helped me better understand my participant's experiences with issues of race or racism during their training and preparation for urban school principalship.

The second category of research focused on the notion of urban children living in toxic neighborhoods situated in urban settings that may have a negative affect on the child's health, psychology, since of self worth, value for education, safety, or ability to focus on learning (Baker, 2004; Cotton, 1991; Delpit, 1995; Kozol, 1991, 1996; G. Orfield, Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C., 2004; Payne, 2005; Rossman & Morley, 1996; Schlechty, 2002).

A third category of research helped me analyze and interpret the themes that emerged regarding the organization, structure, process flow, components, curriculum, content or outcomes of participants leadership training and preparation programs (Bruss, 1986; Cleveland State University, 2003; Levine, 2005; J. Murphy, 1998; Parra & Daresh, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Weick, 1976; Michelle D Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton., 2005; Michelle D. Young et al., 2005). The research theory of loosely coupled systems posited by Weick (1976) is an example of research that provided a lens that helped me examine the organizational process and procedural connection between the skill and knowledge-based outcomes of principal training and the leadership skills criteria established by the five person selection committee that decides which aspiring principal is selected to be school principal.

The fourth category of research used to illuminate and scrutinize my data centered on the notion of urban school effectiveness, accountability, school reform, leading change, NCLB, principal leadership effects, and building strong school, family and

community partnerships (Boysen, 1992; Chrispeels, 2002; Edmonds, 1979; Epstein, 2001; Forsyth, 1993; Fullan, 2001; Greiner, Bennigson, & Poulfelt, 2005; Kozol, 1991; Reynold J. S. Macpherson, 1998; Payne, 2005; Taylor, 2002). Citing research by Richard Elmore, Fullan (2001) argues that, "changing the way school principals are recruited, supported, and developed" is necessary to prepare school principals for their role and responsibility of change leadership (p.146).

Four separate research lens equipped me with an eclectic mix of theories, arguments and perspectives that helped me analyze and begin to understand the data I collected during this project. Creswell (1998) cautions that researchers engaged in phenomenological research must not allow past experiences and current perceptions to infiltrate and contaminate data collection, analysis or research conclusions. Advancing the notion of "epoche" he urges the researcher to "bracket" preconceived ideas about the phenomena and focus instead on listening to the voices of study participants – with the intent of understanding how they have constructed meaning from their exposure and experiences with the research topic under investigation (p.54). Following Creswell's suggestion, I listened closely to each of my ten participants and resisted the temptation to prejudge, discount, or devalue participant's statements that did not fit with my understanding, preconceptions or prejudices regarding urban principal preparation. Instead, I focused, as Creswell advised, on examining or "gazing" at the data from my participant's perspective, while consciously "bracketing" my analysis from my prior experiences, biases, and preconceptions of leadership preparation.

Data Analysis

A pleasant but unexpected result of verbatim transcription of the audiotape recordings of the 90 minute focus group session and eleven one hour interviews was an

enormous quantity of qualitative data. Developing individual case studies for each of the nine urban school principals proved to be an effective way to segment and begin to make sense of this large quantity of data. More importantly, the structured protocol I used to frame focus group and interview questions helped me conduct a cross case analysis and create the nine participant case studies presented in Chapter 4 and, in the process, uncover multiple, "patterns and theme that cut across individual experiences" (Patton, 2002, p.57). The themes and findings that emerged from the nine case studies are summarized and discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Nine urban school principal case studies

The objective of this research is to understand, "What it means for a principal to be prepared to be a principal in an urban school with a majority African-American student population." from the perspective of nine urban school principals in Michigan. In this chapter, findings generated from the data that was collected from one focus group and from open-ended structured interviews with nine principals are presented in the form of one case study for each principal - four elementary school principals, two middle school principals, and three high school principals. During each interview session, participants shared their perspectives on (1) their role and responsibility as principals; (2) their training, experience and preparation for urban school leadership; (3) the effect of the urban setting on urban school leadership; and (4) the implications and recommendations for urban school leadership training and preparation.

The audiotape of each participant's interview was transcribed and then coded to identify emerging themes. Significant themes were then recorded in one of the following six narrative categories:

1. Participant profile: Principal's university training; work history in urban education; school facilities; student population; teachers and school support staff.
2. Leadership training: Participant's perception of their school leadership training, professional development, mentoring, and on-the-job experience
3. Leadership priorities: Each participant discusses their perceptions of key leadership priorities for their urban school.

4. Unique urban school issues: Participant's perception and brief discussion of issues and challenges they believe are unique to their urban school.
5. Leadership preparation: Participant's perception of leadership skills, knowledge, capacity, and insight developed as a result of university training, district training, professional development, mentoring or on-the-job experience.
6. Leadership programs: Participant's perceptions of university and district sponsored leadership programs intended to train and prepare aspiring principals, assistant principals, new, or experienced principals for urban school leadership.

Each of the nine case studies presented in this chapter are organized and framed by these six narrative categories. Two significant benefits of framing each case study with the same six narrative categories are: (1) collectively, the six categories functioned as an efficient and effective rubric for performing a cross-case analysis to identify common interview themes and (2) provided a narrative framework to present my findings and recommendations.

First case study Ruby, Principal K-5 elementary school

RUBY: To me providing adequate urban school leadership is doing what is expected of you, and sometimes I don't feel that way. It's difficult when you're a single building administrator trying to complete all those tasks, making certain everything is done on time and meeting everyone's needs, the students, the community, the teachers, and also making certain there's effective instruction. When you're in school, when I was at the university, they didn't cover that. To me it was like theory, research...and not what's gonna happen when you get in there. Maybe they just didn't know?

Participant profile

Ruby, a K-5 elementary school principal, has worked in this urban school district in Michigan for 26 years - her entire career in education. An African-American, Ruby joined the district in 1980 after graduating from a historically black college in the South with a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education and, she said, "a ZA

endorsement to teach preschool or Head Start." During the first 13 years of her education career, Ruby worked as a regular education teacher in three different elementary schools within the district. In 1993 she moved to district staff and served as a reading specialist for five years before being promoted to assistant principal of an elementary school. Four years later, in 2002, Ruby was selected by a six person school selection committee [composed of parents, teachers, union representative, and district executive] to be principal of her current K-5 elementary school.

Ruby's three-story, brown brick, elementary school building is located on the north-west corner of a noisy street intersection in what appears to be a low income neighborhood. An eight foot tall chain-link fence provides see-through protection for the student sand-lot playground area and gravel surfaced visitors' and school staff parking lot - both located in the rear of the building. A total of 44 personnel work in Ruby's school - 22 (50%) teachers; 21 (49%) staff support specialists; and 1 school administrator, Ruby - or, as she refers to herself, "a single building administrator." Closer examination of her teaching staff reveals there are 18 regular education teachers; one art teacher; one computer teacher; one physical education teacher; and one literacy coach.

Discussing her student population, Ruby disclosed that of the 482 students attending her school, "approximately 50% are African American; 34% Hispanic; 10% Caucasian; and the balance, a diverse mix of Vietnamese, Arabic, and other." Ruby is proud of the fact that her school has consistently met or exceeded school improvement objectives established by her district, the state of Michigan and No Child Left Behind. An August 2006 Michigan Department of Education school improvement report published on the Internet (http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schools_met_AYP_169521_7.PDF) confirmed that while Ruby's K-5 elementary school did make adequate yearly progress

(AYP) in 2006, 54% of all of the schools in Ruby's district did not make their 2006 adequate yearly progress objectives.

After 26 years in urban education, Ruby confided that she is seriously considering taking early retirement from the district. Her intent, she said, is to use her ZA endorsement and urban school leadership experience to, "open a preschool, or Head Start, or something like that." Ruby made it clear that although she is, "committed to urban education," she is, "not interested in becoming a superintendent or central office executive," because, she said, "she doesn't want that kind of stress."

Leadership training

In addition to formal university training, Ruby has attended many district sponsored professional development and leadership training sessions since joining the district. When I asked how she would characterize her leadership training, Ruby responded, "it was essential, important, beneficial and inspirational." Essential theoretical knowledge was provided by the university. Professional development conducted by the district was important and beneficial to the development of her instructional and administrative leadership skills. And she said, it was inspirational to hear the leadership strategies, approaches and success stories of other urban school principals from outside of her school district, "who have seen significant growth in their school test scores and student discipline." For instance, Ruby recalled attending two separate leadership training sessions and being inspired by "Lorraine Monroe and Marva Collins" - both of whom are nationally known 'heroic' African-American urban school principals. "When they leave," Ruby said, "I always feel motivated. It uplifts you. You go back to your school and say, yes, I can do this."

Another reason Ruby said she characterized her school leadership training as

essential is, in Michigan, all principals are required to renew their school administrator certification every five years. The primary requirement for recertification is the completion, Ruby explained, "of the equivalent of six university credit hours of school administrator training within the previous five-year period." Because her administrator certification "expires in June of 2006" Ruby was in the process of documenting all of the training she had attended over the past five years. After assembling her documentation, Ruby will send her documentation to the district director of leadership training who will stamp her documentation with, "an official seal" before forwarding the documentation to the Michigan Department of Education for their review and approval. Ruby emphasized the point that in Michigan all principals are responsible and held accountable for selecting and attending training sessions that their school district and the Michigan Department of Education believe will improve their school leadership skills and capacity. Comer training, offered by Yale University, is a good example.

Ruby has attended Comer training at Yale twice, she said. Once while she was a teacher, and again in 1998, while she was assistant principal in an elementary school that had adopted the Comer model. Ruby explained why she believes her Comer training was both beneficial and inspirational. She said:

> I loved Comer because it involved all stakeholders...your parents, teachers, and the community. It's basically focused on meeting the needs of all children so you can educate children ... plus meet their emotional and physiological needs. All those needs have to be met and they're saying if those needs are not met, how can you really educate a child. So they give you the strategies to do that. They also involve the parents in all the meetings that you have. Once a month you bring in the community, and maybe a student, and discuss what's going on in the building and come up with strategies on how to address the needs in your building.
>
> Sometimes I leave the training very motivated because these are the principals that have the same challenges I have and they have seen significant growth in their schools... test scores and with discipline.... It lifts you up.

Ruby believes her ongoing training has helped her understand and implement strategies to support her teachers, address student issues, and deal with school wide

challenges. For instance, her district has, she says, "a continuous series of classes on how to deal with a difficult child." In addition, in each class she received classroom management handbooks that she has used to develop a resource library in her school. Ruby explained that now, "when teachers come to me and say I cannot deal with this child. What can I do?" both she and her teachers "have access to those resources," Ruby said. Training that has helped her deal with school wide issues include the Harvard Urban Leaders Data Wise program. Harvard data training, she said, "...deals with data and research. How do you look at the data in your school? and, ... once you look at your scores, and the research, what can you do to improve in your building?" Ruby is planning to attend more training focused on, "classroom observations." She wants training that will (1) help her better understand "what to look for" when she is conducting a classroom observation and (2) help her determine, "are the teachers doing that?"

Leadership priorities

Ruby argues that providing instructional leadership is her highest priority. When I pressed her to define instructional leader she said it means: (1) being involved in the instructional activities in her school (2) being knowledgeable about her student and school data, (3) being in the classrooms, knowing how instruction is being delivered and how to fine-tune instruction and (4) being able to model lessons for her teachers. In addition to the data-analysis in-service training the district provides for teachers and data specialists in her school, Ruby believes it is important that she receive additional training. From her perspective, as the instructional leader of her school, it is critical that she participate in training to improve her data analysis, strategy development, and project planning and implementation skills. Ruby explained why her being trained in these areas is so important:

> Well, we [building principals] have to look at the data individually [by student], we also have to share it with our group [22 teachers] to come up with a plan during the first week of school. That's when we look at the item analysis and then submit an action plan to the district. Say my reading scores were low in informational text. What strategy are you going to use? What resources? Maybe provide professional development...show a video. Begin on what date and when will this end? Maybe only 50% of my students were able to attain 100%, by June of next year we will have maybe 80% of our students' proficient in that area.
>
> What they [the district] really want is differentiated instruction. That means you're supposed to look at where your children are...if they're low in addition... write up a plan and have strategies for teaching that skill to those students. That's supposed to be done during workshop time...time when teachers really address those student needs. I think the teachers are struggling with it because they still say they don't have enough time to do it or they don't understand how to do it...because, while you're working with those two children, what are your other 28 children doing? So we are trying to provide them support in that area, more professional development...visiting other schools and ... just going in and modeling for those teachers.

Ruby admits that additional professional development, planned workshops and modeling support still does not "resolve their [teachers] issue of not having enough time to do it." As the instructional leader, Ruby's approach is to, "really go in and support them and encourage them that they can do it and just give them strategies... have them visit other teachers and see how they're doing it."

In addition to instructional leadership, Ruby admits there are seven other high priority activities that require a significant amount of her time and direct involvement:

1. staff professional development
2. addressing parent concerns
3. paperwork that's due to the district
4. attending community activities her children are performing in
5. visiting her students in the hospital
6. dealing with discipline concerns, and
7. providing additional resources for her staff, parents, and students.

Ruby admits she finds it difficult to accomplish all of her high priority objectives and still meet the expectations of multiple stakeholders. As she says:

> To me providing adequate urban school leadership is doing what is expected of you, and sometimes I don't feel that way. It's difficult when you're a single building administrator trying to complete all those tasks, making certain everything is done on time and meeting everyone's needs, the students, the community, the teachers, and also making certain there's effective instruction. When you're in school,

> when I was at the university, they didn't cover that. To me it was like theory, research...and not what's gonna happen when you get in there. Maybe they just didn't know?

Unique urban school issues

Ruby, an African-American, confided that she attended a Catholic elementary school and high school that was, she said, "all female and predominately white." However, because she has worked her entire educational career in this urban school district, Ruby made it clear she would not speculate about school leadership issues outside of her urban district. Two aspects of her urban elementary school, Ruby believes, are unique include (1) dealing with parents who disagree with disciplinary actions and (2) the difficulty she has increasing the amount of involvement parents have with their child's education. She said:

> Our job in public education is to educate all children, no matter what is going on with them, that's part of our responsibility as educators. So I think part of it could be the discipline or maybe the parental involvement that may be unique. Parents work so some parents cannot volunteer so we have to look at, when they send their children to school every day as part of parental involvement, because they're sending their child to school...they're walking them to school, but that is part of being an involved parent. I had a conversation with a parent this morning ... the time that they sit out in the car and observe their children, they could get out of the car and assist with the children standing in line, or with them walking in the building or standing in the hallway. That's about 45 minutes they are spending just observing.
>
> I also see discipline as a challenge, or maybe just dealing with the parents. Sometimes on issues they will challenge you...with some, if you suspend, or you have a problem, they're going to challenge you until it becomes an argument.

Class size is another challenge facing Ruby and her teachers. With 482 students and 18 regular education teachers, Ruby estimates that her class size is, "maybe 25 to 30 children in the classroom," verses of the district guidelines, she says, "of no more than 25 students per class" for her K-5 elementary school. Without additional budget funds to hire two additional regular education teachers, the issue of class size will remain a challenge - for her students, her teachers and herself.

Ruby noted that identifying and implementing instructional strategies that can

maximize teaching and learning for her diverse student population [50% African-American and 34% Hispanic] is a significant challenge. From her perspective, scant research is available to assist her in this effort. Ruby said:

> None of those books really get into the ethnic group. It's just generalized so much...I never hear the teachers say that, and I hope they don't think that, but I notice there [are] a lot of studies out there about how to deal with our black males. I think for all children, they need someone that is nurturing and instruction must be very engaging, but they do make reference to African-American students are accustomed to a lot of music so maybe you have to integrate that.(fix wording) I know my Hispanic people love to draw. That's just been an observation, but they are excellent artists.

Leadership preparation

Ruby believes that urban school assistant principals and building principals must be comfortable articulating educational theory and demonstrating their skills, knowledge and understanding regarding (1) academic instruction (2) school administration and operations; (3) the urban school neighborhood and local community; and (4) multiple needs of their urban students, their parents and school staff. From Ruby's perspective, preparing for urban school leadership is an ongoing process of continuous learning, personal reflection and incremental improvement. She said:

> Good communication skills, being a good team builder, and committed to the children, staff and the community. Being knowledgeable about subject areas taught in your school. Understanding the diversity of the children in your school ... and understanding your community. I think knowing what resources are out there, because many parents come to you needing resources - either for insurance, medical, or social work services. Some may require housing. You need to be knowledgeable about and understand your neighborhood the children are living in. The dynamics and... what's going on in those neighborhoods. What are the barriers for them [students] to get here [to school]. Any abandoned homes? Is there drug trafficking on that street where the children cannot play outside because of that? Are there vicious dogs? I think that's important. Knowing what libraries, agencies and churches are in the community. Churches are now partnering up with the schools to provide tutoring services or ... fruit baskets and food baskets for those families. Also just being a personable person...being approachable... a good listener. The parents and the community cannot feel that you are cold or that you will not listen to them. I just think about what it takes to make it through the day. At the end of the day I always reflect on what could I have done to improve my day? Right now I'm thinking about September. What can I do to be a better leader?

Ruby is convinced that good mentors are important, however, mentors have not played a significant role in her leadership training or career advancement. Ruby noted

that when she was a new principal, members of the local Executive Service Corps (ESC) [private sector executives or professionals] were assigned to mentor her cohort group just after they completed the district's 12 month new principal training program. From her perspective, the ESC executives assigned to her group have not been particularly helpful. Instead, Ruby has identified experienced principals within the district who have graciously agreed to function as her informal mentoring network support group. She said:

> We had people from corporate America who would meet with us once a month... we met in a little cluster so we were able to network with other principals. Some of them had been principals for maybe six or seven years so we were able to get some strategies from them. I'm not still in that ...but it's a good program. I think we still need to be mentored... we have our district directors to call on or a lot of us have developed relationships with other principals who we can call on for assistance. You meet a lot of them by attending the meetings and you realize who could help you in certain areas.

Two retired principals Ruby worked for earlier in her career still call, she said, to offer her their support and assistance:

> Have I had any mentors? Yes. I would call the principals that I worked under mentors. They always call and say what do you need from me? How can I help you? Even to this day, two of them have retired, but like, you want me to come up to the school and assist you with anything? They have letters that they use all the time... I can come put those on your computer. So those administrators have continued to be supportive. And I think it's because they know what it's like to be in a building alone. Even though they had an assistant principal or staff coordinator, they really know the challenges and understand what is required.

Leadership programs

After reviewing a list of instructional and administrative activities that may require their leadership and direct involvement [see Table 3.2] I asked participants two questions: (1) What school activities, procedures or functions require your direct involvement or leadership? and (2) What percentage of your time would you say you spend on instructional or administrative activities? After reviewing the list Ruby (1) confirmed that the activities are representative of activities that require her leadership and

involvement as a K-5 urban elementary school principal and (2) stated that her university training, district professional development, mentoring, and on-the-job experiences have done, she believes, a very good job of preparing her to provide leadership in each instructional or administrative activities. She said:

> Everything that you have listed on this chart right here, I do, because all of it is important. And I think the ones that we [urban principals participating in the study] highlighted, like the school vision, strategic direction, or staff development depends on what district you work in and what reports would be required. To me all of these are really important. Translation of test...this is what we do...and even this one... newspaper and radio; they [the district] provide us with the in-service on that to teach us how to deal with the media. So everything on your sheet of paper, as far as instructional and administrative is what all of us are dealing with.
>
> And I don't know how they would do that [teach these activities] at the college level, graduate level. I don't know. Maybe school districts can address that like we're doing here in this district. Like crisis planning, they [the district] have an office that does that, they come out and in-service us. The legal department, they send the lawyers out to provide professional development ... during school time or after school. Some of the training activities are coordinated through the district leadership training program and some of them may be mandated by the superintendent.

In contrast to her positive remarks regarding her training and preparation, Ruby is quite concerned with the lack of resources and inadequate amount of time she has to do her job. For example, Ruby complained that schools in her district with less than 600 students are not authorized to have an assistant principal. Because only 482 students attend her school, she is the only administrator in her building. Ruby explained how being a single building administrator affects the amount of time she devotes to an activity:

> Yes, I probably was trained for it, but it's the time and resources. When you have an assistant principal maybe the principal could tell the assistant principal, you can handle all parent concerns and all of my student discipline, while I get in here and observe these teachers. So, I mean, we've had the training as an assistant principal and going through the leadership academy, not necessarily through our graduate work, and the district is really working on providing us with professional development in all of these areas. It's just that once you get into the school, how do you manage your time? Once the parents come in, I do spend a lot of time with them and their student concerns.

Another concern Ruby raised was the triangular relationship between the leadership training program, the amount of time she devoted to instructional or administrative leadership, and her job performance evaluation. Without disclosing the rating or content of her last job performance evaluation, Ruby posited that, "if you're not adequately

trained your evaluation is going to reflect that, "because", as she explained, "we are evaluated on test scores, parent complaints, safety, certain reports that are due, how many fire drills... do you improve student achievement in your building. So everything is there and documented... to show if you have decreased or increased in those areas." Her concern with the current performance evaluation process is that the evaluation does not take into account the amount of time she may be forced to devote to specific activities. For example, Ruby estimated that she spends, "approximately 20% of her time on instructional activities and 80% of her time focusing on administrative operational activities." In spite of the fact that her performance evaluation, "has probably got four or five pages balanced probably 50% [instructional activities] and 50% [administrative activities]."

As we concluded the interview Ruby volunteered that she believes the results of my research could and should be used to help aspiring principals, assistant principals and new principals understand, and perhaps appreciate, what it means to be principal of an urban public-school or, as Ruby said, "What does a principal do all day?" She said:

> It would be nice and informational if you could share this with universities that are training teachers to be principals or assistant principals. What is it that [urban] principals are really doing? When you're a teacher sitting in a classroom... you might say oh, if I were the principal, I would do it like this, and she or he is not doing that correctly. But they may not understand what is preventing you from getting to it that day...you're not always just sitting in your office on the telephone or balancing your checkbook. When you're in your office and not physically in the hallway, you're actually involved with something. It could be paperwork, it could be a parent concerns, it could be downtown calling you about something...at all times, I think all administrators are engaged in instructional or administrative tasks.
>
> I've been trying to invite teachers to do this [her principal job] for a day. I told them I would sub in their classroom so that they could see for themselves, What does a principal do all day? Even though a principal may be smiling and pleasant, they may be upset about something or it's something they have to prepare for that evening or that day. They also have a life. So it's also learning how to live a balanced life so that your work does not consume your life.

Second case study Mary, Principal K-8 elementary school

MARY: When I started at my previous school, I spent the majority of my day on administrative

things... maybe 90% administrative and 10% instructional. By the time I left, it was more like 50% and 50%. Right now, [in her newly merged school] I'm maybe 80% administrative and 20% instructional. Next year it will definitely change to more instructional and less administrative.

I believe in a building culture. A part of the culture of this building is the youngsters had an enormous amount of infractions - acting out, fights, that type of thing. That's where my time was needed this year. If things go the way I'm planning, I'll do more instructional, until eventually, they should be about equal. That's where I'm trying to go.

Participant profile

Mary, an African-American female, began working in the district in 1970, after graduating from a local university with a bachelor's degree in teaching and a master's degree in urban education. For nine years, from 1970 until 1979, she worked as an elementary school teacher in two different schools. Early in her career Mary was convinced she wanted to remain in the classroom her entire career. "I did not want to be a principal" she said. However, after serving on a district task force charged with helping to select students, school staff, and curriculum content for a new elementary school, Mary changed her mind and decided to pursue the principalship.

Mary worked in the newly created elementary school for seven years – working half time as a staff and curriculum coordinator and half time as a classroom teacher. In 1986 she was promoted to assistant principal in the same school. Two years later, Mary was reassigned from her elementary school to a middle school as the assistant principal. She served there for two years before being promoted, in 1990, to principal of a preK-5 elementary school. Five years later, in 1995, Mary was appointed to her current position as principal of a K-8 elementary and middle school.

Mary is proud of the fact that, in 2006, the 587 students in her school - 90% of whom are African-American – made adequate yearly progress towards achieving the goals and objectives mandated by the state of Michigan and NCLB. To support the academic, psychological, physiological, and sociological needs of her students Mary has a total

school staff of 94 personnel - 41 teachers, 50 support specialist, and 3 school administrators. Twenty-one of her teachers have regular education responsibility, sixteen are special education teachers or aides, and four have other teaching responsibilities. Mary's fifty support staff members include psychologist, social worker, language impaired, guidance counselor, food-service, building engineer and custodians. The three school administrators include one curriculum leader, one assistant principal and herself as principal. Discussing why she has more support staff and administrators than teachers on her school staff, Mary explained:

> The sociological needs of the children, I am not going to say they outweigh the academic needs, but they are extremely important. I know it's something that people don't like to hear because they say that urban administrators are using it as an excuse. I absolutely believe all children can learn. I thrive on that. But I also know that the negative sociological factors that impact families have a direct bearing on how a school functions.

Leadership training

Mary estimates that 40% of her urban school leadership training was university-based and 60% a combination of on-the-job training and professional development provided by her school district. From her perspective, "The university level does a wonderful job with the theoretical background of education and that type of thing, but there are some 'nuts and bolts things' that when you walk in the door, people hand you... and expect you [to be] prepared to handle." Mary is convinced that she received some of her best training in 1990 when she attended, "a two-week urban school leadership training session conducted by the North-Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) ... right outside of Chicago. It's a national Institute" she said, and, "they bring urban leaders in from all over the country to work with those of us who are working in urban settings."

Urban school leadership training, she believes, should include both theory and task-level leadership training specifically designed to help prepare aspiring principals, assistant principals and current principals to perform their instructional, operational and administrative leadership roles and responsibilities. Specific examples of task-level training are creating a school master schedule; developing and managing a school budget; writing an effective building security plan; and effective and efficient techniques for oral, written and electronic communications with school stakeholders.

Leadership priorities

In 2005, the school district decided to close the high achieving preK-5 elementary school where Mary had been principal for five years and merge her school with an existing K-8 school located approximately 22 blocks away. Mary was appointed principal of the two merged schools. Following the merger, Mary estimates her student population was 800 students. The primary reasons for closing Mary's previous school was declining student enrollment caused by (1) the expansion of commercial buildings and industrial facilities into the residential single-family neighborhood and (2) the exterior appearance of the building. Mary explained: "The inside of the building was in better shape... but it looked worse on the outside... it looked like an eyesore, so they closed it for that reason."

One year after the school merger, Mary's enrollment had dropped from 800 to approximately 587 students. Mary confided that the district superintendent had indicated that, "it was a little mistake the way they closed some of the achieving schools because they had assumed parents would come to the merged schools and they didn't." Mary believes there were six primary reasons for the drastic decline in student enrollment. First, she said, the district did not provide adequate school bus transportation. Second, stiff competition from charter schools with more convenient locations. Third, Mary's

current school had a long-standing reputation as a low-performing versus high-achieving school. Fourth, parents in her previous school did not like "losing their neighborhood school." Fifth, families in the current neighborhood have fewer kids, or no school age kids, and, because of the poor Michigan economy, many neighborhood parents are leaving Michigan and "going South to get a job." And sixth, Mary noted, "This building is in worse shape than the building I left. That didn't help either."

Mary's priorities for her second year [2007] as principal of her merged school included dealing with student discipline; working closely with staff and parents; conducting multiple student assessments and testing; hands-on management and leadership of her school; timely completion of important paperwork and reporting; and establishing a consistent set of school routines and rituals that reflect a high achieving school climate and culture. Her ultimate priority is to spend more of her time on instructional versus administrative leadership activities. As she said:

> When I started at my previous school, I spent the majority of my day administrative...maybe 90% administrative and 10% instructional. By the time I left, it was more like 50% and 50%. Right now, [in her newly merged school] I'm maybe 80% administrative and 20% instructional. Next year it will definitely change, to more instructional and less administrative.
>
> I believe in a building culture. A part of the culture of this building is the youngsters had an enormous amount of infractions, acting out, fights, that type of thing. That's where my time was needed this year. If things go the way I am planning, I'll do more instructional, until eventually, they should be about equal. That's where I'm trying to go.

Unique urban school issues

Mary noted that her personal concern and professional responsibility for student safety requires her to constantly assess and monitor the urban setting and industrial area surrounding her elementary school. For example she has, "devoted an enormous amount of time to going through the neighborhood counting abandoned houses with gapping holes or foundations that weren't filled in." In addition to potential issues of student safety caused by abandoned houses near her school, Mary explained how these

abandoned homes created another issue - large rats. When the abandoned houses are eventually torn down, she said, they typically are left as a large pile of debris creating an ideal breeding ground for rats. "When they razed the abandoned houses it released them on the community." Thankfully, Mary notes, "the rats never entered the school", however, Mary was forced to close her school playground for three weeks because, she said, "I couldn't run the risk of sending children outside during the day." Commenting on unique aspects of urban school leadership, Mary said "that's urban administration...that became my responsibility just as much as whether the children started their reading 10 minutes after they got in class... that becomes as much a part of my job as academics."

Leadership preparation

According to Mary, aspiring and practicing principals can be trained, but not necessarily prepared, for urban school leadership. She believes universities and urban school districts can do a good job of teaching instructional and administrative leadership skills and techniques. However, that person is not adequately prepared for urban school leadership unless they have three critical attributes - caring, understanding and personal and professional commitment to urban children, their families, and the urban community. Urban school leadership, she says, "is something you absolutely have to want to do... want to be in an urban setting...you're gonna see things, some of them will break your heart and sometimes you get such joy. Adequate preparation is, understanding, before you get in it, what it's all about."

Mary has never had a formal mentor for the principalship. Instead, multiple members of her family have served as role models. For example, she said, "My mother was a teacher and three or four of my aunts were teachers." Her advice to aspiring principals is, "you have to walk, talk and act like a principal at all times...you can't

supervise what you don't do yourself ... and you can get people to do what you want from a position of power, but if you want people to really buy into what you're doing, you have to model what you want. If you do that they'll do what you asked them to do." Referring to principals of urban, rural, and suburban schools, Mary expressed the opinion that, "All principalships are hard...they're extremely hard, and I don't think mine is any harder...it's just different."

Leadership programs

The district principal selection process has changed significantly since Mary was appointed principal in 1990. In the late 1980s, Mary notes, "you had to be an assistant principal for five years; work as an assistant principal in two different schools; take a written test; pass an oral interview; and go through an assessment and testing center." A significant change occurred in the mid-1990's when candidates for assistant principal or principal were no longer required to take administrative tests and "there was no more assessment center." Another major change occurred in 2006 when the district announced that aspiring principals, assistant principals and newly appointed principals would all be required to complete a 12-month school leadership program offered by the district Leadership Academy.

Mary believes convincing teachers in the district to leave the classroom and pursue a career in school administration will continue to be a difficult challenge. Many teachers, she said, are hesitant to leave the security of the classroom to pursue the principalship because (A) principals in the district do not belong to a union; (B) principals are employed by the district as at-will employees; (C) each school year all principals must have their employment contracts renewed - or not renewed –by the district superintendent; and (D) over the past ten years the significant decline in district student

enrollment has resulted in many school principals losing their jobs. In addition, high unemployment is a major concern in all areas of Michigan - especially in this urban geography. From Mary's perspective, many teachers believe tenure, union membership, and staying in the classroom may provide a higher level of job security than a school administrator position. As a result, recruiting highly qualified candidates for urban school leadership programs and principalship positions is becoming more and more difficult.

Third case study Robert, Principal K-8 elementary school

ROBERT: Every school has a personality and every principal has a personality. Usually that school personality can take on the principal's personality and, in interviewing people, you can tell if that person is going to fit in or not. When someone is just sent and you have to take them... and they have no concept of working with a team, then they stick out like a sore thumb. That produces a problem.

Participant profile

On May 8, 2006, I conducted a one-hour interview with Robert, the principal of a K- 8 elementary school located on the far-East side of this urban school district. One month later, Robert retired from the district after 40 years of service. Discussing his formal university training, Robert, an African-American, revealed that he has a BS in Music with a minor in English and Social Studies; a MS in Guidance and Counseling; an Education Specialists degree; and an EdD in Administration and Supervision - all from universities in Michigan. While working on his bachelor's degree in music, Robert worked part time in this urban district for four years as a substitute piano accompanist. Graduating in 1966, he joined the district as a full-time classroom vocal music teacher. After teaching music for four years, Robert spent the next 27 years working in student guidance counseling - serving seven years as a school guidance counselor and twenty years at the district level as a guidance counseling supervisor and department head.

Robert, "completed his EdD in Administration and Supervision in 1995 and in 1997 moved into school administration" as the assistant principal of a K- 8 elementary school. In 1999, he was appointed principal of a K-8 performing arts school. In 2003, four years later, Robert agreed to serve as principal of an additional performing arts school in the district and, from 2003 until 2005, served as principal of both schools. In 2005 the two schools were merged into one K-8 performing arts school and Robert was formally appointed principal of the newly merged school. Robert estimates that 95% of the 720 students in his current K-8 elementary school are African-American and approximately 87% qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Leadership training

Robert characterized his training and preparation for urban school leadership as "adequate to good." University training, he noted, was only adequate because "the university does not necessarily prepare one for on-the-job practices. The research and theory is there but there are a whole lot of things that go on that you never hear about in a college classroom." The training he received from the school district was "good" he said because district training was always focused on school operational procedures or instructional programs he was responsible for implementing in his school. In addition to professional development sessions on effective communications and time management, district training also discussed best practices for dealing with the social, psychological, emotional or special needs of urban students and their parents, guardians or families.

Robert believes his training could have been improved if he had had the opportunity for "mentoring or job shadowing." He confessed that while he was an assistant principal he "didn't know all that my principal did." He explained:

> I had some responsibilities and there was another assistant principal who had some

> responsibilities... we carried out those responsibilities and kept the school going, however, I was not at all aware, until I became a principal, of all the meetings that the principal is asked to attend... and they tell you what you must do and then you come back and delegate that to be done and check to make sure that it happens. I knew about delegating and checking to make sure that it happens but was not at all aware of the public relations aspects of the job.

Leadership priorities

Because Robert's current K-8 school was the result of two elementary schools being merged one year ago in 2005, the multiple year student test score data required for calculating a multiple year average is not available to determine the appropriate AYP phase for the school. As a result, Robert's school is classified as being in AYP phase 99 advisory status - meaning his school did not make AYP. For Robert, providing instructional leadership that can help his students achieve passing scores on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test is one of his highest priorities. Robert expressed frustration that he has not been able to devote more time to his instructional leadership responsibilities. The real issue he says is 90% of his time is spent dealing with operational issues and administrative activities: for example, attending meetings, responding to parents, or responding to school district request. Finding adequate time to focus on instructional leadership activities, he says, "is a major challenge." To illustrate his point, Robert held up a partially completed report and explained that the district had already decided which textbooks he should order so, he said, "right now I am involved with book inventory and ordering of supplies for next school year." He continued, "Instead of dealing with and resolving higher priority instructional issues related to curriculum, staff management, staff development and teacher coaching.

If he could spend more time with his curriculum leader and classroom teachers, Robert believes he could improve the linkage between district curriculum standards, his vision for the school, teacher classroom instruction practices, and student achievement.

Robert explained that staff management - finding substitute teachers to provide "class coverage in terms of teacher absences" – has been a daily challenge for him. For example, on the day of this interview, Robert confided that six teachers did not show up for work. "Each school in the district," Robert explained, "has two building subs [substitute teachers] but when your teacher absences go beyond that, then you start having to rotate the schedule, to manipulate and use people's preparation period."

From Robert's perspective, staff development and teacher coaching are high priority instructional leadership activities that would require Robert spending a significant amount of time helping teachers "fine tune" their classroom management and instructional delivery skills. The issue for Robert is that he doesn't feel he has enough time to devote to this important activity. Robert understands that as the school instructional leader he is, "responsible for every teacher and every activity that takes place in each teacher's classroom" and believes, "his primary role is monitoring and assisting in instructional delivery if there's a need for that."

Unique urban school issues

Responding to my question regarding issues and challenges unique to urban public schools, Robert insisted on discussing a major similarity between public schools – suburban, rural, and urban, before discussing what he considers to be unique. A major similarity, he said, is "kids are kids." Children from similar social and economic backgrounds, he explained, will exhibit similar behaviors in school. "The context might be different where they come from - urban, suburban or rural - but students from a high economic level, whether they are urban or suburban, are the same and they do the same things... and urban or suburban children from a low economic bracket will do the same things."

Robert believes a unique issue in this urban district is the tops-down versus bottoms-up approach, process and procedure for teacher selection and hiring. He believes, "that it would help him to improve his school" if he had the opportunity and authority to "interview and select his teaching staff, as opposed to accepting whoever human resources sends." Improving student achievement, he notes, requires teamwork - the individual contribution and collective effort of every member of his school staff. His role as principal, he believes, is to provide team leadership. The classroom teacher's role is to teach and the support staff's role is obligated to provide assistance and professional support for students, staff and school administrators. The key, Robert emphasizes, is everyone working together as a team, therefore, he argues that he should be allowed to pick the players on his team:

> Every school has a personality and every principal has a personality. Usually that school personality can takes on the principal's personality and in interviewing people you can tell if that person is going to fit in or not. When someone is just sent and you have to take them... and they have no concept of working with a team, then they stick out like a sore thumb. That produces a problem.

Robert confided that another unique, and perhaps more pernicious challenge is dealing with the classroom teachers in his school who have a negative or deficit versus positive view of African-American students who come from low-income urban families. Elaborating on his concern he said:

> I have staff who did not grow up in an urban community and I spend a lot of time with staff development to help them understand the urban child. No. I spend time helping them learn to understand the underprivileged child. An underprivileged child doesn't necessarily have to be urban, but when you come from a middle-class or upper-class neighborhood and values, and then you are working with children who are low socioeconomic, it can throw you. So I spend a lot of time helping them understand what is going on, and that everything you see, I mean, it's not all bad. It's just the way it is.

Leadership preparation

Throughout his 40 year career in this urban district, Robert says he never had a

formal mentor to help prepare him for school leadership. Whenever he was considering a career move, he said "I did have somebody I could call ... my first department head when I was teaching...that person is now retired but he is still available to me." Robert believes his university exposure to educational theory; district professional development; experience as a high school music teacher, guidance counselor and district staff; and serving as a middle school assistant principal, combined was adequate training and preparation for his current role and responsibility as a K-8 urban elementary school principal.

Leadership programs

Immediately following his promotion to elementary school principal in 1999, Robert was required to attend principal leadership training offered by the district. Although he did not remember specific content of his leadership training, he did offer two suggestions to improve the current district leadership training program. His first suggestion was to add grade level job shadowing. Robert believes a person headed towards a middle school principalship should shadow a middle school versus elementary or high school principal. From his perspective, "It's different in all three places, so it would be important to shadow at the level one has an interest." Second, he suggested single-building administrator leadership training should be developed for those principals who may not have an assistant principal, or curriculum leader position, authorized for their school. In this district, schools with less than 600 students are not authorized to have an assistant principal or curriculum leader. Many elementary schools and middle schools within the district, he noted, fall into this category.

According to Robert, the Harvard Urban Leaders program he attended in 2003 was the "best and most practical learning experience I've had after becoming a principal

because all the speakers had practical experience related to their topic." In addition, he said, "there were people there from all over the world and it was very interesting to sit in small group sessions to discuss similarities and differences from a worldwide perspective."

Fourth case study Paula, Principal K-8 elementary school

PAULA: Mentoring advice for aspiring and new urban school principals: "shadow a seasoned and experienced principal; learn to delegate; do your job to the best of your ability; don't sweat the small stuff; and, if you don't know Jesus Christ you better establish a relationship with him because, you are going to need that kind of relationship to survive.

Participant Profile

Paula, the principal of a K-8 elementary/middle school began this interview at 3:25 p.m. by saying, "I've got something to do this evening, so I'm only gonna give you one hour. After an hour, I'm through. I just can't give you any more time." It became clear to me during the interview that setting clear expectations, plain talk, and delivering on her promise, have been key to Paula's successful track record as a principal. Not surprisingly, we ended the interview at 4:25 p.m.

The demographics of the students in Paula's K-8 elementary/middle school are quite different from the K-8 private school, located on the corner - only one block away. "The school on the corner is approximately 70% white and is a private school," and, Paula explained, "parents pay maybe 8, 10 or $12,000" to send their children there." In her school, Paula has, approximately 350 students, 99% of whom are African-American and 84% qualify for free or reduced lunch. Paula noted that she does have, "one white child... a little girl...she just came from Florida this school year." While several schools in the district with similar racial and economic student demographics are considered

failing schools, Paula's school has developed a reputation as a high performing school. Paula is proud of the fact that for the past 13 years in which she has been principal, the students and staff in her school have met or exceed the school improvement objectives established by her district, the Michigan Department of Education and, since 2001, the adequate yearly progress (AYP) objectives mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

A total of 54 persons work in Paula's school in a variety of teaching, staff support and school administrator positions. For example, twenty of the thirty-one teachers have regular education responsibility; seven are special-education teachers; one is an arts teacher; one is a computers teacher; one is a physical education teacher, and one is the literary coach teacher. Staff support roles in her school include psychologist; social worker; speech and language teachers; food service and noon hour aides; secretary; engineer and custodian. One curriculum leader and Paula as school principal are the only administrators in her school.

Paula, an African-American female, has worked in this urban school district for 33 years. Hired in 1973, she worked as a special education teacher for 13 years before moving to district staff as a special-education consultant. After four years on district staff she was promoted, in 1990, to assistant principal in an elementary school. In 1993 she was promoted to her current position of K- 8 elementary/middle school principal. "I've been at this school for 13 years as principal and I think I learned to do the job, on the job, as well as at workshops and conferences... that I have attended over the years," she said. Paula believes her university training provided important theoretical information but, made only a minor contribution to her urban school leadership skills, capability and practice.

Leadership training

Paula's formal university training includes a BS in Education, a MA in teaching and an EdD in Education that she earned in 1996. All of her degrees are from universities in Michigan. When I asked how much of her university training was directly related to her role and responsibility as an urban school principal? she replied, "I'd say maybe 25% university and the rest [she learned] on the job, in terms of in-service, and reading, and whatever." Two examples of useful university training, Paula said, were, "School law... and student discipline." Student discipline was useful, she said, "Because I used to teach emotionally impaired students." Commenting on what she did not learn at the university, Paula said "I didn't learn anything about food service; newspapers and radio reporters; student registration or student information systems; ordering materials; doing a budget; or returning phone calls. I learned all that on the job."

Prior to 1991, teachers and school administrators in this district were eligible to receive step-level salary increases for completing various levels of educational attainment - for example, a Masters degree plus 30 credit hours; Education Specialist degree; or a Doctorate in education. Paula revealed that, "Teachers still do [receive step-level salary increases for additional education] ... and when we [principals] had a union, we did as well... but now we don't have a union... and we don't get that any more." Her professional development training after becoming a principal has included, she said, "attending classes at Harvard, Yale, a local Independent School District (ISD) and three different universities in Michigan." She is convinced that the eclectic combination of her formal university training, district professional development and 33 years of on the job training and experience have helped her develop the leadership skills and capacity she needs to continue to "get the job done" in her school. As she puts it, "I think I have the training I need to be a good leader...I think I have what I need already. There is nothing

else that I need to learn. I know what I need to do. Maybe just doing it?"

Leadership priorities

"Instructional leadership? I think it means," Paula said, "that I am supposed to be able to provide leadership to the instructional staff in terms of instruction that impacts students." Paula makes a sharp distinction between her responsibility to help her teachers improve their instructional delivery skills and her teacher's responsibility to create and manage a classroom setting that supports and encourages student learning. "I tell my teachers that classroom management is their concern. I'm not the classroom manager, they are. Don't send children to me for me to manage. That's their job" she said. Paula then described the training and resources all of the teachers in her school have received to help them develop and implement student discipline and classroom management strategies:

> We've had in-services where they are provided with [classroom management] strategies. We have a social worker who has in-service at our staff meetings and I gave everybody a book with pre-referral strategies... these are some strategies that you can use... to deal with this child. Don't bring them to me. If this child is a problem in your class and you choose not to read it [the pre-referral book], that's your prerogative but I'm providing you some resources because I can't... I'm not spending all of my time on discipline.

Based on 13 years of classroom teaching experience Paula understands that classroom management encompasses strategies to deal with student academic performance and discipline techniques for inappropriate student behavior. As she says, "the challenges teachers face in the classroom are not just behavior, some of these are academic kind of issues." As the instructional leader of her school Paula attempts to limit her involvement in classroom management to (1) advising new or inexperienced teachers; (2) mentoring experienced teachers; and (3) only getting involved in discipline issues that require her approval, signature, authorization, or in some cases, she says, her

understanding of kids:

> I have kids come in here... teachers say they were fighting and they need to go home. Usually I sit them out there on that bench and ... I make them sit close to each other. And I tell them, you guys got to work it out or else I'll have to call your parents and you'll have to be suspended from school. I have not had one child since I started doing that who has not worked it out. They sit there, they start talking and laughing and ... they work it out, and they don't have any more problems, and that's the honest truth.

"The point is, I'm not spending all of my time with you [the teacher] because Johnny throws paper on the floor. I'm not. That's not what I'm here for. If I'm an instructional leader, you need to learn how to deal with Johnny when he throws paper on the floor," she said. Despite ongoing attempts to get her teachers to deal with student discipline issues in their classroom Paula still listed student discipline as one of her top five school leadership priorities.

Four other leadership priorities Paula said require a significant amount of her time and attention are (1) staff meetings to ensure timely two-way communication; (2) classroom observations and new teacher evaluations; (3) dealing with parent concerns; and (4) "making certain that the management support staff is focused on what they are supposed to do... staff intervention kinds of activities."

Urban school issues

Paula believes a unique challenge for her school is what she perceives to be a lack of focus or sense of urgency by the district to acknowledge and "fix" long-standing issues in her school. Her frustration stems from her belief that, "At the district level people know what's wrong with these schools... but to fix it just requires more than they are willing or able to commit to doing." Using this Ph.D. research examining urban school leadership preparation as an example, Paula commented that, "Folks in [this district] tend not to pay attention to research... and since I am familiar with doctoral procedures [Paula

has an EdD in education] ... I know nothing much will happen with it. It will be filed, and unless somebody is doing a similar study... they might look at it... otherwise, nobody's gonna look at it."

Four issues Paula believes her urban district should address are (1) repairing, renovating or replacing old school buildings; (2) the lack of adequate school resource; (3) classroom overcrowding; and (4) collecting and disseminating accurate student data. First regarding renovating old school buildings, Paula said, "Take this building for example... this building was built in 1910 [86 years ago]... you don't see buildings this old in suburban school districts." Despite the neat and tidy exterior appearance of her three-story brown brick building, and the high-gloss wood-wax finish I noticed on classroom floors and hallways, Paula is frustrated by the fact that her school "has never had extensive remodeling."

The lack of adequate school resources – specifically, not having an adequate supply of substitute teachers - was the second issue Paula raised:

> They [the district] claim to be concerned about achievement and they want good results on test scores but you know, they don't provide you with good teachers, and they don't provide you with substitutes. My friend... he's a teacher in [a suburban district]...they always have a sub when somebody is absent. You know, how are you gonna have a school when you don't even provide subs, the substitute teacher, when the teacher is absent. That's crazy!

Her third issue is classroom overcrowding, a long-standing and pernicious issuethat affects every student, teacher and staff member in her school - and, she believes, many other schools in her district:

> This has been on the Oprah [Winfrey] show. Did you watch her show on education that she had a few weeks ago? [Oprah is building a school for girls in Africa and paying for the entire project out of her own money.] Oh, it was profound... but the point is, it almost seems as though the powers that be, they don't care about educating kids...in the urban schools, they just throw stuff together. How do you put 35 kids in a classroom and expect high achievement? The recommended class-size is 25 for grades K-3; 30 for grades 4 and 5, and 35 for grades 6 through 12. That's crazy... you're just a holding station... but that's what they do. In my 7th and 8th grade, I got 37 in one class and 39 or something in another class ... and the recommended number is 35. My grades 6, 7 and 8 are

above 35. It's horrible. That's what I'm saying... nobody cares about these kids.

The fourth unique issue that Paula perceives, she and her peers are facing the difficult task of collecting and reporting accurate student count data. Because public schools in Michigan are funded on a per pupil basis Paula and her peers, she says, operate under a mandate and tremendous pressure from district executives to submit accurate student count data that accounts for every student enrolled in each school. Principals who submit inaccurate student count data may be in jeopardy of not having their employment contract renewed for the following school year. Paula explained the issue this way:

> It has nothing to do with district enrollment dropping... that's a different matter. What we are talking about is missing kids. Let me tell you ...this is [the] problem. You've got a 10 day window for counting... and all the different rules. Say Johnny Jones has left the school district but I leave Johnny Jones on my form we use to count kids. When they do an audit, they say okay, oh, Johnny Jones is enrolled over here in [another school district] and you're saying he's still in this district? That's the kind of thing they're talking about in many cases.
>
> In the high schools, it's really crazy because maybe 3, 4 kids, they don't go to every class. Some kids skipped this class so the teacher doesn't count them... and maybe somebody else has counted them...or, maybe the teacher is counting them present when they're not there. Or, when they do the audit... you find that you can't count this kid because he doesn't have six classes...maybe they enrolled for six but then dropped classes, but that information didn't get back to the membership. It's crazy. It's a teacher's responsibility but the buck stops with the principal... so ultimately, it's the principal's responsibility.
>
> The problem is the district provides the training to the administrators ... they don't provide the training to the teachers... and unless you [the principal] take the time to train the teachers how to do it, it's... messed up. What I do... I take the time to look at it. It's almost like you have to...to know everything. If somebody's been absent three days, we need to know where that person is. With my small school [350 students] it's a lot easier to do that, but somebody in a high school with 1700 kids, it's hard, harder to do that... but they [all principals in the district] still have the same accountability.

Leadership preparation

"Whether a principal is adequately prepared for urban school leadership really depends on who you ask," Paula argues. It may depend on what that person's expectations are for a principal; or the principal's reputation and track record; or the issues that need to be addressed in that school. Based on her track record of consistently exceeding AYP and school improvement objectives, Paula believes the district executive

she reports to has full confidence in her leadership skills and capability. To make her point, Paula revealed that the district executive to whom reports, has never been to her school:

> I haven't seen [the district executive] in over a year... as a matter of fact... never been in my school. And that's a good thing... because there are some places that they [the district executive] are over there all the time... I mean all the time... and, I'm okay with that. I'm okay. I do what I'm supposed to do. I know what I'm supposed to do. I get the job done.

Paula believes that being adequately prepared for urban school leadership means the principal is (1) able to communicate effectively with students, staff, parents and stakeholders; (2) is willing and able to make decisions; (3) can find answers and resources required to resolve situations; (4) gets the job done; and (5) practices service leadership. To explain how she perceives and 'makes sense' of the notion of service leadership Paula offered the following:

> At Harvard, I had a session on service leadership... the whole concept resonated with me... because I think to be an effective principal, especially an urban principal, you have to want to serve... because they don't pay you enough to do what I do. They don't... they can't pay me enough to do what I do. I mean, if you are a servant leader, to me, it means... it's not about you...okay... it's going above and beyond what it is that is expected of you. That's service leadership, as I understand it.

Leadership programs

Urban school principals must have good teambuilding and school leadership skills, but, Paula says, "I'd even go a little bit further... I'd say they need compassion and passion." From her perspective, some aspiring principals or peer principals in her district may not have the level of compassion and passion she believes is required for the job:

> Just looking at the people who are becoming principals [in this district]... they don't seem to be doing a good job. I listened to some of them, not all of them... and, you know, it's all about, I'm the principal. And they have so many problems. I don't know. Maybe I've been a principal so long now [13 years] that I realize I can't do it all by myself. I think they [the district] are providing the training [leadership training] but, I'm not sure if the people they are selecting are... maybe I shouldn't say that because I don't know everybody who's selected... but so many schools are 'off the hook' [having a lot of problems and issues]. I talk to new principals and, for whatever reasons, they seem to be struggling a lot.

Based on her knowledge of other schools in her district, Paula argued that the consequences of new or experienced principals not being adequately prepared for urban school leadership include, "they have badly run schools... failing schools... schools where they are always putting out fires...schools where they are always having parental complaints." In addition, principals lacking compassion and passion for urban students, she says, may not provide the leadership that teachers in an urban school need to help and support them as they struggle in their classroom to improve the academic performance of their urban students. To make her point about principals being adequately prepared and having compassion for urban students, Paula told the story of how a peer principal expelled a ninth grade student from school - for what may have been a minor infraction – with the potential impact of delaying that student' s graduation from high school. Paula said:

> I see so many principals that are out to get the kids. They kick them out of school for this, kick them out for that. It's horrible. I think urban schools do a disservice to children. I was [shopping] yesterday... getting in my car... had a whole lot of stuff... and this kid came over and said do you need some help? I started talking to him... what school do you attend?... what grade?...he said the ninth grade... and I said do you like your school principal?... and he goes, no, I can't stand that... she's mean...kicked me out of school...because he opened the door to let some kids in the building? That could be serious, but why would you kick a kid out of school for the rest of the school year? We are kicking kids out of school left and right... especially in the high schools... that's why only 50% of them are graduating... because we're kicking them out left and right. They're tardy, you've got to go home for three days. He skipped a class, you're going home for a week. You open the door, you go home for six weeks? That's crazy!

Although she did not have what she termed a "bona fide mentor" Paula noted that her former principal did serve as an informal mentor when she was a new principal. "Just someone that I could talk to" she said, "when I needed some help or information." Although she is not currently mentoring an aspiring principal, Paula has several pieces of advice for an aspiring or new urban school principal. First, "shadow a seasoned and

experienced principal." Second, "learn how to delegate." Third, "do your job to the best of your ability." Fourth, "don't sweat the small stuff, because it's all small stuff." And fifth, "if you don't know Jesus Christ you better establish a relationship with him because you are going to need that kind the relationship to survive."

Paula believes she should be evaluated and receive feedback on her school leadership performance, however, while showing me a copy of the most current school principal evaluation form, she commented that, "I haven't been evaluated in the last couple years... but we are in the process of doing an evaluation this year. It's supposed to be annual... but because the district has undergone so much change, it hasn't happened." Categories on the principal performance evaluation form included AYP; school effectiveness; student instructional time in content area; data-driven decision making; delegation; fire drills; safety drills; and code of conduct violations. Paula explained that prior to her performance evaluation meeting with her district executive, she "is supposed to do a portfolio of sorts... that address these issues." Paula said she is not concerned with what happens before, during, or even after her performance evaluation, because from her perspective, neither the input nor the outcome of her evaluation will be used for any constructive purpose:

> I haven't been evaluated in the last couple years... but we are in the process of doing an evaluation for this year. I'm not sure how it's going to be done...it's sort of a ...new process. We're supposed to do a portfolio of sorts...address these issues... this is worth 20 points... this is 10... this is 15... that's 20. I don't think it's going to have an effect on anything this year because we're doing it at the end of the school year. I don't know what impact it will have in the future. I'm not sure what it has impacted in the past because no one ever discussed it once we did it.

Fifth case study Daniel, Principal 6-8 middle school

DANIEL: Being a small district [referring to his previous school district], we didn't have a training center or management academy for building principals. We didn't have folk who were paid to do training. We relied on consultants, or the Intermediate School District (ISD), to in-service us or provide staff development. My Masters [degree] was in administration, so I had coursework, but in terms of actually

having on-the-job experience, that was only through the internship program - which they [previous district] only had for a short period of time. I went to several workshops dealing with running a building, but nothing near what this district provides.

Participant Profile

Daniel, an African-American principal of a 6-8 middle school in this urban school district in Michigan, has been working in urban education for 34 years. Early in our interview he freely admitted that public school administration was not his first choice as a career. Daniel, explained that he had attended a historically black college to study advertising but was forced to drop out of school due to a lack of money. He returned to Michigan and, after first attending a local community college, graduated from a four year university in 1972 with a BA degree in teaching. Later that year, he began his 34 year career in education by accepting a teaching job in what he called, "a small K-14 urban school district." The district was small because, he said, "It only had one high school, three middle schools, five elementary schools and one community college career academy." In 1978 Daniel earned a Masters degree in Educational Administration and, he added, "I finished the course work for my EdD last year [2005] but I haven't been awarded my doctorate yet... because I still need to complete my paper... probably by spring of 2007."

Summarizing his 34 year work history in urban education, Daniel joined the small urban school district in 1972 and worked nine years as a middle school regular education teacher before moving to another middle school in the district as the football and basketball coach. Nine years later Daniel was promoted to assistant principal of the same middle school. After only one year as assistant principal, Daniel was promoted to district assistant superintendent. His promotion, he believes, was based on 19 years of experience working in the district, his reputation for getting things done, and his graduate

level university training in educational administration. His responsibilities as assistant superintendent included labor relations, human resources, transportation, facilities and maintenance. Ten years later Daniel was appointed superintendent of the district and served in that capacity for three years, until he retired in 2003 after 32 years of service in, as he said, "that small urban district."

Daniel "only stayed retired for several months" because he received a call from a middle school principal in this urban school district who "offered him a job as a curriculum coordinator in her middle school." Daniel accepted the job, he says, "because I realized I missed that interaction with students at the building level." Eight months later, Daniel was promoted to assistant principal of a K- 8 elementary/middle school. One year later, in 2005, a six person school principal selection committee selected Daniel to be principal of his current 6 - 8 middle school.

According to Daniel, 652 students attend his middle school. Approximately 81% of his students qualify for free and reduced lunch and, he said, "100% are African-American." Of the 104 personnel that work in his school, 40 (38%) are regular education teachers; 26 (25%) are special education teachers or aides; 30 personnel (31%) provide staff support services; and 6 (6%) of the 104 school personnel are school administrators. The six administrators, Daniel noted, include one curriculum coordinator; three curriculum leaders; one assistant principal and himself, as school principal.

Leadership training

Daniel has had no special education training but is expected to provide instructional leadership for the special education teachers and staff that works in his school. Daniel did not reveal the number of special education students in his middle

school, but did explain that 26% of his staff are special education teachers or aides needed to accommodate the "growing number" of students in his middle school who have been diagnosed as requiring special-education. Daniel believes he and his teaching staff would benefit from special-education in-service training that could improve their skills and capacity to assess, diagnose and understand which of his 652 students need, or do not need, special-education services and support. Daniel explained why he and other urban principals should receive special-education training as an integral part of their university training, district professional development training and leadership preparation program:

> This whole special ed piece... training would help. Students who have been misdiagnosed or who are borderline, how do we recognize those students? We had a workshop yesterday... focusing on students exhibiting the same types of behaviors as kids in special-ed but the parents refused to sign the documents. How do we in-service teachers who have been teaching [for] 25, 30 years, but who don't understand what inclusion means...don't know how you reach that population of youngsters... how to do a lesson plan that would allow them to...get the students started and pull a couple of kids out to give them some additional one on one? If I were more knowledgeable about how that's done I could provide that to my staff... when there was a need.
>
> We may not be able to tap into special-education funding because the students have not been diagnosed... but there are other resources out there. We could possibly reduce class sizes in a couple of areas... to provide more one-on-one instruction... but when you've got 32 kids and one teacher, there's no way...not a whole lot of time you can devote to one or two individuals who need more time than you're able to give them. Or, their parents don't want the stigma. Or, in some instances, parents have agreed to have them placed, but they tested a little bit above the area that would allow them to receive the services. A lot of these kids have not been diagnosed, and they're sitting there, and they're failing.

Daniel admitted that his previous "small urban school district" did not have a leadership development program for their aspiring principals or school leaders. Each principal, he explained, was basically responsible for getting the leadership training they thought they needed. Daniel confessed that in his previous district, "we relied on consultants or the Independent School District (ISD) to come out and in-service us and to provide some staff development. But no, we didn't have our own management Academy for building principals."

Daniel believes the labor relations and law classes in his educational leadership

graduate program were appropriate and helpful for his previous responsibilities as the director of human resources, assistant superintendent and district superintendent, but, he said, "that training was not applicable to the job responsibility of a building principal" - his current responsibility in this district. Daniel appreciated the opportunity to attend the district aspiring principal leadership training program in 2004, when he was assistant principal and school leadership training after he was promoted to building principal in 2005. Daniel complemented the district for implementing the school leadership training program as an integral part of an ongoing process of professional development for school leaders.

Leadership priorities

After only one year as building principal, Daniel believes he is making slow progress towards achieving the AYP goals and objectives mandated by his district, the state of Michigan and No Child Left Behind. Daniel's middle school did not make AYP in 2006 and is currently coded as being in AYP restructuring - Phase 5. Daniel is confident that he can make the needed improvements, however, he did confide that, "the pace, this year being the first year, has been somewhat slow." Daniel clearly understands his role and responsibility as principal of an urban middle school that is being restructured. "I'm the educational leader in the building charged with making sure," Daniel said, "that the school makes adequate yearly progress (AYP)... that's my primary responsibility." Discussing his leadership approach to making AYP, Daniel said, "I have to make sure that my students and staff have the materials and resources they need in order to be successful... in order for them to improve their test scores." Daniel has concluded that a major inhibitor to achieving his school improvement objective is the

existing culture and climate of his school. From his perspective leading change is his number one priority;

> We have to change the culture in the building...to get students to understand what proper behavior was... change in terms of their decorum... how they carry themselves. Dealing with our parents ...making sure our parents understood that this was a partnership... the school has a responsibility but it's not our responsibility alone. Some of the things we're doing to change the culture ...we're holding students accountable and monitoring student progress very closely. We've offered after-school tutorials...formed a partnership with a local university ... where we have online tutoring now, something we started this year. It's been slow... but I have seen some improvements. You see the number of referrals on a particular kid... through interactions and interventions, you see the number of referrals being reduced... he's staying in class more... out in the hall less. His grades may have been all D's and F's, but now he's getting some C's...he's making some progress

Daniel understands that implementing cultural change and achieving his school improvement goals will require the support and buy-in of his entire school staff. One of his first actions as a new principal was, he said, to interact with his staff to develop a shared vision for the school and get their insights, ideas and suggestions for where and how the school could be improved. He said:

> I asked for their help. When I first came on board I had a talk with them about what they saw the school doing different from last year. Where did they want to see the school go? Were they satisfied with the condition the school was in, not only the physical plant but the schools reputation? If the answer was no, then... let's talk about what we need to do, collectively... because I can't do it by myself. They said they wanted change but... you have to be willing to put in the required time and energy.
>
> We put some things in place... like hall monitoring, staff assistance, interacting with kids on passes from classes. For example, if you did give them a pass, monitor how long they were gone from your classroom... and don't write any passes during fifth and sixth hour, because after lunch.... Many of the staff has stepped up. We're not where we should be but we're making progress. I'm getting by-in... and some are bringing other staff persons along. We still have those who are resisting, saying it's a lot of work ... and I just want to teach. I'm telling my staff we have to do more than just teach content.

Unique urban school issues

Commenting on major similarities between the two urban school districts in which he has worked, Daniel said (1) both are urban districts, (2) both have a majority African-American population and, (3) the vast majority of the student population qualify for free or reduced lunch. Key differences between the two urban districts, he says, are: (1) organizational culture; (2) size; and (3) the amount of one-on-one and interpersonal

interaction in the smaller district between district staff and building personnel. Elaborating on the differences between the two urban districts, Daniel said:

> Differences? There was a difference in district culture... it was smaller... and you didn't have as much red tape. You had more interpersonal interaction with those who were in decision-making positions in terms of getting things done ... or if you needed them quickly. In terms of students, kids are kids. And the parents, at one time, were very, very involved ... and you had more home visits. On the administrative side, it was more hands-on. For example, there was more collaboration with the union... we could sit down and talk about things we needed to see happen... it wasn't a matter of whether it was negotiations time or not...we could make certain things happen.
>
> This district [current district], being the size it is, there are more layers in terms of the bureaucracy... and more departments. If you look at what I did from the assistant superintendent position, it was quite a bit... you were charged with a very large responsibility and you had to acquire the skills needed in order to be effective at what you did. That's why, although my doctorate is in education leadership... the school law, labor relations, dispute resolution, contract negotiations, those types of things... I can't use those courses as a building principal, but they prepared me to do what I had to do then.

Daniel divided his discussion of unique urban school issues into two categories: (A) school building issues he is attempting to address and (B) issues he believes can only be resolved by district level administrators. One example of a building level issue is the lack of adequate resources. To illustrate this point, Daniel noted that his school building is, "over 100 years old" does not have adequate custodial resources and it is very difficult to get building repairs done in a timely fashion:

> You know, there are days when we may have just one custodian in the building, for this entire building, and that's not adequate. I mean, I've got, we've counted them, approximately 58 holes in the walls in terms of classrooms. These were there over the summer, when I got here they were there, and we still have not been able to get them plastered. I've been told that they have prioritized it, and I've been told that they are coming but....

Another unique building level issue is the negative image students and parents have of Daniel's school because of the schools history of low MEAP scores [Michigan standardized test] and not making AYP, he said, "for four years in a row." Daniel argued that the districts approach of, "changing the school name... five years ago... in an attempt to give it [his school] a different image... and change the culture [from a low to high achieving school" was superficial change that has not worked. A much better approach,

Daniel said, would be for the district to provide him with the resources he needs to, "make sure all the children succeed," - a lofty goal espoused by the district.

Three district level issues that Daniel would like to see addressed are (1) district bureaucracy; (2) early reading interventions programs; and (3) alternative schools for middle school students. The first issue, district bureaucracy often manifests itself in the form of "lots of red tape" that inhibits or precludes him from getting a timely response to his request for approval, critical resources or support for his school. From his perspective the root cause of the "red tape" issue are the multiple layers of district staff scattered across multiple departments within the district. The smaller size of his previous district (1) made it easier for a school administrator to get information or support from the district, and (2) required district staff and administrators like him to operate more efficiently and effectively.

The second issue the district must address, Daniel said, is early reading interventions at the elementary school grade level before they get to middle or high school. "If we don't get these kids reading and literate by the third or fourth grade, game's over," Daniel said. The district should critically analyze the current K-12 curriculum and find a way to, "allocate more of the time to reading and mathematics." Daniel pressed his argument by saying:

> Having this well-rounded educational offering [curriculum] for our kids really is not serving them well when they can't read, social studies and languages arts are all for naught... okay. You talk about reading and writing across the content areas in every class...teach reading in every class... that's not happening. And we're fooling ourselves if we think it is. It's just not happening. When you have kids in middle school who are 16 and in the seventh grade, you've got a problem that we have failed to address.

Daniel believes the district should establish alternative schools for middle school students. Some middle school students, Daniel argues, find it difficult to transition to high

school, demonstrate appropriate behavior inside and outside of the classroom, and still maintain acceptable levels of academic achievement. He said:

> We have a challenge as it relates to alternative educational placement for middle school kids. We have alternative high schools in urban areas but the problems that we see kids experiencing [is] they don't just start in the ninth grade. There are students who need, like we're starting to implement now, the single gender classes in middle school... all-male classes, all female classes... maybe one or two classes to start, to see how it works. But we need to have better interventions for kids early on...because sometimes, when we have these programs in ninth grade, it's too late. It's too late.

Leadership preparation

Daniel believes the best way for a principal to develop urban school leadership skills, knowledge, and capacity is through a mix of, "schooling, work experiences, and having some measure of success in your job performance... being successful where and at whatever you were assigned. That way," Daniel continued, "you demonstrate that you've learned how to pick yourself up and get back into the game...and that's key." Mentors, Daniel confessed, have not helped prepare him for his current role and responsibility as an urban middle school principal. Instead, he was adamant that his best training and preparation was his 34 years of experience as an urban school teacher, sports coach, curriculum leader, assistant principal, assistant superintendent and district superintendent.

Daniel was eager to pass on the following advice to aspiring, assistant or new urban school principals. He said:

> I would tell that person that when you view a principalship understand that it's not always what you think it is. It does require a very, very high level of commitment... and time. It requires a lot of work... and ongoing preparation. It's a tremendous responsibility. If you're doing the job that you've been hired to do, you're responsible for the education of every student who is in your building, okay. And I firmly believe that if a student leaves you and they are unable to read, write, or compute, you've failed them. You have failed those kids... those children, okay, 11, 12, 13, and in my case, 15, 16, 17 years old. It's a trust that you have with them. Parents... parental support, even if you don't get it, you still have to teach that child.
>
> And understand, things happen in urban schools. My kids, they bring it to school with them every day... and you've got to prepare yourself for that. There are things that are going on in their lives... you have to reach out to them. You have to do more than just teach kids. You have to grow

them. And you have to be willing to give that because they need it...if you're gonna reach them and make a difference in their lives. So think about it real hard. If this is what you wanna do, fine, you know, we need good principals all over the map. But understand, it does require a lot of effort and a lot of work.

Leadership programs

Since joining this district Daniel has participated in a substantial amount of leadership training offered by the district's leadership academy and a variety of district staff such as the law department or school improvement specialists. He likes the fact, he said, that "there is ongoing professional development," to help him stay current on educational research; school improvement techniques; best practice school procedures; and academic strategies that can benefit urban middle school students. He said:

> The learning never stops. You have to go out and find out what the new state mandates are, and how they're gonna impact what we do. Report requirements... the law as it relates to federal funds and what you can spend these funds on. Laws as it relates to special-education, Title I, you know, you have to stay abreast. Your responsibility as a building principal is to make sure that you're following the guidelines. For example, when they changed the pupil accounting system, you know, they called the principals in and made sure we were aware of how it was done. I applaud this district for providing ongoing training.

Adding a structured internship to the district's existing principal leadership training program, Daniel believes, would make the program even better. In addition to university training and district in-service, Daniel posits that a school administrator internship and the opportunity to shadow and work directly with experienced urban school principals would be extremely valuable. Similar to mandatory in-service for teachers, an in-service for aspiring and assistant principals could provide hands-on work experience, beneficial exposure, and a principal's perspective to school leadership issues, challenges and school leadership strategies for improving student academic achievement. Daniel said:

> Even though you have the coursework... and the presenters have background knowledge, that's very helpful... but you really need to be there, you know, and have in-office training. Just like student teaching, all the coursework won't prepare you for the actual day-to-day rigors of teaching, nor will aspiring administrator seminars prepare you for being in a building... you just have to be there. I think if that changes [if an internship is added to the program] you'll see administrators better prepared.

Sixth case study Kathy, Principal 6-8 middle school

KATHY: I found myself in a very unusual position...I was really grateful and flattered that I was selected to be principal of this newly created middle school because, this was one of the first charter schools in Michigan and one of the first de-chartered schools in the nation. It went from charter to public. There's a law that if a charter school fiduciary decides not to finance the charter school they become a de facto public school. I was honored to be selected as principal because that was a real tricky road because you're dealing with an entire student body whose parents chose to leave the public school district in the first place. And now all of a sudden, they're back. I felt it was really an honor that the district saw skills in me, that they chose me to do this then, because remember, at the time, I was an assistant principal in charge of just over 150 kids the day before, and now, the next day, I'm over 800 children and this staff that was 2/3 charter, 1/6 public school district, and 1/6 of the staff came in new.

Participant profile

Kathy's 6-8 middle school is located on a busy boulevard in what appears to be a low-income neighborhood near the center of this urban city. Neatly trimmed grass surrounds the playground, and the attractive front entrance of the school gave the appearance of order - until I noticed that the name of the school was missing from the front façade of the building. When I asked Kathy why her school had no name, she smiled and explained:

> I've been in this building for four years and it hasn't been the same school for two years in a row, you know... with all the things that are happening in the district... like multiple school closings... the elementary school proximal to us is closing and moving into our building... so we're going to be a K-8 building in the fall...so, we'll have another transformation.

Kathy's explanation provided a partial answer to why her school had no name on the front of the building and also explained why Kathy was of interviewing within the district , as she said, "for all kinds of things," including a principal job in another school. Kathy confided that, "The plan is for the elementary school principal to come over," and take over as principal of the newly created K-8 elementary/middle school. When I asked Kathy, "Where will you go?" She smiled and replied, "I don't know yet. News at 11."

The district executive to whom Kathy reports had described Kathy as an effective urban school leader who has strong leadership skills; understands school operations; willing and able to make needed changes; and has demonstrated she has the leadership skills required to improve student achievement. The executive's testimony regarding Kathy's reputation as a school leader may explain why Kathy was originally selected to be the principal of her current middle school - a school that was previously a charter school. Kathy shared the following background of her school:

> I found myself in a very unusual position...I was really grateful and flattered that I was selected to be principal of this newly created middle school because, this was one of the first charter schools in Michigan and one of the first de-chartered schools in the nation. It went from charter to public. There's a law that if a charter school fiduciary decides not to finance the charter school they become a de facto public school. I was honored to be selected as principal because that was a real tricky road because you're dealing with an entire student body whose parents chose to leave the public school district in the first place. And now all of a sudden, they're back. I felt it was really an honor that the district saw skills in me, that they chose me to do this then, because remember, at the time, I was an assistant principal in charge of just over 150 kids the day before, and now, the next day, I'm over 800 children and this staff that was 2/3 charter, 1/6 public school district, and 1/6 of the staff came in new.

When she was a young girl, Kathy's career ambition was to become a doctor, however, she confessed, a combination of circumstance, her in-laws, and an unexpected foray into teaching, influenced her to pursue a career in urban education:

> The way I got into education is kind of serendipitous because I always wanted to be a surgeon. But I got married and I had children. My father-in-law had always said, 'You know what Kathy? You would make a great teacher.' And I said, 'no, I wouldn't...that's not for me.' Then there was a downsizing at the job that I had, and somebody said well, why don't you substitute teach? And I said, maybe I'll do that in the interim...and that was all she wrote, you know, I really loved teaching. That was 20 years ago and I've been in education every since. So, my father-in-law was right.

Kathy joined the district in 1986 after earning a BS in Psychology and a BA in Biology and Chemistry. During her 20 year career in the district, Kathy worked as a K-8 classroom science teacher for 14 years; two years as a K-8 assistant principal; and four years in her current position as a 6-8 middle school principal. The racial and economic demographics of her student population, Kathy noted, has remained pretty much the same

-approximately 98% African American and 80% free and reduced lunch. The most significant change in her student population over the past four years has been the significant decline in student enrollment. When Kathy took over as principal, her enrollment, "was over 800 children." Her current student enrollment is "now about 480 students." In addition, the composition of the school staff when she became principal was, "2/3 charter, 1/6 public school district and 1/6 of the staff came in new " she said. Her first challenge was to get this diverse group of teachers working together as a team. She explained her approach:

> It was a real juggling act.... First, I called the staff together ... and we had a lot of meetings. And I said, you know, your buddies are all looking for us to fail... and the charter schools are going to say, oh, they failed because they went to a public school district. Public schools will say, oh, they failed because they used to be a charter school. We're going to call them all out. We're going to make them all eat their words.

Leadership training

In addition to a BS in psychology, a BA in biology and chemistry, and a Masters degree in teaching, Kathy only needs one class to complete her Education Specialist degree requirements. Because her district requires candidates for principal to have completed graduate-level classes in school administration, Kathy "used the education specialist degree as a means to get the principal's job." Kathy commented that she is planning to "take the additional 50 or 60 credit hours required to get a Ph.D. in Education" because she would "like to be a district superintendent, one day."

Although she believes her university training, district professional development and on-the-job training have prepared her for district executive level responsibility, Kathy confided that two years ago she "interviewed for an assistant principal position in the district and didn't get it." But, she said, " that turned out to be a good thing, you know,

God is good. I just ask the Lord to order my steps, and just lead me to where he knows I need to be. It's worked out pretty good so far." Kathy has faith that she will achieve her career objectives but is a strong believer that it is her responsibility to design and implement a training curriculum that will prepare her to assume higher levels of urban school leadership.

Some components of Kathy's leadership training curriculum are mandated by her school district, while other training is suggested, but not mandated, by the Michigan Department of Education. For example, all school principals in Michigan must apply for recertification every five years by documenting that they have completed the equivalent of six credit hours of school leadership training within the last five-year period. The school district must indicate that they approve the content of the six credit hours before the principal's recertification documentation is submitted to the state for their review and approval. "Principals can decide," Kathy says, "what to take [school administration courses or leadership training sessions] based on what you think you need to know or improve on." From Kathy's perspective, the bottom-line is that she is responsible and accountable for her school leadership training.

Kathy was very critical of her formal university training for two reasons: First, she estimates that only 15% of her university training was focused on preparing her to work in an urban school setting, and second, she was disappointed that her university training gave her, "a pedagogy to refer to but did not give a real-life explanation of the urban classroom." Kathy then shared several reasons why she believes that her district' s leadership training program for assistant principals and school principals was, "exemplary:"

> Number one, we had input in terms of what we needed. Number two, the class leader did a really

> good job putting the program together because, as a recent urban principal herself, she knew what the needs were coming into that setting ... so she provided a lot of insight. And third, there's a new principals connection where they [newly appointed principals] stay together as a cohort for a year. I think it's an excellent program. It went from the 'who you know' philosophy of becoming an administrator [in this district] to actually having the training. So, you know, I thought it was excellent.

From Kathy's perspective, "District training is designed to meet the needs of principals in the [urban] district... with its focus on testing, evaluation, legal, special-education, NCLB and parent involvement."

When asked how school leadership training could be improved, Kathy offered two suggestions: First, "universities should have curriculum and class content based on where you are headed... either urban, suburban, rural schools or special-education." And second, because her budget training had been "too theoretical," Kathy was adamant that, "Leadership training should include the nuts and bolts of how to do school finance and budgeting... and should focus on what [finance and budget numbers] goes where."

Leadership priorities

"My top leadership priorities would probably change if you asked me tomorrow" Kathy said, "but, today, May 6, 2006, my answer is instructional leadership, teacher quality, school culture and declining student enrollment." Kathy noted that instructional leadership is a concept and priority that she prefers to discuss in the context of what she actually does versus what she might do theoretically. For her, instructional leadership means "leading by example, focusing on student academic excellence, minimizing distractions and disruption of classroom instruction, and providing her teachers and staff with the resources they need to teach." She said:

> To be an instructional leader ... everything you do is moving towards the educational and instructional excellence of children. Making sure the teachers have all the materials in place they need. Monitoring, managing and administering the course of the school day... by setting up a schedule that is amenable to learning and minimizing the impact on the classroom. For example,

> not too many announcements over the PA, like Bobby, come get your coat, cuz, all these things, little things but they impact instruction... because, if you make a blanket PA announcement, everybody's class is stopping... instead, call Bobby's classroom.

Kathy believes instructional leadership applies to all aspects of her school leadership responsibility – not just instruction. "I don't think of instructional leadership as a relationship between the principal and teachers... I think it encompasses everyone." A total of 71 teachers, staff support personnel specialist and school administrators work in Kathy's building - 24 employees are regular teachers; 10 are special-education teachers; 34 are staff support specialists; and 3 are school administrators, including 1 curriculum leader, 1 curriculum coordinator, and Kathy as principal. The following comments illustrate how Kathy attempts to provide instructional leadership to all members of her staff – not just teachers:

> Everybody's included and everybody is empowered. When we do things... we do things together. The lunch room aides are invited, the custodians are invited. As a matter of fact, we had a meeting and the custodian led the meeting because he had some ideas that he wanted to present. A good idea doesn't have to come from me, it comes from whoever it comes from. They're very involved. They teach lessons. One of my security persons is the cheerleading coach... one of the noon hour aides is the dance coach... and might come and say I've noticed this about this group of kids... there's a dance lesson... can I teach it? [Kathy's answer...] Yeah!

Teacher quality is her second priority. Kathy says one approach to improving teacher quality is "to make sure that you're evaluating and assessing what instruction is going on and how that instruction is being received and perceived by the kids." She attempts to assess teacher quality every day by conducting informal teacher walk-throughs. "When I'm walking down the halls I'm looking in every class... peeking my head in. Just because a class is noisy doesn't mean there's not instruction going on...and a silent class doesn't mean learning is going on either you know. When they're doing science experiments it's not going to be a silent class" Kathy suggested.

In addition to daily walk-throughs, Kathy also conducts formal teacher

evaluations. The major difference between the two assessments, she explained, is their depth and duration. "The walk-throughs that I do every day are not an evaluation. An evaluation is a formal tool that contractually takes one hour. It takes an entire class period because you have to see the beginning of a lesson, the course of the lesson, and the closure of the lesson. But, a walk-through, you can do by sticking your head in the door."

Her third priority, developing a common culture for her middle school, is an ongoing challenge. When the two schools were merged four years ago Kathy said she had "about 40 teachers." All 40 of the teachers, Kathy noted, "needed some tweaking... in terms of what they needed at the time... and about three or four," Kathy confessed, "I tweaked right out the door... some charter and some were public." Today she has 24 teachers in her school; however, four years into her principalship, Kathy is still attempting to merge her ex-charter school teachers and public school teachers into a high-performing team of urban school educators. Public school teachers, Kathy noted, are accustomed to working in a school culture framed by a union contract. "Charter school teachers weren't," she said, "but when they came into the district they had the opportunity to join the union as active members or simply pay union dues." Many of her teachers actively participate in the teachers union because as long as they pay union dues, "bottom line, you might as well get the benefits of being in a Union."

It is important for aspiring urban school principals to understand "that every single building has a different culture and everybody [principals] has a different style of leadership." The "grand mystery," she says, "is matching the leader to the culture of the institution that they find themselves in." In addition, she argues, an urban school principal must have mastery of a wide variety of leadership tools and techniques for managing and leading change within the school teaching staff. "You know, a teacher will

be in a building for 20 years while a principal's lifetime [as principal of the school] is usually three years. So, you know, they'll [teachers] just wait.... they can acknowledge whatever platitudes you send them, but they're gonna do what they wanna do." Aspiring principals, Kathy suggested, must know how to analyze a school culture, understand where people in the school have been, where they are now and where they're coming from. The key, she says, is to know, "how best to move them to where you feel they need to go and also make sure that they buy into it, as well." Because, she says, "If they don't buy into it, then they're not going to do it."

Kathy's fourth priority is the precipitous drop in student enrollment in her school over the past four years - from 800 to 480 students. Kathy believes the sharp decline in enrollment was caused by three major factors: (1) few school age children live in the neighborhood; (2) high rates of underemployment and unemployment throughout the city; and (3) her district's strategy of closing 6-8 middle schools like hers and opening more K–8 elementary/middle schools in an attempt to attract parents and retain children in the schools from kindergarten through eight grade. Kathy used the new condominium complex located across the street from her school to highlight the issue of few school age children living in the neighborhood. "First of all," she said," where I'm at [her school location], you've seen it, there is new housing but there's no children. It's primarily empty-nesters. So, even though it looks like a thriving neighborhood, it's not enough to sustain the building."

Commenting on the relationship between high unemployment in her urban community and declining student enrollment, Kathy asserted the following:

> The majority of my kids came from the charter, not from the local neighborhood... and a great number of those parents are, you know are middle-class parents. They're losing their jobs left, right and center... and they are leaving the city. We would do interviews, and it was always, we love the

> school, we love everything, but I got to find a job. As they were matriculating out, there was nobody filling them in.

Kathy then explained how her middle school is being affected because, she disclosed, "the district is changing more and more over to K- 8 schools:"

> As more and more schools become K -8, well, who's gonna send their sixth-grader to me. If you hear from the guy in the cubicle next to you [at work] that the school is a very good school, you can transfer your child to the school. There's just some forms that you have to fill out saying I agree to get them there, you know, there's no student transportation, that type of thing. If you get your child into a good neighborhood school and they are K - 8, why change?

Unique urban school issues

Many school issues Kathy has to deal with throughout the school year are not included in her building principal job description. As a result, those issues and her efforts will likely not be discussed or assessed during her performance evaluation. For instance, a student's home environment or lack of parental support and guidance may be an issue for Kathy, but her efforts to address the issue will not be reflected in her performance appraisal. Kathy made it clear that she would never allow a lack of specificity in her job description to inhibit or prevent her from attempting to do what she believes is the right thing to support her students, school staff, or parents. From her perspective, not having a rigidly defined performance plan gives her the freedom and opportunity to develop a leadership style and approach she believes is appropriate for her, and her school. Summarizing her job, Kathy made it clear that she believes her role and responsibility as principal is to provide each of her urban students with, "an excellent education." She says:

> I understand my role is to be the executive of that setting [her urban school]. Whatever that mean. For instance, it may be a peer, it may be a coach, a mentor. It may be a mother or it may be an educator. Whatever is needed...it may be a custodian. But, it's my responsibility to make sure that active, persistent, excellent education takes place in that setting. Do whatever it takes to make sure that happens.

The following story is an example of what Kathy means when she says, "Do

whatever it takes to make sure that happens."

> One day, this parent thanked me for breaking into her house. Her child got a ride to school every day. And the car pool lady said, well, is she here? I said no, she's not here yet. I went by the house. Nobody was there. So I called the mom but we couldn't get hold of her. So I kept calling the house, didn't get an answer, so myself and another teacher went over there and so we're knocking, knocking, knocking, knocking. I said, I know this child is in there ... I'm breaking a window and I'm going in. And the teacher said, well, I'll be waiting right over here when the police come. I broke the window and I went in. The little girl said she wasn't feeling well and she had taken some Benadryl, and then she took some more Benadryl, and she knocked herself out. So the mother was like thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. So that's what she thanked me for ... because I scooped the baby up and brought her to school with me and said come on, let's walk around and that kind of stuff. So that's what she thanked me for... for breaking into her house.

Leadership preparation

Kathy argued that being prepared for urban school leadership is just as important – if not more so – than her university academic training. University training, she admits, does provide theoretical models of teaching and learning, exposure to research-based educational practice, and help aspiring principals meet district and state certification requirements for school administrators. However, being prepared for urban school leadership is more about a person's personal and professional commitment to serving multiple needs of urban students and school staff. Academic training can help develop academic leadership skills required to be efficient in the job but may not help prepare an aspiring principal develop the personal commitment Kathy feels is required to be effective in getting the job done. From her perspective, the key to preparation is making a conscious choice and career decision to become a principal in an urban school. The major reason Kathy decided to work in an urban school setting was, she said, "Because I wanted to be some place where I could effectuate change... not only in the classroom but attitudinally as well." And, she continued, "I felt I could make the biggest impact in an urban setting - and not have to spend a lot of time trying to prove who I was and what my credentials are. That's a waste of time... and I didn't want to waste my time."

Urban school principals, she advises, must be prepared to be held accountable for everything that happens in their school but, in many cases, despite not have the training, skills or experience to do many of the things that need to be done. "You can learn anything," she argues, "how to do the budget... use the student code of conduct... curriculum... or how to rate a teacher as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, but," she confessed, "I don't pretend to know everything, but what I don't know I surround myself with. Why spend my time trying to do something that I'm not good at when somebody who is good at it can knock it out in an hour."

Kathy is an ardent believer that perhaps the most important preparation for urban school leadership is, "having a genuine admiration and affection for the children." From her perspective, empathy, compassion and caring are the best preparation because, she said, "I think that drives the best...drives you not to want to see somebody harm children... or to see no education taking place."

Leadership programs

When I asked Kathy how she might assess an urban school leadership training program, she said she would start by asking two questions: First, "Ask the parents and the kids if they believe their school is providing a good education?" And second, when a principal completes the program she would want to know, "Does the urban school principal have the necessary skills to get the job done?" Kathy has participated in multiple district leadership development programs including, she noted, "the district's leadership training program, as an assistant principal, before being promoted to principal in 2002." In addition, in 2005, Kathy attended the Harvard Urban Leaders Program. The major benefit of the Harvard program, she said, was it helped her understand that many of

the issues she is facing in her urban school are also issues in rural and suburban districts, wealthy school districts, and schools in other countries around the world:

> Every day was focused on a different issue...Ruby Payne came and spoke on the framework of poverty...someone else speaking about inclusion, and someone else about writing in a content area. So every day it was a different focus. One of the things that I learned listening to my colleagues from around the country, and around the world, is that we have a lot of the same issues. They may manifest themselves slightly different but we have a lot of the same issues. For example, parent involvement is a universal issue... but one thing that I've taken away from the program is it doesn't matter if your mom is drugged out and selling crack or using crack or if your mom is at a conference in Aspen, Colorado, you're still neglected. Another thing is writing... the way that technology is these days, young people have too many mechanisms not to be proficient in writing , you know, with spell check and the creative spelling they see all around them... these are children that went through that whole language bit when they were in elementary school... now they're in high school and it's like... they spell boys B O Y Z, you know, because that's what they say.

Mentoring is not a formal part of the district leadership training and preparation program, however, during the four years she has been principal, Kathy has functioned as a mentor for two assistant principals that have worked in her school. Three pieces of mentoring advice Kathy says she has given aspiring and new urban school principals are: First, "Love your job or get out of urban education." Second, "If you're in the game for the dollar, or the hours, you'll be disappointed." And third, "Be who you are at all times... don't try to be like me."

Seventh case study George, Principal 9-12 high school

> GEORGE: Being an instructional leader, driving the curriculum, and doing quality control on the teaching staff - according to the district, are my primary responsibility. However, when I look at what they ask me to do...I'm also an accountant, and a facilities manager, and a security guard, and a nurse and, all that. They tell us that our major responsibility is academic but with all these other responsibilities that overshadow that, that really does not turn out to be the bulk of my day... 70% of my time is doing things other than that.

Participant profile

George is an African-American high school principal in his late 40's or early 50's. He grew up in this urban community, attended public schools here and still lives in the

city with his wife and kids. After graduating from a university in Michigan with a bachelor's degree in physical sciences and math, George joined this urban school district and worked as a middle school math teacher for five years. In 1982, frustration with district politics, excessive bureaucracy and low pay drove George to quit his teaching job and take a job in the private sector selling life insurance. George explained why he left teaching and, equally important, why he returned:

> I knew I wanted to work with our [African-American] kids, and... I loved the classroom. To me it was the best job I could ever have cuz it was enjoyable and, you know, the rewards were right there. ...all of these youngsters coming to you for the content, and that role model piece. I felt uplifted by that...I loved it. But, I didn't feel like I'd influence enough children in the course of a year... only 165 kids a year... that's as many as you can touch... so I felt limited. In addition, I was so disgusted with the [district] bureaucracy, the politics ... we couldn't make a change. So the opportunity came to leave... and the money was better... so I left... sold insurance...and made about double what I was making as a teacher.
>
> After about a year, I realized that I really miss the teaching part so I ... came back into teaching school... for half the money...but there are rewards the other job couldn't provide. I was feeding my family but.... People would ask me, What do you do for a living? When I told them I was a teacher, I was proud of it...when I told them I was in insurance rep, it was just a job. That was really what it was. So when I came back in 1983, I realized that, okay, I'm in for the duration...this is what I'm supposed to do.

After returning to the district in 1983, George worked for the next ten years as a high school computer applications teacher. In 1993 George was promoted to the position of Dean of students and, over the next 12 months, worked as the Dean of students in two different high schools before being promoted to assistant principal of a middle school. While still an assistant principal, George moved to the high school level and worked for the next seven years in two different high schools. During the ten year period 1993 to 2003, George earned a Masters degree in Education Supervision and Leadership. In 2003 George was promoted to his current position as high school principal.

George estimates that 99% of the 1000 students in his high school are African-American and "upwards of 75% qualify for the free and reduced lunch program." Among the 136 personnel working in his high school, 60 (44%) are regular education teachers

and 10 (12%) are special education teachers or special-education aides. Among the 27 members of his school support staff are 6 public safety officers; 8 bus drivers; 4 guidance counselors; 7 food-service specialists; 4 secretary/bookkeepers; 3 boiler operators; and 5 custodians. The 10 administrators working in his high school include 5 curriculum leaders, 4 assistant principals, and George - as school principal.

Leadership training

George felt compelled to take ownership of his own training because he was concerned about his lack of teacher leadership experience. "Most of my colleagues," he explained, "had spent some time as a content Department head... I have always felt as though I missed something because, as Dean of students, and as an assistant principal, I didn't have any teachers under my umbrella." The best training for the principalship, George said, was on-the-job training he planned and initiated for himself. Because he believed his lack of teacher leadership experience could make it difficult for him to get promoted to building principal, George decided, while he was still Dean of students, to implement his own leadership training strategy. His strategy was, he said:

> To take on the task and jobs that are essential to school operations, but nobody really wanted to do... like, for instance, North-Central accreditation... or student and teacher master scheduling... these are time consuming tasks that require a whole lot of paperwork and coordination with a whole lot of people, inside and outside the building... but, I wanted to learn all the pieces of the job.

George did concede that "at the university level there are some big picture things that we really needed... like we really need to understand the laws and how schools are funded... so some courses were useful." However, school leadership training provided by the universities he attended were, he argued, "largely theoretical and didn't get into the nuts and bolts... had no coursework on day-to-day school operations" From his

perspective, "most of his professors didn't seem interested in connecting the real world to the theoretical." To illustrate his point, George described how he was treated in an undergraduate teaching methods class when he attempted to discuss educating urban students:

> I was actually punished at [a university in Michigan]... had to take one class [Methods of Teaching Science] twice. I made the mistake of inquiring if they were going to give us some methods that would be more useful in the environment [urban] where children didn't come to school excited about learning science... I got a very low grade. I got an A in everything we turned in, lesson plans, materials, checklist, practice teaching in small groups... everything I did, I got an A, but... my final grade was a D. And I never missed a class. I asked my advisor how I got the low grade. He said, well, we all agreed that you didn't seem to get it... and that was as far as he went. The next semester I took it over, kept my yap shut, and got a B+. Same instructors, same assignments. So [the university] really didn't want you to talk about that [urban students] back then [1972-1973]...everything was theoretical ... they didn't want you to relate that theory to the real world.

George argued that the professional development provided by his urban school district is better than his university training. For example, George described two district leadership training sessions he attended as informative, beneficial and encouraging. One session was offered by the Skillman Institute, Center for School Leadership - "a series of workshops that were up-lifting...rah, rah type of cheerleading... but" George said, "in this line of work you really do need those." The second session was the Harvard Urban School Leadership training program he attended during the summer of 2005. The major benefit, George said, was hearing "experts from Ivy League schools" discussing educational theory that served to validate and vindicate his current approach to urban high school leadership and practice:

> There were eighteen or so lecturers during that ten day period... many of the theories they put out there where beliefs I already held but it was encouraging to hear the experts from prestigious Ivy League schools agree with me. They weren't always points of view that the district espouses and some of them were issues that frankly, I've gotten grief [from his district] for espousing... and then, suddenly, I get to Harvard and all of these acclaimed experts say, well, yes, that's the way it should be. So, you know, I thought the session was very encouraging.

Each of the seven school principals George worked for during his 27 year career have served as informal mentors – and several, he said, are still available to him if

needed. An important lesson he learned from all of his mentors, George confided, was how difficult it was to communicate and implement a compelling vision for the future of his urban school. Urban school principals, George suggested, should receive leadership training that helps them understand (1) how to get all members of their school to buy-in and support the principal's vision and (2), how to use their vision as a tool to support a tops-down and bottoms-up approach to urban school leadership. George described the difficulty he is having implementing his vision for his high school:

> If I want to bring about some systemic change in my building, I need my teachers to buy-in ....If they don't I get lip service...they go through the motions but nothing happens... you get into the nuts and bolts and they're doing exactly the same thing they had been doing. Teachers are ... independent people for the most part. Your most effective teachers are somewhat eccentric... you've got to convince them that this is what they need to do... you can't just boss them around.
>
> I think a big part of my job is communicating vision....develop one and then share it... where I think we can go, what our strengths are. You have to constantly revisit it... to the point where they say, okay, we don't think we need to see the vision again. But when it looks like we're straying from the path we do revisit... and I see the eyes roll... here we go again. But there can't be any gray areas, because, you know, you start making decisions based on that vision.

Leadership priorities

Improving his 60% high school graduation rate is one of George's highest priorities. To achieve this objective George claims he is implementing a five-part strategy that should help him meet the NCLB mandate of 85% high school graduation rate by 2014 or, as he said, "come very close to it." Critical elements of his strategy are (1) improving teacher quality; (2) enforcing current curriculum and academic content standards; (3) helping his ninth grade students get off to a fast start; (4) identifying and closing gaps in student's content knowledge; and (5) spending more time providing instructional leadership.

The first part of his strategy, improving teacher quality will require working with the district human resources department to help identify, hire, train and retain highly qualified teachers and assistant principals. George admits his greatest challenge has been

finding highly qualified candidates because (1) the district history regarding teacher layoffs, (2) salary competition for highly qualified teachers and (3) a significant number of unemployed white collar workers who may want to teach simply because they need a job - not because they have the requisite skills or passion George believes are required to teach urban children. George explained the district's history regarding teacher layoffs:

> When we did the layoffs last year they did an inefficient job...they laid off too many and then we can't get those people back. We don't pay the best...so when we run a teacher away, they've got families to feed, so they're acquiring a position in a better paying district ...and they're not coming back. We already have to deal with some of the scrubs that other districts won't take...we don't get the pick of the litter. The only time we get those folks [highly qualified teachers] is when they are people who have the mentality that a lot of folks of my generation had when we came out of school - we knew we were coming back home to teach...you wanted to teach African-American children...and, you wanted to teach in [an urban district].

Salary competition, George explained, makes it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and administrators:

> Right now, three of my assistant principals make less than most of the teachers that they supervise. Teachers have set hours... assistant principals don't. Any one of my assistant principals could go teach in [a suburban district]... and make more than what I pay them. They don't have a regular pay scale anymore [because assistant principals and school principals are no longer in the administrators union]...they [the district] looks at whatever they were making as a teacher and tack on a little bit more and say, okay, that's your assistant principals salary

In Michigan's sluggish economy an increasing number of unemployed college graduates are looking for a job with reasonable pay and good benefits. The challenge is to identify and select highly qualified candidates who want to teach in urban schools because they are passionate about educating urban kids - not just because they need a job:

> The other part is quality control, because, as you know, there are some folks who have degrees in education that really shouldn't be in teaching. Nowadays, with the economy being the way it is, and the approximate starting salary [teacher in this district] now about $35,000... the salary has attracted some people who are only here for the money. Teachers get medical, dental, vision... they get all of the people in their families covered...so now we have some folks who just need work. Some of them are turning out okay and some of them are not. So now we really have a big problem with the teacher who didn't come to help kids. We still have to weed out some.

The second part of George's strategy to improve graduation rates is to get teachers who are "accustomed to being independent" to deliver instruction based on existing

district and Michigan curriculum and content standards. The challenge will be getting 42 teachers in his high school to change or modify their current classroom practice:

> [This district] has really done a very good job of developing a curriculum that, if you can keep your teachers aligned with the curriculum, keeps instruction directly in line with what they've mapped out. At the high school level we've got pages and pages of exactly what they're [teachers] supposed to do. If they walk lockstep with the district, we see improvement from the kids. The problem is teachers are accustomed to being independent...that's been the tradition... if people follow the curriculum...that's the hard battle.... So, driving the curriculum is a big chunk.

Helping ninth grade students get off to a fast start is the third piece of his strategy. From George's perspective, a ninth grade student's academic success in high school depends on how well they learn to communicate, negotiate and resolve conflict with their teachers, and their peers - both inside and outside of the classroom. To help smooth the transition from middle school to high school, and get his ninth graders off to a fast start, George said, "I'm trying a different kind of orientation with my ninth graders." He explained:

> The district wants us to give them an orientation on the academic stuff... but my ninth graders are falling off the path for behavioral reasons, for the most part a lack of refusal skills. How to tell that kid, no, I don't want that marijuana. No, I'm not gonna skip. Or, no, I'm not going to do premarital sex this early in my life. They just aren't getting those skills. I'm running the orientation [one-week during the summer] like a seminar, a little video, question and answer, stand and deliver. My intent is for me and my four assistant principals to establish one-on-one relationships with about 100 kids each. At the end of that week there'll be 100 kids that feel like they know the principal and 100 kids that feel like they know an assistant principal. So, when they come [start high school in the fall] they don't feel abandoned. If you look at our stats, the ones that are falling off the mark and not graduating on time, the damage is done in the ninth grade, their first year of high school. They're supposed to come out of the ninth grade with 60 hours... if they come out with 45, you know, I'm losing the battle. But if I can get them to walk out of the ninth grade with 60 hours, and develop a workman's like approach to acquiring an education, and knowing that they have a part to play, then...

Closing gaps in student knowledge is the fourth element of George's strategy to increase the graduation rate. George recalls that as a middle school math teacher, "I had youngsters come to me, seventh and eighth graders, with some serious gaps in their knowledge... for instance some had actually not memorized basic multiplication facts." The challenge that presented for George was, he said, "At that point, I can't teach them

mathematics if you don't know arithmetic." As instructional leader of his high school George is trying to persuade, influence, or cajole each of his classroom teachers to use appropriate assessments to identify student knowledge gaps that need to be filled or reinforced. George understands the additional burden on his teachers but, as he said, "I took a pay cut to become a teacher. I really didn't feel as though I was going to ...do anything other than what I thought was absolutely right." He hopes the teachers will feel and do the same.

The fifth and final piece of George's strategy is to spend more time on instructional leadership versus school administration or operational issues. "Currently" he says, "I spend only something like 35% of my time on the instructional leadership side because I have content area experts to do a lot of that." A key reason he spends approximately 65% of his time on administrative and operational issues, George says, is excessive bureaucracy at the district level:

> Ideally I would like to switch those two around [35/65% time spent on instruction and administration] but the demands of the job... that takes my time on the administrative side. There's so much... like my Title I money. At the beginning of the year [a district executive] changed all of the requirements and put in four or five more levels of approval. Now, the same Title I program that's been good [approved] all of these years, all of a sudden cannot be approved. The other principals... they're all saying it...there's some barriers to us actually getting the job done... the bureaucracy downtown. For example, getting someone on the telephone is very difficult... if I need to call physical plant or payroll, human resources, budget or any of these divisions... you get voice mailboxes that are full... or set up so you can't leave a message. I would say that's about 80% of it [his 65% administrative workload] ... dealing with this bureaucracy. They've always talked about site-based management but it's never, ever, happened like that.

Unique urban school issues

George discussed four major issues that negatively affect his urban high school: (1) school building security and personnel safety; (2) the value his students place on education; (3) the lack of academic rigor in the classroom; and (4) school finance reform. Building security and personnel safety are a particular concern for George because of the

urban setting of his school. Located in the center of this urban city, the high school campus sprawls across a two block square area in what appears to be a low income residential neighborhood. The campus is bounded on all four sides by two or three story brick apartment buildings or small wood framed houses - many with sagging porches and peeling paint. One or two abandoned homes accent each block. Streets adjacent to the high school carry noisy car and truck traffic to nearby expressways. When I entered the high school through the student entrance - approximately one and a half blocks from the visitor parking lot - I passed through an airport like metal detector; had my briefcase inspected by two uniformed public safety officers; signed the visitor's log; and was given detailed directions to "the principals office." As I began the interview, George smiled when he asked if I had enjoyed my "long walk" from the visitor's parking lot to his office, but was quite serious when he explained that his concern for the safety and security of his students and staff made having "a single point of entry into the building" a critical part of his "school security plan."

The second urban school issue George discussed was the low value many of his urban students place on education. "You don't have to convince a middle-class child that there is a value to education" he argued, "because they are getting that from home." With approximately 56% of his students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, George is concerned that he has students from low income homes where the value and necessity of education may not be visible, demonstrated or effectively communicated. While acknowledging that his high school "does play a role", George was adamant that the primary responsibility for instilling education as a value - not just the dollar value of education - rests with the parents of each of his students.

> I have throwaway kids...their parents have turned their backs on them or are just not concerned. So,

> we have to be the school and the parent for that child, or we lose them. I have two housing projects in my boundaries and you know the tradition in public housing ...there are households where they don't have any person working. That means that child is not growing up with the work ethic that we take for granted. That means we [urban school teachers and administrators] have to first convince them that there is a value to education.

George made it clear that his comments regarding "throwaway kids" were directed at only a subset of African-American parents. Most African-American parents, he believes, have always placed a high value on education and, he noted, work hard to provide the best possible education for their children. "But these days" George notes, "it doesn't seem as though the parents value education at the same level." He speculates that part of the issue may be related to what he has witnessed in his high school - parents having kids while they themselves are still so young - kids having kids. George explained:

> We have a lot of high school seniors with 30 some years old mom's and 40 some year old grandparents. They are not passing the wisdom along because they didn't have time to accumulate any before they were parents...in some cases the parents may not have had an opportunity to receive the value of education, and so they just don't see it. And sometimes it's an issue with the parent. If the parent is a dropout they may be unwilling, you know, to tell their youngster, look, I should be doing better than this but I made some mistakes. I don't believe their morals are any worse or anything like that, they [younger parents] just have not had an opportunity to reap the benefits of an education - so they can't pass on that opportunity.

The third urban school issue George raised was the lack of rigorous academic instruction his students were getting from their teachers. As George discussed academic rigor, his focus shifted from the lower expectations of younger parents to the lofty expectations of NCLB - 100% passing and 85% graduation rate by 2014. NCLB, George argues, has "changed the culture of education" by raising the level of academic performance expectations for all children - especially urban school students. In the past, George explains, the prevailing expectation for urban students was "a certain percentage of kids weren't gonna make it... you were gonna have a percentage of D's and F's, and

that's just how it was, and everybody was okay with that." NCLB established new expectations for students, as well as teachers, principals and parents - all schools and students will be successful. "I don't think that's realistic but that's the name of the game we're playing now" George says, "so we really need to do interventions now... we know the interventions are out there...there's been enough research."

The primary interventions George said are "the new three R's, ... [which] used to be reading, riting, and rithmetic... now its rigor, relevance and relationships." Rigor, he explained, is the notion of making school work more challenging for each student. Relevance helps the urban student relate their classroom and academic activities to their current urban setting and future academic or job activities. George believes his primary responsibility as instructional leader is to ensure that all of his high school students receive a rigorous and relevant education - despite current district practices that he feels make this more difficult to accomplish:

> [In our urban district] we say every ninth grader has to take algebra... but we know that every child in the ninth grade is not algebra ready. I'm a certified math person, and I don't think that's really true [that every ninth grader is ready for algebra]...but that's what we're requiring. In the process of pushing every ninth grader into algebra, kids who are algebra ready are getting less algebra, the first year of algebra, now than they were getting years ago when we were selective about who we put in that class. The teacher can't push them as far, so we've dummied down a lot of stuff.

The lack of engaging instruction, he believes, "is why we're turning a whole lot of kids off." As instructional leader, George feels it is his responsibility to ensure all of his students are challenged and academically engaged by their teachers. Rigorous instruction, he believes, is the key:

> If they're engaged, they will do better. They [educational researchers] found that most of the high school dropouts say they dropped out because, either they didn't think the work was meaningful, or it didn't apply to anything that they would need later on in life...or they were bored. You know, they need the rigor...they need to be challenged.

The fourth urban school issue George discussed was the requirement for school

finance reform. In 1994 Michigan voters approved legislation, referred to as Proposition A, which changed the way all K-12 public schools in the state were funded. Public schools in Michigan are now funded by the state from general sales tax revenues, as opposed to being funded from local property taxes. One objective was to provide all school districts with the same or similar per-pupil funding. That was the basic idea. From George's perspective, a wide disparity still exists between the funding and resources provided for students in his low income urban district and wealthier suburban districts. He believes the funding and resource disparity is due, primarily, to issues of property values, personal income and race:

> In Michigan we have a huge disparity of funding for public education but the state charter says the state, not the local community... has the responsibility for educating the children of Michigan. So we should be providing all children with an equal quality public education across the state...and, it's just not the people of color in Southeastern, Michigan either. Every school in the state should have equal funding. I think we need to have some real fundamental changes ...school finance reform ought to be a very high priority...but nobody really wants to address it... they just wanna compare MEAP scores... statewide.

The primary reason urban school issues will be difficult to resolve, George noted, is because, "we have a hesitancy or reluctance to discuss racial issues in America." Arguing that the term urban is often used as a surrogate for race George said, "Urban, to me, is like a code-word nowadays... earlier-on it was African-American... today it's Black." George is adamant that race is the primary reason his district is one of the most segregated districts in the United States:

> We are more segregated now in this city...and this is the most segregated region in the nation. We are segregated housing-wise. A study showed that the banks and realtors steer based on race... but nobody does anything about that. Our real estate values are unusually lower on this side of the city because the banks won't...it's not all the environment.

Leadership preparation

George believes he was "prepared to be a principal" long before he was "finally

promoted" to principal, in 2003. Prior to his promotion, George had worked fifteen years as a math and computer applications teacher, one year as Dean of students; and eight years as an assistant principal. He believes there were two primary reasons it took him 24 years to become a school principal. First, "prior to 1993, principal selection was "a murky process" that seemed to favor persons who were members of, what he refers to as, "the good old boy network in the district." The second reason was district politics. District politics played a major role in principal selection up until 1993 when, George confided, a new district superintendent raised questions regarding (1) the criteria and qualifications for principal candidacy; (2) the complexity of the principal selection process and (3) why "approximately 75% of the teachers [in the district] were female, but the majority of principals were male." That same year in 1993 - George says the criteria and process for principal selection were clarified and simplified.

Under the new process, candidates for principal were required to have a masters degree related to education; at least five years experience as a classroom teacher; and a minimum of two years experience as assistant principal. Candidates meeting these criteria could be placed on an eligibility list for possible selection. When a principal job was available a district executive would select three candidates from the eligibility list and arrange for each of them to be interviewed by a school principal selection committee consisting of five to six school stakeholders [teachers, parents, union representative, and a district executive]. The committee selected the person they thought was the best candidate to be principal of their school. From George's perspective, the changes implemented in 1993 helped make the process more objective, transparent and fair.

By 1997 George met all of the published criteria and was placed on the eligibility list. However, in retrospect, he believes district politics and the fact that he was still not

considered a member of the good old boy network, were the key reasons he was not selected for an interview. He explained:

> As an assistant principal at the time... for two or three years I could not interview for principal... even though there were several vacancies. District human resources and the superintendent made decisions on who on the eligibility list would be allowed to interview for principal openings in the district. They never actually said any thing...wouldn't respond to written communications. I was eligible but I never made the list for the selection committee... that's the politics that they [the district] had ... and I think it's still pretty much in place.

In 2003, George was selected from the principal eligibility list, interviewed by the principal selection committee of his current high school, and was selected to be principal.

Based on his experience pursuing the principalship, George tells aspiring principals that being trained and prepared for urban school leadership and getting your name on the eligibility list is simply not enough. He advises candidates that "getting positive visibility and making your mark on the district" is an effective way to increase the odds of getting an interview with a principal for an assistant principal position or an interview with a selection committee for school principal. The key is to "visibly" demonstrate your ability to lead school change and deliver positive results. George shared the story of how, while he was still a math and computer applications teacher he gained positive visibility and made his mark by helping the Dean of students and his high school principal use computer and telephone technology to significantly reduce in-school truancy. His story:

> The district had a position called Dean of students... a department head that handled discipline... always and still a big problem in [this district]. I went to our Dean of students and shared how and why I didn't have a truancy problem in my classroom... and how my idea could work across the entire school. He presented the idea to the principal... she agreed and invested about $2000. We printed a card with a barcode for each child's name and ID number... each teacher had a stack of cards... after teachers had taken attendance... cards of kids who were absent were scanned into the computer... 15 minutes after the hour we were calling their home. Within a month we reduced in-school truancy by about 60%. My stock went up with [the principal]. That turned out to be very handy later on... when I was pursuing Dean of student jobs because, now, I had a track record [visibility] for improving student attendance [the result]. I was selected for Dean of students at [a different high school]... during that same year I returned to my previous high school as Dean of students. The following semester the assistant principal at [the first high school where I was Dean of students] became principal of another high school... and hired me as an assistant principal...that was about 1994.

Leadership programs

George's district has a leadership training program for persons aspiring to become an assistant principal or building principal. In 2003, when the program began, the district administrator responsible for the program met with George and several other new school principals and shared with them the reason the district had decided to develop and operate its own school leadership training program. The district administrator explained that, "The district is experiencing a brain drain...most of the experienced people...are leaving in droves and we have this vacuum. We are promoting folks... all great new people...but there's no experience."

During that meeting, George and the other principals developed a list of leadership topics they believed should be included in the leadership program. George remembers the following nine topics being suggested - all nine of which, George confessed, were "things I had to learn on the job."

1. Student discipline
2. Conversations with parents
3. Purchasing and requisitions
4. Labor relations
5. Scheduling
6. Public relations
7. Planning and carrying out the budget
8. Site management
9. Corrective discipline

George is not impressed with his district's current leadership training program. "I had an opportunity" George said, "to interview some folks who came out of the assistant principals' academy, and some that came out of the principals' academy, and I thought they were about as disconnected from reality as the stuff the universities were providing." His biggest complaint about the program was, he said, "I didn't see them getting the

hands-on that I thought they were supposed to get ... really addressing what these folks needed to know."

Mentoring may be the best way to train and prepare aspiring principals for urban school leadership responsibilities, George argues. He is currently mentoring all four of his assistant principals - two of whom he says, "are assistant principals today because he pulled them up through the ranks." Comparing the training and development he received from his mentors [seven school principals he has worked for] with his university and district training, George said, "I think they [his mentors] were a more powerful influences than the others [university or district training]."

George's approach to mentoring his assistant principals is to create opportunities for them to actively participate in key aspects of school instruction, administration, building operations and decision-making. "What I do" he said, "is I try to give them the parts they don't see, the parts that I didn't see as an assistant principal... the things that keep [the principal] up at night." To illustrate his approach to mentoring George shared the following example:

> For instance, the district reduced my teacher allocation for next year and I gotta cut eight teachers...out of 42. So, I shared with them the whole process... and what the district needs. I showed them the way they [the district] give it to us [a blank spreadsheet to be filled in with teacher data and then returned to the district]. They say you got too many teachers and they give you a number that you've got to cut...and the number of teachers they allow me to have...and the number budgeted. Actually, what I tell them [the district] is what content areas they can cut from and they go by seniority [the teacher with the least amount of seniority is more likely to [be] cut]. Then, we all sat down [George and his four assistant principals] and I said, okay, now, how do we do this?
>
> As an assistant principal I didn't get involved in that part [decision-making]... the principals [George worked for] would sweat it out on their own. But that's the stuff that keeps you up at night... the things that you have on the to-do list...that you never get to the end of.

George perceives and criticizes university educational leadership programs for being overly theoretical, not covering the daily "nuts and bolts" of urban school leadership and avoiding discussions that relate to the challenge and opportunities for

educating urban African-American students. Despite his harsh criticism, George strongly supports the notion of universities offering courses - and perhaps an entire curriculum - focused on urban education. His support for university-based urban education leadership training is evident in by his response to my questions regarding his training, experience and preparation for urban school leadership:

> I thought the undergraduate part was inadequate and irrelevant. It didn't apply to what we actually do. Grad school turned out to be a little more on point. The experiences outside of the formal school setting [Harvard Urban Leader Program] ... those turned out to be very useful and appropriate. I think the universities need to actually have schools of urban education, as a division of the College of Education.

Eighth case study Henrietta, Principal 9-12 high school

HENRIETTA: Our high school has a technical career focus and we talk about what's happening globally. Tom Friedman's book *The World Is Flat*... helps us as we plan our curriculum and work with our students. Tom Friedman said his parents told him to eat all the food on his plate because there's a child starving in China. Now, parents tell their kids, do all your homework, there's a child waiting for your job. They're not starving now in China... they're taking all our jobs. We tell our kids... do your homework.

Participant profile

Henrietta believes she is well prepared for her current leadership role and responsibility as principal of a technical career high school situated in an urban setting. Her confidence is based on her formal university training; 15 years of private sector work experience; 14 years of urban education teaching and school leadership responsibilities; leadership training provided for her by the school district; ongoing relationships with multiple mentors; and her spiritual and professional commitment to serve the children, parents and staff in her urban high school.

Henrietta, an African-American, earned her Bachelor's degree in business administration in 1984 while working for a private sector company. However, after working for this company for 12 years, Henrietta decided to quit her job as Human

Resource manager and, she said, "start a career in teaching." She explained why she made that decision:

> I did a lot of soul-searching and praying, and remember feeling the Lord leads me to education. Quit your day job... go back to school... get a masters in education. My husband was supportive and so, that's what happened. I had been in the [urban] schools... observed what was happening... and was like, oh, wow, we [African-Americans] need help and, I'm not sure if I have the answers, but, okay, I need to get involved.

In 1990 Henrietta began her career in urban education by working as a substitute elementary school teacher in this public school district. After one year substitute teaching, she left the district and taught business math and computer application courses for three years at a local private sector business school. In 1994 Henrietta returned to the district as a high school business teacher and then, just three years later, accepted a position counseling students in a technical career high school. Henrietta believes that was a major turning point in her career because the female African-American principal of the high school agreed to become Henrietta's mentor.

After working in the technical career high school for six years, Henrietta's principal/mentor promoted Henrietta to assistant principal in charge of a technical job training program for high school seniors. The program, according to Henrietta, "had been running for about two years and they didn't have any success with the program." Henrietta's challenge was to make the program successful. She did that in about a year. The success of the program - and Henrietta's leadership ability - gained visibility across the district, within the Michigan Department of Education, and with the two private sector companies sponsoring the program. Both program sponsors - one a global manufacturing company - "are now active members of the business partnership council" Henrietta has established in her current technical career high school.

In 2004, Henrietta's mentor, who was by that time a district level executive,

promoted Henrietta to a district supervisor position responsible for technical career training program across the district. Eighteen months later, two significant events occurred in Henrietta's career. First, she says, "I completed my administrator certification... a Masters in teaching plus 30 [additional credit hours]." And second, in May of 2005, "When this [technical career high school principalship] became available... I interviewed with the school community [principal selection committee]... and I was selected."

And, she noted, of the 700 students that attend her high school, "probably 98% are African-American." Henrietta then told the following story to help explain why she is excited about the opportunity to work in a high school with a majority African-American student population:

> It has a lot to do with culture... and who you're comfortable with... separation by choice... this is who I'm comfortable with... these kids. I can educate any child, but I really understand their needs... a lot more than someone else... that whole cultural piece. I was raised in this community. I attended elementary school just a few blocks away. I tell my kids, I came out of the same community... and walked the same streets you walking. If I made it... you can make it too. So it's giving back... reaching back. I think about the statistics [high percentages] of African-Americans sitting in prison... that kind of stuff. All I have to do is reflect, and I say, I'm where I'm supposed to be, because... if I could save a few of them... from going to prison. Really provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to make it to the next level and make it. Not just graduate.

Leadership training

Henrietta characterized her overall training and preparation for urban school leadership as, "Necessary, helpful and, in some cases, practical." From her perspective, most of her university training "was very little help" because, "it had very little concentration on urban schools." However, she continued, there were two university classes that were, "very important and beneficial." One was, "school law and finance" and the other, "supervision of instruction." The supervision of instruction class, she said,

"really helped me because they discussed writing a curriculum, the evaluation and selection of curriculum, and supervising the teachers."

In contrast to her university training, Henrietta believes the district's leadership training program she attended while she was an assistant principal, "was extremely helpful" for three primary reasons. First, the cohort group of new principals that she attended training with is a helpful network support group that, "meets together once a month with the district director of leadership training." Second, she appreciated and received great benefit from class discussions and debates regarding servant leadership. And third, during her leadership program, a self-assessment of her leadership style and preferences helped reassure her that, "she was on the right track to get to, the next level of responsibility" as a high school principal. She explained that during class, "we were given the opportunity to have our team evaluate us," and then compare the class assessment of our leadership style with "how 100 or 1000 exemplar principals responded to the same questions." Henrietta was not surprised by her peer's assessment and said she has used the feedback to modify and improve her leadership:

> It wasn't a total surprise...even when people said I needed to work on encouraging the heart. Understanding my own leadership style, personality and my makeup, I knew that was something I needed to work on. My style is very, I get so bottom-line focus and so tight. I'm so hands-on. I just kinda run in the office...like running 50 miles an hour and, it's like, will she please slow down. I forget sometimes to stop and say, you know, you're doing a good job. Thank you. This year, because of the training and understanding my style, I had all my staff go through True Colors [an assessment tool] and I learned that every one of my secretaries is a blue... and they have a gold leader... I'm a gold. Now I see it very clearly. My clerical support, they need a lot of encouraging, a lot of stroking, very sensitive...you can't just say it and let's move on...you have to remind them how wonderful they are. To a certain extent, you have to do that with all of your people.

Leadership priorities

Discussing her leadership role, priorities, and the school activities she believes requires her direct involvement and leadership, Henrietta said, "My role is the

instructional leader... and gatekeeper for student and staff safety." In the role of instructional leader, Henrietta said:

> I lead the learning... by modeling the way. If we're having professional development... I'm sitting in their learning... right with you. Working with school improvement teams... working with parents ...or business partners. I'm a strong believer that the principal should be very visible... to the point that I don't get all the stuff done that I should get done... but, you have to lead from the front.

In her gatekeeper role, Henrietta perceives herself as, "the gatekeeper for safety and security. This means," she says, "that my role is to keep folks out of my [school] community who shouldn't be here" and, she continued, "we have other folks on guard, but I'm going to decide who should get in here, who shouldn't, and who I should ask to leave." Her primary objective is to, "keep our students safe and not allow anyone to disrupt what we are trying to do here," she said.

Six school leadership activities that take a significant amount of Henrietta's time are: returning phone calls; building security; translating student tests and assessments into instructional strategies; student and staff safety; student discipline; and parent and community involvement. Even though she believes instructional leadership is her primary role, Henrietta admits, "I probably spend, I'd have to say, about 80% of my time on administrative operations and only 20% on instructional leadership." Henrietta attempted to rationalize her 80% and 20% ratio of involvement by saying, "yes, I spent a lot of time [on administration] especially this year. I'm a first-year principal, that's why so much... and [moving into] a new building. Wow." When I asked Henrietta, "Rather than 80% administration and 20% instructional leadership, what do you think it ought to be?" She replied, "Just the opposite. Flip it." She then elaborated on her answer:

> When I talk about flipping it... in terms of moving that time over to instructional, you know, one of the things we need to do is face the brutal facts...and a lot of times we're uncomfortable. There are so many brutal facts that we need to look at that we're not even talking about. We may raise

them but sometimes at central office it's kind of like, okay, yeah, we hear you, but... go back to work. So we... How do you become a great school? How do we get there? That's been tossed around in my mind so often.... In our staff meetings I tell my staff, it won't hurt my feelings, it's not about me, it's about us. It's about these students. What are some of the facts we really need to address. I mean, let's really talk about safety and fights, and then, once we address those little facts, then, let's start looking at how we can deal with them...things we can put in place so that we can move forward. You know, we talked about getting the right people on the bus, getting the wrong folks off the bus, and getting the right folks in the right seats. That's hard to do, by the way, with the union.

Unique urban school issues

Discussing her graduation rate Henrietta said, "Oh, awesome, it's like 98%." In spite of the school's impressive 98% graduation rate Henrietta quickly identified eight issues, challenges, and "brutal facts" that she must deal with in her urban high school:

- Lack of adequate resources
- Ninth grader transition to high school
- Parents who value education but do not have a strategy or plan for their child's educational success.
- Student and staff safety
- Affect of neighborhood crime on her students
- Building break-ins and property theft
- Poverty and low income families
- Henrietta's estimate that, " 70% of her kids are from single parent homes"

Elaborating on the first and second issues, Henrietta commented that a good example of her first "brutal fact" - lack of adequate resources - is that her high school students were forced to attend classes in portable trailers for 13 years before they were moved into their current high school building, a recycled middle school building, in the fall of 2005. Henrietta explained that she, her assistant principal, and her secretary, only had three months – May, June and July - to get the school ready for students in the fall:

This building...before we moved in...was mothballed for three years. So, yeah, it was just kind of sitting here for awhile...waiting to decide what they were going to do with it. I did not believe that we would get it ready. I mean, we were sweating it out. My assistant principal and I, we were the only ones here, and the secretary. And, we were moving from the old school over here - and they were demolishing the portables we had had for years...13 years. That was demolished, so

> everything was moved over. Everything was piled up in hallways and it was, ugh. This building...it had been a middle school.

The second brutal fact is the difficult transition her ninth graders face as they move from a middle school environment to a high school campus setting. Henrietta is confident that helping her ninth graders have a smooth transition and get off to a fast start in high school can help her maintain or improve her current 98% high school graduation rate. In addition to helping with academic performance Henrietta is hopeful that a smooth transition can help improve student behavior and reduce the growing number of discipline issues she and her staff had to deal with. She said:

> We've transitioned into a new building, and because of that we've had some serious issues with discipline. Students transitioned from a very small portable unit to a huge building and all of a sudden, it's like, whoa, it's party time. I guess it's just like moving them to a college campus... you have all this freedom and open space and they have a sense that now let me just try any and everything. I have a discipline log that's probably that thick of students.

During the summer of 2006, Henrietta and her staff will conduct a four-week transition and orientation program for all of her ninth grade students. The program will be based on "four pillars" that Henrietta believes will provide a solid foundation for her ninth graders success in high school. Henrietta explained that the four pillars are: (1) behavior expectations based on the district student Code of Conduct; (2) character education to discuss "specific character traits that we value... and expect to see... like respect, responsibility and achievement"; (3) new technology tools and techniques students will be using in the fall; and (4) high school academic expectations and requirements. The primary objective of the transition orientation program, Henrietta said, is to, "You know, get them in the building, talk to them, and get them used to some of the staff members so when they are arriving the first day, they're well-prepared to get started."

Henrietta used the following story to highlight the "brutal facts" of profane language and blatant disrespect for school staff, to highlight the importance she places on character education for her urban students:

> I'll give you an example. Last week I heard some rumblings, I mean, just like cattle, just rrrrrrr, just running through my building. I ran upstairs and my students had been released early from the lunchroom. So they were running down... and this was their last day of final exams. And I just kind of stopped in the corridor like this [her arms open wide] and I said don't move. It was about 100 students. And I just really blasted them... like, I'm so disappointed, blah, blah, blah, blah. You know, be quiet over here. I'm going through all of this, right. They were throwing water balloons and they had been a smashing milk cartons in the lunchroom and all this, and I'm standing there... I had to figure out what to do with these kids.. if I let them go to class or release them, they'll tear my building up...that's how excited they were. So, I'm standing there and they started chanting, 09B, 09B. They were calling me like the b, the bitch. That's their class, their ninth graders, they graduate in '09. Okay, all my leadership skills, kick in, kick in leadership skills. I was praying...okay Holy Spirit, show me what to do. So, I took them all down to the auditorium. My administrators came in. We made sure every one of them was there and we suspended every one of them. After I lectured them... and talked to them about the level of disrespect. Oh, Miss Henrietta, it's just what we do. I said it doesn't matter. I need to send a message that this is not going to be tolerated. But, I brought that up because I remember thinking, okay, all right, kick in...what do you do when all the kids are calling you a b? None of the [leadership training] classes helped me with that. I have other examples ...it was like, okay, you have to think on your feet, you know. In those classes, they don't teach you how to think on your feet. Those are skills you really need. You really have to just be...quick.

Leadership preparation

Two mentors, Henrietta said, have played important roles in preparing and providing support at different points in her career in urban education. The first mentor was the principal of the technical career high school where Henrietta was a teacher. That mentor was responsible for two of Henrietta's promotions - one promotion to assistant principal and another to a district staff supervisory position. Henrietta's second mentor is a private sector attorney specializing in school law assigned by the district to support Henrietta and six other members of her cohort group after they completed leadership training for new principals. The cohort mentor, she explained, "was funded by a grant from the Skillman foundation and was a member of the Executive Services Corps [a local group of private sector executives and professionals]." Describing her cohort mentor as "awesome" Henrietta said:

> The program... was very beneficial... and I'll tell you the reason why. We were assigned a mentor through that group... he's an attorney... his specialty is school law. So I had access... any time I had an issue, I could pick up the telephone and get free advice. Every time we would go visit him he would give us any changes to child protective services... updates regarding No Child Left Behind... anything. He would have it ready for us and say, this is something you need to look at... something you need to study. Matter of fact, here is a binder he gave us on discipline of non-special education students. So these are the types of things we would get from him when we would meet with him. I mean, if I have a kid... where I have some child abuse concerns... looking at the law around that... sharing this information with my staff. Suspensions and expulsions... teacher suspensions... search and seizure. Can I go search that child's locker? Sexual harassment and this school environment...what cases have set a precedent and what can I legally do? Religion...and dress code... and free speech. I mean, he's covered all of this...right here in this binder. It was a lot on me this year as a first-year principal... but to have someone like [her mentor] was awesome...as you might imagine.

Leadership programs

Urban school leadership programs, from Henrietta's perspective, are, "only doing an average job" of preparing aspiring principals for urban school leadership. Leadership training and preparation programs could be improved, Henrietta said, by adding two components that were missing from her training and preparation experiences. First, "provide an opportunity for hands-on... actually putting us into the [urban school] environment... and allow us to shadow principals on a regular basis, during the regular school day," she said. And second, building principals should be required to expose their assistant principal(s), "to everything that you may need" to know and understand the principals job. For example, she said, "the school budget... teacher evaluation and working with your school staff." In addition to hands-on and exposure, Henrietta suggests the curriculum and content of leadership programs should include developing or enhancing an urban school leader's skills related to the instructional supervision of teachers. Henrietta explained why teacher supervision skills are important:

> I think that's important... in terms of evaluation of instruction and really knowing, and understanding and can relate to teachers. There is a high regard from teachers. The first thing they'll say is, How much time did she spend in the classroom? I mean, that's the first question. And I really believe that's important, because I often pull from my classroom experience when I meet and talk with teachers. When I mentor teachers. When I go into their classroom and I'm able to say to them, I tried it this way and this strategy really worked for me. I mean, there is a level of respect there, and I can relate to it. I've had 35 kids looking at me. I've worked with them, okay. I know

what they're going through. Absolutely.

Henrietta confessed that her data analysis skills are weak. Urban school leadership programs, she believes, should help aspiring, new and experienced principals develop skills required to analyze student data and implement strategies to improve instructional delivery for individual or specific groups of students. To address her weakness in this area, Henrietta confided that, this summer, she will be attending the Harvard Urban Leaders Data Wise program. "I'm really looking forward to that," she said, because, "that's a huge issue for me... I really needed additional instruction on how to look at data, analyze it and use it to improve instruction." Henrietta plans to use what she learns to enhance and reinforce her instructional leadership role and responsibility as the "leader of learning" in her school. Henrietta is confident that she, her staff, and her students will all benefit from her attending the Harvard Data Wise program. She said

> First of all, the right tools to use. There's some wonderful software we could use ... they have these Excel spreadsheets that other folks have done and you can really dig deep. I'm gonna use it and I'm gonna train them [her staff]. This is going to be train the trainer. I'm coming back, and I'm going to be ready. I mean, who else can do it? I mean, I'm going to the session. I know Excel and I love to work with it. I worked with it in industry and there are some tools that they're going to give us. They asked us to bring a laptop ... so I'm really excited about that. And we're going to hear about some success stories from other principals in the Boston area who have used data and have seen the impact in student achievement. I'm looking forward to meeting with other principals and how they used it. But also looking at, you know, ways to analyze the data. What do you really focus on? And then, once you have identified where your areas are that need to be improved, how do you get there? What are some strategies that you've used as a result, and you know... what action plans to close the gap.

Ninth case study Marietta, Principal 9-12 high school

MARIETTA: This district's leadership program ain't worth a peep. They never let them [aspiring principals] touch a budget. They never let them analyze data. They listen to visionary leaders presentations about philosophy, I guess. I want to know when the Academy is gonna start teaching assistant principals to help us [principals]. So that program in this district has helped them become philosophers of education - but the practical applied learning is not there.

Participant profile

With "about 850 students, her high school is not the largest in this urban district" but, she believes, may be one of the most diverse in terms of student population. African-American students, she estimates, account for 55% of her student population, European-American [white] students 20% and the remaining 24% are, "like Hispanic, Arabic, Romanian, Asian, Russian, Vietnamese, African, or Native American... and tomorrow." She continued, "there could... be another one come in of a different ethnicity." Marietta estimated that she has 107 personnel working in her high school. All working, she said, to serve the academic, psychological, physiological and emotional needs of her students. For example, of the 70 teachers in her school, 60 (56%) are regular education teachers and 10 (9%) are special-education teachers. Members of her 30 person support staff include a psychologist, social worker, librarian, guidance counselors, food-service specialists, secretaries, public safety officers, custodians and building engineers. In addition to herself as principal, the six other administrators include two assistant principals, three curriculum leaders, and one curriculum coordinator.

Marietta has worked 38 years - her entire career - in this urban school district. Starting in 1968, Marietta served for 15 years as a high school regular education teacher; 15 years as a high school assistant principal; and eight years in her current job as high school principal. Marietta has a BS in education and an M.A. in teaching, however, she is convinced her best training and preparation for her current role and responsibility as high school principal was, she said, "through the mentoring that I received... skimming through reading and research... and learning from parents and from the children." Marietta learned, "how to treat children from their parents," and, she continued, "I learned

from children to understand if there might be something wrong in their home."

Leadership training

Marietta believes her primary responsibility is to provide instructional leadership that, "meets the needs of the school." Three things she believes an instructional leader must do are, "You have to know how to analyze the data [school and student data] ... prioritize what you will teach... and, you have to learn how to work with your staff." Reflecting on her last comment that an instructional leaders must "learn how to work with their staff," Marietta expressed her disappointment that her district has not offered training that would help her address a major issue she is facing in her high school - low staff morale. She explained why that training would be helpful:

> If I could learn how to improve morale... because, they [the staff] affect the students ...and they are just gloomy. They say all the time, to everybody but me, we need to improve morale around here. Teachers say it to each other... they accused me of lowering their morale. [Why, I asked?] Because I'm trying to get them to do what they need to do, and they can't handle it. They would not survive in another school.

Training and mentoring for assistant principals and principals, Marietta says, is an ongoing process. To make her point, Marietta noted that, "While I was an assistant principal [for 15 years]... my high school principal [and mentor] sent me to everything." Examples of training she attended included, "how to use the student code of conduct... or a meeting about how to do the budget," she said. After each training session, Marietta would meet with her principal to discuss the training content and, "then he would teach me" how to apply in his school what I had just learned in the training. Marietta confided that she always suspected that, in addition to mentoring, her principal's real motivation was, "he was making me do the principals work [his job]." In her current role as principal,

Marietta confessed that, unless the memo specifically mandates that the building principal must attend, she does not attend district training sessions.

Marietta admitted that when she receives an e-mail or announcements of administrator training, "she would decide which of her six administrators should attend." From her perspective she is, "only doing to my assistant principals what my principal [her mentor] did to me." There are only two meetings that she attends on a regular basis: "I go to our district superintendents meeting... once a month..." and, she continued, "I attend the district executive's [her boss] staff meeting." Marietta's district provides school administrators with good school operations training, however, she says, "the bulk of district training for school administrators is at a lower level [for example assistant principals or curriculum leaders]... because they [the district] like to promote from within."

Leadership priorities

Marietta conceded that improving staff morale and providing instructional leadership are both high priority issues that require a significant amount of her time and leadership involvement. For example, she said, "as the instructional leader you have to go into that classroom and see what they [teachers] are doing...if they need a little more training, get that training to them, and then go back and watch them constantly." When I asked Marietta to estimate how she spends her time between instructional and administrative activities she said she spends, "55% of her time on instructional leadership activities and 45% of her time on administrative issues."

In addition to instructional leadership and staff morale, Marietta identified six other high priority issues, challenges or activities that she believes require her leadership and

involvement:

- making AYP and achieving her school improvement objectives
- student discipline
- maintaining high visibility with staff and students within her school
- communication with her three curriculum leaders
- classroom walk-throughs
- and paperwork

Discussing her school improvement activities and AYP status, Marietta disclosed that in 2005, her school was, "in AYP phase 2." When I probed regarding her AYP status in 2006, Marietta's candid response was, "we're in bad shape" and "my high school graduation rate is low... but I don't know the percentage." An August 2006 AYP report published on the Internet by the Michigan Department of Education (http://www.michigan.gov/documents/schools_met_AYP_169521_7.PDF) confirmed that because Marietta's high school did not make AYP in 2006 her AYP rating had dropped from AYP phase 2 to AYP phase 3. High school graduation rates were not included on this report.

Unique urban school issues

Marietta is convinced that the issues and challenges she faces in her urban high school are similar to the issues and challenges high school principals are facing in suburban school districts. From her perspective, the issues and challenges are the same, it's the degree, depth and policy implementation at the school building level that makes a difference, she said. To illustrate her point Marietta made the following statements:

> I had a daughter who worked in a [predominately white, middle-class suburban school district]... kid stole a gun... they fought... they just want to call it... the white kids need a psychologist and our kids need jail. We're even talking about incompetent teacher's. They're there. The challenges in private schools, or the parochial schools are not different... the policies are a little different, but a kid, is a kid, is a kid. It's what's happening in these children's heads that make it different. So you have, you know, the big time private schools, the academy's... all those children are children. Just

> as you have in an urban school, you have a level of class that's strictly the neighborhood, it's strictly the parenting. So if you have parents who grew up in [a high poverty, high crime neighborhood]... and they get to move out, their mentality is the same. They're still like, ghetto. The kid's friends and relatives are still here, so you know. I see that very, very clearly.

Leadership preparation

Preparing a principal for urban school leadership requires on-the-job exposure and active participation in multiple genres of training. The best preparation for urban school leadership, Marietta believes, is a combination of formal university classes, district training and on-the-job training in an urban school setting:

> Research says that when you have success in these organizations or companies, the overriding factor is experience. So people do need to get that university training... they need to get that. And then they need to have something like a student teaching experience in an urban school. Once they get that experience... then put them in a place where there is a real mentor, somebody who's been exposed to all there is about the job. Doing the budget, doing this, doing that, you know, learning how to talk to kids, learning how to follow the code... all that. They need to see all the language barriers that we have, and see how it interacts with a kid who doesn't speak English, or, a kid whose pants are sagging. I don't let that go through here [baggy or sagging pants]... but some principals do. So you know...field-based experience.

In addition to training and experience, Marietta believes the mentoring she received during the 15 years she was an assistant principal was both necessary and essential for developing her high school leadership skills. Marietta confided that she loved the mentoring, training and experience she received but did not like her mentor's school leadership style, or his approach to mentoring. She said:

> Those were traumatic times for me because I felt used and abused. He gave me anything I wanted but there was not enough help for me. I wrote him a note and I asked for a transfer, told him I needed to leave the school... and he said the answer is no...when you leave it will be for a promotion.
>
> I remember ... he hires these people without my opinion and then tells me they're mine to train and work with. He said, your job is to make my staff happy. I said what about me? Isn't that your job? He said, no, you just can't get your feelings hurt. He was doing that with me because he thought there was no hope with the other administrators that he had... I need you to do it [he would say]... because he knew I'd take care of it ...and the kids would be served. And so it was all that training I had, learning how things should be done for the children.
>
> When I was an assistant principal, I was so busy working, so busy sitting in meetings for him, learning stuff, who had time to go home to make relationships? You'd just go home and tell your husband or your companion...but even my children would say... they told me, you oughta get that school, because you've been running it every day.

According to Marietta, her mentor appeared to be more focused on district politics, personal relationships and patronage than providing instructional leadership or administrative oversight for his school. Marietta's frustration with her mentor and ambivalence regarding his leadership is evident in the following story she told:

> Everybody knew him. He walked those halls and he laughed a lot. He did personal favorites for everybody. I want this summer school Title I program and I want the best of the teachers...but hell, I don't want her ... you [Marietta] tell her she can't teach. People were all upset at me ...thinking I had changed his mind. But he did not have the heart to hurt people. He could not manage...could not take a hard time. He'd called me in and talk about the other AP... so I'd tell the AP, look, I'm sick of you walking around with this clipboard looking like... I need you to help me.
>
> But he [her principal] was a great thinker and he had a lot of experience. He was retiring on the job to the point that, for one full year, he came in every two weeks, and he'd fraternize the whole day. Then he'd call me. Everybody liked him. They wanted him to ... serve on this committee and this and that. And yeah, he worked that frat boy thing. He was hiring everybody's sons and daughters, and I said, look, but this boy can't even read good. Why we got him here?

Leadership programs

Marietta believes the 15 years she spent as an assistant principal helped her develop the instructional and administrative operations leadership skills she needed to function as a high school principal. In stark contrast Marietta said she is aware of many assistant principals in the district who have been promoted to the principal level with only several years of experience. "Most of these principals," she says, "were assistants for three years," and, she continues "when you go to a meeting you can see the type of questions they ask... I mean, I know the answers to that," she said. Marietta does not believe that it takes 15 years to prepare a person for the principalship, however, she does argue that, "it takes more than three years to learn the high school principal job."

From Marietta's perspective the district leadership training program has little value or substance. According to her, the primary focus of the assistant principal training program is to expose aspiring principals to conceptual models of school leadership and encourage participants to apply the concept when they return to their respective school

buildings. Marietta is very concerned that the district program does not include on-the-job leadership training and mentoring she believes is necessary to properly train and prepare a person for urban school principalship. She says

> This district's leadership program ain't worth a peep. They never let them [aspiring principals] touch a budget. They never let them analyze data. They listen to visionary leaders presentations about philosophy, I guess. I want to know when the Academy is gonna start teaching assistant principals to help us [principals]. So that program in this district has helped them become philosophers of education - but the practical applied learning is not there.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The primary objective of this research is to understand what it means to be prepared to be an urban school principal. In this Chapter, I discuss seven key findings and multiple supporting themes that emerged from my analysis of data collected during this research project. The first source of data was one-on-one interviews that I conducted with nine K-12 school principals working in the same urban school district in Michigan. The second source of data was two interviews I completed with the district's director of school leadership training. And third, data was harvested from my review of research investigating the training and preparation of principals for K-12 public school leadership. Unfortunately, only a scant amount of the research literature I reviewed focused on preparing persons specifically for urban school leadership.

The fallacious operating assumption appears to be that the urban, suburban, or rural setting or context of the school does not matter - that K-12 school principals can and should be trained and prepared to address school issues and challenges and provide necessary and sufficient school leadership in any context. Based on the findings of this research, I offer a counter-argument that says context and contextual leadership does indeed matter. Equally important, training and preparation for K-12 urban school principals can and should be theoretically grounded in an urban context and school leaders trained and prepared in an urban setting.

Ironically, the fact that research examining contextualized urban school leadership is scarce may have at least two unintended consequences. First, the dearth of research on

urban school leadership may increase the research value of the findings presented in this report. And second, scarcity of research on the urban school principal underscores the importance of listening to the individual and collective voices of the nine highly experienced urban school principals in this research report as they (1) share their unique perspectives as urban school leaders; (2) provide perspective and nuance on urban school leadership as a career choice; (3) explain the intricate and often punitive relationship between student learning and the urban setting; and (4) speak with passion and candor on the critical issue and daunting challenge of training and preparing aspiring principals for urban school leadership.

The seven research findings presented in this chapter are derived from data and information provided by my participants. For example, my participant's perspectives on their careers in urban education; leadership practice in the context of an urban setting; issues and challenges they face in their schools; and their lived experiences during their training and preparation for urban school leadership. Each finding is discussed within the same six categories I used to frame each case study in Chapter 4 - participant profile; leadership training; leadership priorities; urban school issues; leadership preparation; and leadership programs. My seven key findings are:

1. Over the next ten years a large quantity of highly experienced principals in this urban district will be leaving their job due to retirement, promotion, or career change. (See Table 5.0 and Table 5.1)

2. In this urban school district, leadership training is not a program it is an on-going process that employs seven genres of training to develop participants skills, knowledge, and capacity for urban school leadership. (See Figure 5.0 and Table 5.2)

3. Elementary, middle and high school principals place a different priority on the school leadership issues and challenges they face.

4. Urban principals must focus on a myriad of "nuts and bolts" issues and challenges that are affecting their urban school. (See Table 5.X, Figure 5.3 and 5.4)

5. Principal preparation for urban school leadership is a continuous process with six distinct preparation activities. (See Figure 5.5)

6. Principals in this district are only measured, assessed, evaluated, and receive performance feedback on three out of six categories of their urban school leadership capacity. (See Figure 5.6)

7. Leadership training and preparation programs offered by school districts, universities, and private sector organizations have significant differences in their program components, structure, and outcome objectives. (See Figure 5.6)

8. Being prepared for urban school leadership means having the skills, knowledge, opportunity, and resources necessary to provide leadership in seven critical areas: educational strategy; school issues and challenges; multiple needs of urban children; helping urban children; professional commitment to urban education; and meeting stakeholder expectations. (See Figures 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9)

Participant Profile

Themes that emerged from the participant profile category of participant case studies in Chapter 4 provide support for my first finding that, over the next ten years a large quantity of highly experienced principals in this urban district will be leaving their job due to retirement, promotion and career change. Emergent themes that support this finding include baby-boom retirement possibilities; career and job changes; and the difficult challenge of making adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Baby-boom Retirement Possibilities

Persons born between 1946 and 1964 are often referred to as baby-boomers and considered to be members of the baby-boom generation. For example, in a report published by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO, 2006) the authors discuss financial and healthcare implications of baby boomer retirement:

> The first wave of the baby-boom generation, the 78 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964 and alive as of 2005, will turn age 62 and become eligible for Social Security benefits beginning in 2008. The retirement of the relatively large baby-boom generation, combined with other demographic trends, is expected to strain the nation's retirement and health systems.

One theme that emerged from participant case studies was the notion that a significant number of the nine urban principals participating in this study are members of the baby-boom generation and likely candidates to retire within the next 10 years. To better understand the potential impact the phenomenon of baby boom retirement might have on principals leaving this urban district, I estimated the birth-date and age of each of my nine

Table 5.0: Estimate of study participants age in 2006 and 2016

Participant's alias name	School grade level	Year participant received university undergraduate degree	Year started working in private sector or urban education	Estimated year of birth*	Estimated age in 2006	Estimated age in 2016
Male						
Robert	K-8 elementary	1966	1966	1944	62	72
Daniel	6-8 middle school	1972	1972	1950	56	66
George	9-12 high school	1976	1976	1954	52	62
Female						
Ruby	K-5 elementary	1980	1980	1956	50	60
Mary	K-8 elementary	1970	1970	1956	50	60
Paula	K-8 elementary	1973	1973	1951	55	65
Kathy	6-8 middle school	1986	1986	1964	42	52
Henrietta	9-12 high school	1982	1978	1960	46	56
Marietta	9-12 high school	1968	1968	1946	60	70

Note: Date of undergrad degree and year started working was provided by participant.
* Estimated year of birth based on assumption participant was age 22 when undergrad degree was received.

participants. A summary of my calculations are shown in Table 5.0.

Working on the unsubstantiated assumption that each participant received their undergraduate degree when they were 22 years of age, I calculated each participant's date of birth and their estimated age in 2006 and 2016. In column 6 of Table 5.0, we see that two participants - Robert and Marietta - are estimated to be 62 and 60 years of age in 2006. Moving to column 7, we see that five other participants will be 60 years of age or older by the year 2016. In summary, seven of my nine participants are prime candidates to retire from the urban school principalship by 2016. In fact, baby-boom principals have already begun to leave this urban district. An excellent, but unfortunate example is Robert, one of my participants, with 40 years of urban education experience, retired in 2006 - only one month after I interviewed him for this study.

Career and Job Changes Based on Extensive Experience

In addition to baby-boom retirement, career advancement and changes in job responsibility are two additional reasons participants in this study may be leaving the principalship before the year 2016. For example, in the fall of 2006, Marietta left her high school principalship to assume a support staff position within the district. A second example of school principal career and job change occurred in early 2007 when another of my participants, George, was promoted from high school principal to a director level position within the district. Unlike Robert who retired from the district, the skills and knowledge acquired by both Marietta and George will remain within the district. However, in all three cases the district was faced with the challenge of selecting suitable replacements for three highly experienced urban school leaders.

The last column of Table 5.1 validates the extensive amount of experience each participant had accumulated - or was required to have - before they were selected to be school principal. For example, Henrietta had 13 years of experience prior to becoming a

school principal while Robert had 33 years of experience before he was selected to be high school principal. The last row of Table 5.1 confirms that, as of 2006, the average

Table 5.1: Participant's career history in private sector and urban education

Participant's alias name	School grade level	Years working in private sector	Urban education experience as of June 2006							
			Year started	Total years in urban education	Teacher or school staff	District staff	Curriculum leader or Dean of students	Assistant principal	Principal	Years before been selected principal
Male										
Robert	K-8 elementary		1966	40	11	20		2	7	33
Daniel	6-8 middle school		1972	34	18	13*		2	1	33
George	9-12 high school	1	1976	29	16		1**	9	3	26
Female										
Ruby	K-5 elementary		1980	26	13	5		4	4	22
Mary	K-8 elementary		1970	36	16			4	16	20
Paula	K-8 elementary		1973	33	13	4		3	13	20
Kathy	6-8 middle school		1986	20	14			2	4	16
Henrietta	9-12 high school	15	1990	14	10	2		1	1	13
Marietta	9-12 high school		1968	38	15			15	8	30
	Average:			30	14			4.6	6	24

Note:
All data supplied by participants
All participants are African-American
* Served 10 years as assistant superintendent and 3 years as district superintendent in a smaller urban school district.
** Dean of students

years of experience before participants were selected to be school principal was 24 years; an average of 30 years total experience working in urban education; 14 years average classroom teaching or school staff experience; 4.6 years average as an assistant principal; and, as shown in column 10, as of 2006, the range of time participants have served as school principal ranges from 1 to 16 years - with an average of six years in the job.

If the pace and volume of baby boom retirements accelerates, or the number of principal job changes continue to increase, I suspect that this urban district will find itself

in the tenuous and untenable position of not having an adequate number of candidates in the district's principal replacement pipeline who are trained and prepared for the awesome responsibility of urban school leadership. The primary reason for my concern is the long period of time – an average of 24 years – that it took for the nine participants in this study to become principals.

Research conclusions posited by Murphy and Schwartz (2000) provides additional support for my finding of highly experienced principals leaving or retiring from the principalship:

> In a 1998 survey of 403 school district superintendents, *half reported a shortage of qualified candidates* for principal vacancies. The study cites a wave of principal retirements as the major cause of the shortage... 37% were over age 55 by the 1993 -- 94 school year. For example, a 1999 University of Minnesota study estimated that, by 2010, about 75 percent of Minnesota principals will be lost through retirement or attrition, even as school enrollments are expected to grow by 10 to 20%..... Still, 86% of Minnesota superintendents reported in 1998 that filling principal positions was "difficult" or "very difficult." Too few credentialed people are prepared adequately for the job. And too few qualified educators want to be principals. Why? (P.5).

Leadership Training

Multiple researchers including Hess, 2003; Levine, 2005, and Murphy, 2003 argue that university educational administration and school leadership training programs are doing a poor job of training and preparing principals for K-12 public school leadership. Interview comments offered by the nine urban school principals participating in this research indicate that they would agree with my assessment. From their perspective, no one institution can provide a single program that would have adequately trained them for the complex and difficult task of urban school leadership. Instead, a recurring theme that emerged from each participant's case study was the notion that each participant had been actively involved in a series of on-going leadership training activities throughout their career. Participants believe the major benefit of on-going training

throughout their career is the incremental accumulation of urban school leadership knowledge, skills and experience that has occurred. The emergent theme of incremental accumulation is the basis for my second finding that in this urban school district principal leadership training is not a program it is an on-going process that employs seven genres of training to develop participants' skills, knowledge, and capacity for urban school leadership.

In Figure 5.0 below I show the seven genres of training identified by my participants: (1) on-the-job work experiences; (2) mentoring; (3) district leadership training; (4) district professional development; (5) urban school leadership training at other institutions; (6) Michigan school principal recertification requirements; and (7) university training.

Figure 5.0: Seven genres of urban school leadership training.

1. On-the-job work experiences throughout each participant's entire career.
2. Mentoring participants received from informal or new principal cohort mentors.
3. District leadership training program for aspiring, assistant and new principals.
4. District professional development sessions conducted within the district.
5. Urban school leadership training sessions offered by other institutions.
6. School leadership training Michigan requires for principal recertification every five years.
7. University undergraduate, Masters and advanced degree training in education.

Source: Participant interviews, focus group and case study analysis

On-The-Job Work Experiences

All participants believe the first genre of training, on-the-job work experience - as

a teacher, district staff member, Dean of students, or assistant principal - was the best training they had because, as Mary, a K-8 school principal said, it helped them learn the issues, challenges, and "nuts and bolts" of urban school practice. Examples of "nuts and bolts" might include the issue and challenge of getting multiple substitute teachers on very short notice; implementing student discipline according to the district Code of Conduct and then having to deal with an irate parent challenging your veracity and aggressively questioning the disciplinary action regarding their child; or, getting teacher buy-in on the first master teaching schedule you ever developed.

Mentoring

Mentoring, the second genre of training discussed by participants is an informal versus formal practice in this urban district. Six of the nine participants discussed the informal mentoring relationships they developed - and in most cases still maintain - with district level administrators and building principals they worked for when they were teachers or assistant principals. For instance, Marietta, a high school principal, discussed the enormous amount of high school operations knowledge she acquired from her principal while serving as his high school assistant principal for 15 years. Another participant, Henrietta, commented on the value of the information sharing and informal mentoring that occurred when she and her cohort group of new principals would meet, "once a month with the district director of leadership training." Henrietta also acknowledged how she was for the legal knowledge, data, information, and advice she and her cohort members continue to receive from an Executive Service Corps private-sector attorney specializing in school law. In sharp contrast, three participants, Robert, a K-8 principal; Mary a K-8 principal; and Daniel a middle school principal, said they never developed any form of mentoring relationship during their entire career.

District Leadership Training

The third genre of training is the district's 12 month leadership training program. In this urban district, Francis, the District Director of Leadership Training, has primary responsibility for training teachers who want to become assistant principals, and assistant principals who may be selected by a school selection committee to become an elementary, middle, or high school principal. During May of 2006, I used the interview guide shown in Appendix B in the appendix, to interview Francis and get (1) her perspective on principal training and preparation for leadership and (2) better understand the structure, curriculum, content, and outcome objectives of the district leadership training program.

During our interview Francis, a white female, revealed that she has worked in this urban district for 30 years - her entire career in education. She confided that in 1976, after graduating from a local university with a BS in Special Education and a MA in Education Administration, she joined this urban school district as a K-8 elementary school special education teacher. Eleven years later, in 1987, Francis was promoted to assistant principal and three years later was selected to become principal of a 350 student K-8 elementary school. Francis shared, that in 2003, after serving 13 years as elementary school principal, she was promoted to district director of leadership training.

Throughout her career in urban education, Francis's primary objective has been "to serve the whole needs of urban students and their families." From her perspective, the purpose of the district leadership training program is to help aspiring school principals understand the importance of providing a form of "servant leadership" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) that serves the multiple needs of the families and children that will someday attend their school. Francis believes the primary responsibility of an urban

school principal is to both educate and to serve urban children. She said:

> As facilitators of the educational process if you have, you know, a family that moves in and they are in a house illegally, and they don't have water, the kids don't have clothes, or whatever, you're helping them obtain what it is they need in order for the kids to even get to schools sometimes, OK. So it's helping the families, the whole family, in addition to the whole child... serving all of them.

As shown in column ten of Table 5.1, five participants - Daniel, George, Ruby, Kathy and Henrietta - have all been school principals less than four years. Each confirmed that (1) they had participated in the twelve month district leadership training program run by Francis (2) believe the program helped them better understand the leadership challenges they would be facing and (3) incrementally improved their leadership knowledge, skills and capacity. Kathy for instance referred to the program as "exemplary" primarily, she said, "because the class leader [Francis] was recently an urban principal herself... and knew what the needs were [for new principals] coming into this [urban school] setting." Henrietta, a high school principal, also gave the district leadership training program high marks because, while participating in the program, she gained insight into her "private sector authoritative leadership style" and learned how she could modify her leadership approach in a way that would help improve morale among her teachers and support staff in her high school.

District Professional Development

District professional development sessions were described by several participants as, "important, beneficial, inspirational or essential." For instance Robert, a K-8 principal with 40 years experience in urban education, believes his district professional development was important and beneficial because the training was always focused on school operational procedures or instructional programs he was responsible for implementing in his school. Each participant had positive comments about the variety,

session content, knowledgeable presenters, or the fact that a principal could decide if other persons from his or her school should attend a particular development session.

Urban School Leadership Training Conducted at Other Institutions

Six participants said they had attended urban school leadership training conducted at a variety of institutions outside the district such as Harvard, Yale, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), the Skillman foundation, or an Independent School District (ISD) in Michigan. On example is that George, a high school principal, attended a 10 day urban principal leadership training session at Harvard. From his perspective the major benefit of his Harvard training was "hearing experts from Ivy League schools" discuss and validate research-based leadership practices he was attempting to implement in his urban high school that has 1000 students and a total of 136 school personnel.

Principal Recertification Training

The sixth genre of training is school principal recertification training required by the state of Michigan. School principals in Michigan must submit documentation and evidence to the Michigan Department of Education confirming that they have completed the equivalent of a least six credit hours [equivalent to 18 State Board Continuing Education Units (SBCEU's)] of school leadership and administration training within the last five years. In this urban district all principals submit their documentation to Francis, the district director of leadership training, for her review before the documentation is forwarded to the state of Michigan. One participant, Kathy, a 6-8 middle school principal, believes the five-year self-directed recertification approach allows her to (1) customize her training to address what she perceives as leadership skill gaps and (2) gain knowledge and review current data related to unique issues and challenges she may be facing in her middle school.

During my review of literature, I found no research specifically focused on self-directed urban school principal leadership training. I did however discover two websites that summarized individual state requirements for principal licensure. The first website is the Education Commission of the States (ECS) http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=878&map=0 and the second website http://ncei.com/2003_Principals_Superintendents/index.htm for the National Center for Education Information (NCEI). Both sites provide information regarding university degree requirements and years of education related experience required to apply for the job of school principal.

University Training

The seventh genre of training that participants discuss in their case studies is the formal university training they had engaged in to receive their Bachelors, Masters or advance degrees in education. In this district, candidates for the principal position are expected to have at least a Master's degree in education. As shown below in Table 5.2, George, a high school principal, has a second master's degree in Secondary School Leadership while four of my nine participants have additional graduate degree training and education beyond their Masters degree. For instance, we see that in addition to a master's degree, Robert, a high school principal has an Education Specialist degree, and a Doctor of Education degree. Paula, a K-8 principal, also has a Doctor of Education degree and Henrietta has completed an Education Specialist degree program. Daniel, a 6-8 middle school principal, confided that he has completed the course work and only has to complete his dissertation to receive his Doctor of Education degree, as he said, "probably by spring of 2007."

Overall, participants were not satisfied with their university training. Three of the nine

participants, Mary, Marietta, and Daniel expressed mixed feelings regarding their university training. For example, Mary said, "the university level does a wonderful job with the theoretical background of education and that type of thing but, there are some nuts and bolts things that when you walk in the door, people hand you...and expect you

Table 5.2: University and district leadership training of participants

Participant alias name	School grade level	Bachelors degree	Masters degree	Education Specialist and/or Doctorate degree	District leadership training program
Male					
Robert	K-8 elementary	BS Music	MS Guidance Counseling	Education Specialist Doctor of Education EdD	
Daniel	6-8 middle school	BS Education English and Social Science	MA Education Supervision And Leadership	Doctor of Education EdD (ABD)	Yes
George	9-12 high school	BS Physical Science And Math	MA Education Supervision and Leadership MA Secondary School Leadership		Yes
Female					
Ruby	K-5 elementary	BS Early Childhood Education	MA Early Childhood Education		Yes
Mary	K-8 elementary	BA Elementary Education	MA Urban Education		
Paula	K-8 elementary	BS Education	MA Teaching Special-Education	Doctor of Education EdD	
Kathy	6-8 middle school	BS Psychology BS Biology	MA Teaching		Yes
Henrietta	9-12 high school	BS Business Administration	MA Teaching	Education Specialist	Yes
Marietta	9-12 high school	BS Education	MA Teaching		

Note: Data provided by participants.

to handle." Mary, I should point out, is the only participant that has a degree in urban education. From her perspective her Masters degree in Urban Education provided her with, she said, "a considerable amount of urban school leadership data, information and knowledge" primarily because "all of our work had to be done in an urban setting."

The third mixed rating and evaluation of university training was provided by Daniel, a 6-8 middle school principal. Daniel had served as an assistant superintendent and district superintendent in a smaller urban district before he retired with 32 years of service and joined this larger urban district just three years ago. In his case study, Daniel discussed why he believes his university training was very appropriate for his executive responsibilities at the district level in his former school district, however, he continued, "the training was not applicable to the [current] job responsibility of a building principal."

Unlike Mary, Marietta, and Daniel, six of the nine participants were dissatisfied with their university training - for three primary reasons. First, participants believe their university training had minimum practical value because it was too theoretical. Second, the university training did little to prepare them for urban school leadership in an urban setting. And third, many complex and pernicious urban school issues and challenges they face on a daily basis were never discussed or even introduced during their undergraduate, Masters, or advanced degree programs in education. For example George, a high school principal with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Science and Math, and two Masters degrees in education, said this about his university training, "Everything was theoretical...they didn't want you to relate to the real world." In his case study, George described how he was "actually punished" for asking one of his university professors how the theoretical teaching methods the professor was discussing in class could be used to get an urban student excited and engaged in learning if that student "didn't come to school

excited about learning science."

Kathy, a middle school principal, also had unfavorable comments about her university experience. She said, "It gave me pedagogy to refer to, however, it didn't give me a real-life explanation of what I would be facing in the [urban] classroom. It was an ivory tower experience. It didn't connect the dots... not at all... and I wish it had." Similar to Kathy, Henrietta expressed the concern that her university training was more theoretical than practical and shared in her case study a provocative story that emphasized how little she believes her university training prepared her for the "real-world" issues and challenges she would face in her urban high school. Following is a brief excerpt from her story:

> I remember thinking, okay, all right, kick in [her university training]...what do you do when all the kids are calling you a b [a bitch]? No, none of the classes helped me with that... it was like, okay, and you have to think on your feet, you know, and those [university] classes, of course, they don't teach you how to think on your feet. Those are skills you really need. You really have to just be...quick.

During her interview, Francis, the district director of leadership training, attempted to balance her negative comments regarding her university training by including positive comments regarding certain aspects of her training. Francis said:

> My [university] classes were worthless. I had a professor who said 'I haven't been in a school in 15 years'. I said, then why are you teaching me... you obviously don't know what I'm dealing with out there [in her urban school]. You know, its way too theoretical. They didn't do anything on data analysis or any of that. Now that's 30 years ago, but... I mean, it's not that I didn't learn anything at [the university]. I had two professors that were really good at... how leadership really works... you put all these ingredients together, and it just becomes this beautiful masterpiece of people, and the gifts that they bring to the organization. I think that's what I learned...I learned to appreciate diversity.

Research by Murphy (2003) and Hess and Kelly (2005) provided me with insight and a plausible explanation of why the majority of my participants believe their university training did such a poor job of preparing them for the job role and responsibility of an

urban school principal. Murphy (2003) investigated the structure of university masters level school administration programs and concluded that the content of current Masters programs are the result of a gradual, incremental build up of ideas, concepts, and theories borrowed from professions and disciplines outside of the school administration profession (p.5). Other researchers have also expressed concern with the curriculum and course content of university leadership training programs. For instance, after examining the course content of 31 educational leadership programs, Hess and Kelly (2005) reported that, "the evidence indicates that preparation has not kept pace with changes in the larger world of schooling, leaving graduates of principal preparation programs, ill-equipped for the challenges and opportunities posed by an era of accountability" (p.35). Hess continued and posits that, "meaningful reform of principal preparation programs must retool the contents so that it matches the challenges confronting principals in 21st century's schooling" (p.38).

Leadership Priorities

My third finding is that elementary, middle, and high school principals place a different priority on the school leadership issues and challenges they face. This finding is supported by three themes that surfaced from interviews and participant case studies. The first emergent theme suggests that the leadership priorities of my participants should be grouped and categorized as common, grade-level, or school building priorities. Second, all participants place a higher priority on school administration and building operations than instructional leadership. And third, the priority each participant places on making adequate yearly progress (AYP) appears to depend on the school's AYP phase, goals, and objectives.

Common, Grade Level, Or School Building Priorities

During focus group and one-on-one interview discussions each participant responded to questions that probed their leadership role, responsibilities, and priorities as urban school principals. I show in the first column of Table 5.3 the 24 leadership priorities participants said require their time, attention and focus. In the second column I show the number of participants that mentioned each priority. The last two columns in the table represents five urban school leadership priorities posited by (Forsyth, 1993) and seven priorities suggested by (Taylor, 2002) based on the results of their research investigating the relationship between urban school effectiveness and leadership provided by the urban school principal. It is important to note that the five leadership priorities posited by Forsyth, and the seven identified by Taylor were mentioned as a priority by one or more of my nine participants.

Research findings by Taylor (2002), for example, argues that seven correlates of improving effective schools include a clearly stated school mission; safe and orderly climate; high expectations; student time-on-task; instructional leadership; frequent monitoring; and positive home and school relations (p.377). Research by Forsyth (1993) contains similar findings and suggest that the ten "areas of greatest challenge" for the nine participants in this study would likely be understanding the urban context and conditions of practice; motivating urban children to learn; managing instructional diversity; building open climates in their schools; collecting and using information for problem-solving and decision-making; acquiring and using urban resources; governing their schools; effecting change in their school; establishing mission, vision and goals; and accountability for all school activities and outcomes.

Table 5.3: Participant's leadership priorities and related research

Principal's 24 leadership priorities	Number of principals mentioning this priority	Participants: Elementary: Ruby	Elementary: Robert	Elementary: Mary	Elementary: Paula	Middle school: Daniel	Middle school: Kathy	High school: George	High school: Henrietta	High school: Marietta	District: Francis *	Related Research: Forsyth (1993)	Related Research: Taylor (2002)
Instructional leadership	8	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Student discipline	6	x	x	x	x				x	x			
Parent concerns	6	x	x	x	x				x	x			x
Time allocation	5	x	x	x				x	x		x		
Teacher evaluations and informal walk-throughs	4		x		x		x			x			
Paperwork	3	x		x						x	x		
AYP phase	4		99			5		3		3		x	
School merger activity	3		x	x			x						
Staff meetings and staff morale	3		x		x					x			
Teacher quality	2						x	x			x		
Student and staff resources	2	x				x					x	x	
Ninth grader high school orientation and transition	3					x		x	x				
Declining student enrollment	3			x			x	x					
Student assessment and testing	2			x					x			x	x
School culture, rituals and routine	2			x			x						x
Support staff resources and focus	2		x		x								
High visibility with staff and students	2								x	x			
Staff buy-in and support	1					x					x	x	x
Substitute teachers staff management	2		x		x								
High school graduation rate	2							x	x				
Closing student knowledge gaps	2					x		x					x
Enforce current curriculum and content standards	1							x					
Student and staff safety "gatekeeper"	1								x				x
Returning phone calls	1								x				

Source: Participant interviews, case studies and literature review.

Note: * = priority for Francis, director leadership training, during 13 years she was K-8 principal in this district.

In Figure 5.1 the leadership priority mentioned by each participant is (1) categorized by grade level and (2) the number of principals that mentioned that particular priority is shown in parentheses. We see in Figure 5.1 that only 4 of the 24 leadership priorities - instructional leadership; teacher evaluations and informal walk-throughs; AYP phase; and declining student enrollment – are considered a priority by principals at the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. Due to page restrictions of this report I will only discuss two of the four issues that are common across the three grade levels: instructional leadership and AYP phase

Instructional Leadership is a Lower Priority Than School Administration

Based on my review of research literature, instructional leadership is a term that is often used but appears to lack common definition or meaning. Educational researchers are more likely to describe instructional leadership in terms of surrogate measurements of expected outputs or expected academic results rather than provide a cogent definition of instructional leadership or their perceptions or findings regarding instructional leadership behavior. For example, multiple researchers (Carlin, 1992; Center on Education Policy, 2005; P. Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Jackson, 2005; B. S. Portin, 2000; Wanzare & Da Costa, 2001; Waters et al., 2003) argue that instructional leadership provided by the school principal is a critical success factor for improving urban school effectiveness and then quickly shift their discussion to focus on surrogate measurements of instructional leadership results such as making adequate yearly progress; successful implementation of educational policy; getting teacher buy-in and support; or significant improvements in student academic achievement. Despite the lack of common definition, the frequency with which researchers highlighted the importance of principals providing instructional leadership prompted me to ask each of my study participants, including Francis, the

director of leadership training, the following two questions: What does it mean to be an instructional leader of an urban school? And, What percentage of your time do you spend

Figure 5.1: Summary of urban school principal's grade level leadership priorities

Elementary/middle/high school - 4 priorities	Middle/high school - 3 priorities
• Instructional leadership* (8 principals)	• Teacher quality* (2)
• Teacher evaluations and informal walk-throughs (4)	• Ninth grader high school orientation and transition (3)
• AYP phase (4)	• Closing student knowledge gaps (2)
• Declining student enrollment (3)	
	Elementary - 2 priorities
Elementary/middle school - 3 priorities	• Support staff resources and focus (2)
• School merger activity (3 principals)	• Substitute teachers staff management (2)
• Student and staff resources* (2)	
• School culture, rituals and routine (2)	Middle school - 1 priority
	• Staff buy-in and support* (1)
Elementary/high school - 6 priorities	
• Student discipline (6)	High school - 5 priorities
• Parent concerns (6)	• High visibility with staff and students (2)
• Time allocation* (5)	• High school graduation rate (2)
• Paperwork* (3)	• Student and staff safety "gatekeeper" (1)
• Staff meetings and staff morale (3)	• Returning phone calls (1)
• Student assessment and testing (2)	• Enforce current curriculum and content standards (1)

Source: Participant interviews and case studies.
Notes: (x) = Number of school principals mentioning this priority.
* = Indicates this was a priority for Francis, the Director leadership training, during the 13 years she was a K-8 principal but is not included in the principal vote count shown in parenthesis.

providing instructional leadership for your school? The following summary of participant's responses to these two questions provided additional evidence that support my finding that elementary, middle, and high school principals place a different priority on the school leadership issues and challenges they face.

As shown below - similar to educational researchers - each participant in this study offered a different definition and ascribed a different meaning to the term instructional leadership:

Elementary school principals

- Ruby said instructional leadership means," Being involved in instruction... knowledgeable about her students and school data... being in the classroom... and modeling lessons for teachers."

- Robert said: "Helping students achieve passing scores on the MEAP test."
- Mary said: She did not have a definition of instructional leadership
- Paula said: "That I am supposed to provide leadership to the instructional staff in terms of instruction that impacts students."

Middle school principals

- Daniel, the only participant in the restructuring phase, phase 5 of AYP, said: "Being the instructional leader means I am the educational leader... charged with making sure that the school makes AYP... that's my primary responsibility."
- Kathy said: "Leading by example, focusing on student academic excellence, minimizing distractions and disruptions of classroom instruction, and providing her teachers and staff with the resources they need to teach."

High school principals

- George said: "To persuade, influence, or cajole each of my classroom teachers to use appropriate assessments to identify student knowledge gaps that need to be filled or reinforced," and, he continued, "I have content area experts [five curriculum leaders] to do a lot of that."
- Henrietta said: "I lead the learning... by modeling the way," and, she noted, "the principal should be very visible... to the point that I don't get all this stuff done that I should get done but, you have to lead from the front."
- Marietta said: "As the instructional leader you have to go into that classroom and see what they are doing... see if they need a little more training, get that training to them, and then go back and watch them constantly."
- Francis, the Director of leadership training said: "What does it mean to be the instructional leader of an urban school?" First of all it's having the right people who give the instruction. It's like, having been good at instruction as a teacher in a classroom, you know what to look for because you know what good teaching looks like. It's understanding what works and what doesn't work. It's practical experience... and understanding the needs of the students that you serve.

In addition to ascribing a different meaning to instructional leadership, participants also confessed that they each place a different priority on providing instructional leadership in their schools. In the last row of Figure 5.2 we see that this group of principals only devote an average of 24% of their time to providing what they define as instructional leadership and devote an average of 76% of their time to what they perceive are administrative and operational activities within their schools. In addition, we see in column 2 of Figure 5.2 that the amount of time the four elementary school principals spend on instructional leadership ranges from 10% to 20%; the two middle school principals 20% to 25%; and the three high school principals devoting 20% to 55% of their time providing instructional leadership. Across the entire group, participants estimated they only spend 10% to 55% of their time engaging in instructional leadership

activities.

Despite different definitions, perceptions, descriptions, and percentages of time devoted to instructional leadership, all participants agree that (1) instructional leadership

Figure 5.2: Percentage of time participants spend on instructional or administrative leadership activities.

Urban school principal	Instructional leadership activities	Administrative leadership activities
Ruby – Elementary school	20%	80%
Robert – Elementary school	10% (Lowest)	90% (Highest)
Mary – Elementary school	20%	80%
Paula –Elementary school	15%	85%
Daniel – Middle school	20%	80%
Kathy – Middle school	25%	75%
George – High school	35%	65%
Henrietta – High school	20%	80%
Marietta – High school	55% (Highest)	45% (Lowest)
Average:	24% instructional	76% administrative

Source: Participants interviews and case studies.

should be a top priority for all urban school principals; (2) each of them should be devoting more time and providing more instructional leadership; and (3) the key reason they don't devote more time to instructional leadership is they honestly believe it is more important for them to spend the majority of their time (average of 76%) actively involved in school administration and operational activities. When I asked participants how they thought urban school principals should allocate their time between instructional and administrative activities, several responded by saying "Just flip it" – meaning flip from 24% instructional and 76% administration to 76% instructional and 24% administration.

However, when I asked participants why they didn't 'just flip it' they quickly responded that 'flip it' was easy to say, but difficult, and maybe impossible, to do. In her case study, Henrietta, one of my three high school principal participants, offered this explanation:

> When I talked about flipping it, in terms of moving time over to instruction, one of the things we need to do is, "face the brutal facts" [Henrietta quote from the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins (Collins, 2001)] and a lot of times we're uncomfortable. I mean, let's really talk about safety, and fights, and then, once you address those [brutal] facts, then let's start looking at how we can deal with them. First of all, if you don't have the right people on the team? We talked about getting the right people on the bus, getting the wrong folks off the bus, and getting the right folks in the right seat. Okay. That's hard to do by the way, with the union, and with what's happening now [a significant decline in student enrollment resulting in severe district financing issues and school budget cuts].

AYP Priority Depends on the School's Current AYP Phase

The third theme supporting my finding that urban principals have different leadership priorities related to the mandate of NCLB and the increasing pressure on my participants to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards achieving their assigned AYP goals and objectives. Using data I extracted in May 2006 from the Michigan Department of Education website (www.Michigan.gov/documents/schools_met_AYP_169521_7.pdf) I summarized in Table 5.4 the AYP status and phase of each of the nine participants. As shown, only three of the nine participants - Ruby K-5 elementary, Mary K-8 elementary and Paula K-8 elementary - made AYP in 2006.

Robert K-8 is among the six that did not make AYP. His school is coded as AYP phase 99, because his school was recently merged with another school - AYP phase definitions are provided in the bottom section of Table 5.4. When Daniel was selected in 2005 to be principal of his 6-8 middle school, the school was already in phase 5 of AYP and had a school restructuring plan that had been approved by the district. Daniel is now accountable for improving the school's AYP performance and is expected to implement

Table 5.4: Summary of participant's 2005-2006 adequate yearly progress (AYP)

Participant alias name	School grade level	Years participant has been principal of this school	2006 AYP		Students passing MEAP test*		2005-2006 AYP phase	Notes:
			Made AYP = Yes	Did not make AYP = No	Math	English language arts		
Male								
Robert	K-8 elementary	7		No	No	No	99	School merger in 2005 - new school did not have MEAP data prior to 2005 - 06
Daniel	6-8 middle school	1		No	No	No	5	Implementing restructuring plan
George	9-12 high school	3		No	No	No	3	Corrective action
Female								
Ruby	K-5 elementary	4	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Mary	K-8 elementary	11	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Paula	K-8 elementary	13	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Kathy	6-8 middle school	4		No	--	--	0	Student subgroup did not make AYP for first time in a subject.
Henrietta	9-12 high school	1		No	No	Yes	2	Continuing improvement. Students did not get passing score in math
Marietta	9-12 high school	8		No	No	No	3	Corrective action

AYP: Michigan Department of Education
www.Michigan.gov/documents/schools_met_AYP_169521_7.pdf May 2007
Phase 0 = School did not meet AYP for the first time in a subject. Federal requirements do not start until school does not meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject.
Phase 1 = School improvement -- must offer choice and transportation.
Phase 2 = Continuing school improvement -- must offer choice, transportation, and supplemental services.
Phase 3 = Corrective action -- school must continue choice, transportation, and supplemental services and take further corrective action.
Phase 4 = Restructuring -- school must continue choice, transportation, and supplemental services and develop a plan to restructure the school.
Phase 5 = Implement restructuring plan -- school must continue choice, transportation, and the supplemental services and implement restructuring plan.
Phase 6 = Comprehensive school audit by external team; mandatory assignment of coach; limited to no decision on technical assistance funding options. School must continue choice, transportation, and supplemental services and continue to implement the restructuring plan.
Phase 7 = Comprehensive school audit by external team; mandatory assignment of coach; no decision on technical assistance funding options; recommendation to district on status of school; intermediate school District intervention. School must continue choice, transportation, and supplemental services and continue to implement the restructuring plan.
Phase 99 = AYP advisory -- a new school that did not have MEAP data prior to 2005- 06. This school is given advisory status because data are not available for safe harbor comparison or multiple year averaging.

the restructuring plan that has been developed. In his case study, Daniel made it clear that he understands what is expected in terms of improving student test scores and other AYP objectives - but is concerned with the lack of support he is receiving for building repairs and the large and growing number of special education students in his middle school. Kathy's 6-8 middle school is in the process of being merged with a K-8 elementary school and is in phase 0 of AYP because a student subgroup did not make AYP for the first time. The three high school participants - Henrietta, George and Marietta - did not make AYP in school year 2005-2006. Henrietta's 9-12 technical career high school which has, she says, "a 98% graduation rate," failed to make AYP because students did not pass the math portion of the state standardized test. Henrietta has only been principal of this high school for one year and is taking steps to address her math AYP issue. Henrietta is confident her students will make AYP in 2007. Both George and Marietta's high schools are in phase 3 of AYP because their students failed to pass both math and English language arts. Marietta summarized her perspective of her AYP phase and status by saying, "We're in bad shape." Her top priority and strategy to improve her AYP status, she said, is to address and resolve some serious issues she has that have resulted in "low staff morale."

George, another high school principal that did not make AYP, is attempting to improve his AYP phase by (1) improving the academic and social transition of ninth graders into his high school and (2) attempting to identify and close what he calls, "the knowledge gaps" that many of his students exhibit, especially in math. His top priority is to provide his students with classroom instruction that is both rigorous and relevant to the student because, as he says in his case study, "the lack of engaging instruction, it's why we're turning a whole lot of kids off." The fact that each of my participant's priorities and

strategies regarding AYP consistently referred to their specific "area of greatest challenge" (Forsyth, 1993) provides additional support for my finding that in this urban school district elementary, middle, and high school principals place a different priority on the school leadership issues and challenges they face.

Urban School Issues

My fourth finding is urban principals must focus on a myriad of "nuts-and-bolts" issues and challenges that are affecting their urban school. Five divergent themes materialized from participant interviews and case study analysis to provide support for this finding: (1) as a group, participants identified thirty-one nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges that they perceive are unique to their urban school; (2) how the urban school setting is perceived and defined may directly or indirectly influence how sustainable solutions to pernicious urban school issues and challenges are debated, implemented, or resolved; (3) the challenge of ensuring student and staff safety in an urban setting; (4) participants do not have adequate supply of three critical school resources – time, money, and people; and (5) time management is a difficult issue and perplexing challenge for all participants – including Francis, the district director of leadership training.

Thirty-One Nuts-and-Bolts Issues and Challenges

While discussing how leadership training could be improved, Kathy explained in her case study that, "There are some nuts-and-bolts things that, when you walk in the door, people hand you… and expect you to handle." The second column of Table 5.5 contains thirty-one "nuts and bolts" issues and challenges that Kathy and her peers perceive are unique to their respective urban school. The total number of participants that mentioned a particular issue is shown in column three while issues or challenges

Table 5.5: Summary of thirty-one nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges affecting participant's schools.

Issue category	Participant's "nuts-and-bolts" issues	Participants mentioning this issue	Participants										Research	
			Elementary				Middle school		High school			District		
			Ruby	Robert	Mary	Paula	Daniel	Kathy	George	Henrietta	Marietta	Francis	Leithwood (2003)	Sammons (2006)
Urban	Student and staff safety*	4			x				x	x		x	x	x
	Poverty and unemployment	2						x		x			x	x
	Neighborhood crime*	2								x		x	x	x
	Abandoned buildings	1			x								x	x
	School break-in and theft	1								x			x	x
Resources	Time management* **	10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
	Building maintenance repair	2				x	x						x	x
	Student's with multiple need*	2									x	x	x	x
	Custodial staff	1					x							
	School finance reform	1							x				x	x
	Classroom technology	1								x			x	x
	Alternative middle schools	1					x							
	Single building administrator	3	x			x		x					x	
	Ethnic textbooks	1	x										x	x
Students	Merger and consolidation**	4		x	x			x		x				
	Student count process	2				x					x			
	Class size	2	x			x								
	Special-education diagnosis*	2					x					x	x	
	Ninth-grader transition	3					x		x	x				
	Student not value education	2							x	x				
Teachers	Academic rigor and relevance**	3		x			x		x					x
	Low staff morale	2					x				x			
	Substitute teachers	2		x		x								
	Focus on reading skills	1					x						x	x
	Teachers hired by District HR	1		x										
Parents and family	Parents angry about discipline	2	x						x					
	Parent involvement	1	x											
	Student home environment	1						x						
	Single-parent household	1								x				
AYP	Negative AYP image	2			x		x							
	High school graduation rate	1							x				x	x

Source: Participant interviews, case studies and literature review.
Note: * = Francis, director of leadership training, while she was K-8 principal.
** = Issue at all three grade levels: elementary, middle and high school.

mentioned by individual participants are indicated by an 'X' in columns four through thirteen. In columns 14 and 15 of Table 5.5, Leithwood (2003) and Sammons (2006) offer research based evidence that urban school principals should be trained and prepared to provide school leadership necessary and sufficient to address at least fifteen social, financial, political, and educational issues and challenges they will face in their urban schools.

In Figure 5.3 the thirty-one issues and challenges identified by participants are shown grouped into six categories – urban school setting; resources; students; teachers; parents and family; and AYP. Due to the brevity of this paper I will only focus on four of the thirty-one issues and challenges participants say are affecting their schools - the urban school setting; student and staff safety; adequate resources of time, money, and people; and time management.

Perception and Definitions of the Urban School Setting

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) argue that school principals must be capable of providing "six generic forms of leadership... instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial, and contingent forms of leadership" (p.13). In addition, urban school principals must have the capacity to provide school leadership that is necessary and appropriate in an urban school setting in which the majority of students may be nonwhite, economically disadvantaged, and facing multiple issues and challenges due to systemic issues of race, politics, economics or societal issues that may pervade the urban school setting. From my perspective, how the discussion of an urban school setting is framed and defined will strongly influence how sustainable solutions to the issues and challenges affecting my participant's schools are debated, implemented, or resolved.

Figure 5.3: Six categories of nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges mentioned by participants.

Urban school setting	Students
• Student and staff safety* (4)	• School merger and consolidation (4)**
• Poverty and unemployment (2)	• Student count process (2)
• Neighborhood crime*(2)	• Class size (2)
• Abandoned buildings (1)	• Special-education diagnosis* (2)
• School break-in and theft (1)	• Ninth-grader transition orientation (3)
	• Student does not value education (2)
Resources	**Teachers**
• Time management* (10)**	• Academic rigor and relevance (3)**
• Building maintenance and repair (2)	• Low staff morale (2)
• Student's with multiple needs*(2)	• Substitute teachers (2)
• Custodial staff (1)	• Focus on reading skills (1)
• School finance reform (1)	• Teachers hired by District HR (1)
• Classroom technology (1)	
• Alternative middle schools (1)	**Parents and family**
• Single building administrator (3)	• Parents angry about discipline (2)
• Ethnic textbooks (1)	• Parent involvement (1)
	• Student home environment (1)
	• Single-parent household (1)
	AYP
	• Negative AYP image (2)
	• 60% high school graduation rate (1)

Source: Participant interviews and case studies.
Note: * = Issue for Francis, director leadership training, during 13 years she was K-8 principal in district.
** = Issue at all three grade levels: elementary, middle and high school.
(x) = Number of participants mentioning this issue.

In the top section of the first column in Figure 5.3, five pernicious issues and challenges participants say they face are framed by my capriciously selected title of urban setting. The five issues and challenges captioned include student and staff safety; poverty and unemployment; neighborhood crime; abandoned buildings; and school break-in and theft. Due to the brevity of this paper, I will only focus on the perception and definition of my participant's urban school setting as opposed to discussing the debate, implementation or resolution of the five issues and challenges listed in this category.

Mark Gooden (2002) and Michael Dantley (1990) argue that critical leadership and

servant leadership are two forms of urban school leadership that may be appropriate for schools situated in an urban setting. From her perspective, Francis, the district director of leadership training believes that, unfortunately, race and class are two immutable factors of the urban setting that may serve to inflame the debate or inhibit resolution of the five issues and challenges shown in Figure 5.3 under the category of urban school setting:

> When you say urban you have to define where you are in the city... it makes a difference in terms of the population that you're dealing with. For example... in a school that was primarily Hispanic, I may have a day like you [a principal in a different school] but I will never have a week like you. I could deal with parent issues for a whole week, a different one every day [when she was in elementary school principal in the district] but I was in a high poverty, high crime, you know, high drugs, high mental illness [neighborhood]. I mean, I had all those variables. In a Hispanic community... you could call the parents and say... and they were like, we'll take care of it, and they did. The student wouldn't do it again, right. Okay. So, there are uniquenesses between the neighborhoods and between city and suburb. You just deal with so many more social issues. I'm not saying they don't have issues in the suburbs, but not like we have. Urban school principals are much more involved in the problems with the socio-economics of their community that impact learning.

It is important to note that how an issue or challenge is framed by definition can directly or indirectly affect how a solution to the issue or challenge might be crafted. A multiplicity of definitions of the urban setting emerged from my review of research literature and participant case studies. From my perspective, based on this diversity of urban setting definitions, key stakeholders in this urban district may find it difficult to frame and implement sustainable solutions for the issues and challenges participants say are affecting their urban schools. For example, my contribution to the conundrum is evident in the definition of the urban setting that I presented in Chapter 1. In the definition section of Chapter 1, I framed my research and examination of urban school leadership preparation by using the U.S. Census Department definition of urban that is solely based on housing and population density within a given geographic area (US Office of Management and Budget, 2005).

When I asked each of my participants, "What does the term urban mean to you?"

they responded with a variety of answers. For instance, one participant said, "When we talk about the socioeconomic picture [of this district] you think of crime. Then, when you look at the demographics, typically...you think of African-American." Another participant, Marietta, a high school principal expressed a similar view when she said, "Well, it's a euphemism for Black. When I was trained [referring to her university training] that's what it was, you know, because I'm talking mid-60s, late 50s. It was a way not to say Black. Urban, I think, basically means that now, too, but it also means inner-city." Other participant responses included perceiving or defining urban as (1) a code word often used to refer to race; (2) inner-city areas with a large minority population; (3) a large concentration of lower income families; (4) stagnant or declining property values; or (5) underachieving public schools.

Paula, an elementary school principal offered a different perspective than her peers when she discussed the urban setting by focusing on the similarities rather than the differences between urban, suburban or rural schools. One important similarity, she highlighted is the fact that all public school principals in Michigan, regardless of the geographic location of their school, must accept every child that enrolls in their public school and attempt to provide that child with the best possible education. Based on 32 years of experience working in urban education, Paula argues that the discussion should not center on the stark differences between students or their geographic school location – a more important and fruitful discussion would focus on the 'degrees of difference' that may exist between urban, suburban or rural schools and school children. All children, she believes, will face challenges that may be related to race, gender, family issues or social status. One significant degree of difference, Paula believes, is, "With urban students you're dealing with children who have more challenges." To make her point Paula said:

> You may have urban students who don't have two parents at home, or a parent in jail, or a parent on drugs. I know at least two children off the top of my head whose mothers are in jail, and I know one of the children is very depressed. It's not uncommon to have children that come to us that may not have eaten, so they're not going to be focused, and that's a reality. And yet, in spite of these and other stressful circumstances they're still expected to achieve."

Kathy, a middle school principal, provided an additional perspective on degrees of difference when she talked about the wide variety of potential challenges any child might face and the degrees of difference in how the challenge itself might be defined. Reflecting on an urban school principal leadership training session she attended at Harvard University, Kathy said:

> One of the things that I learned listening to my colleagues from around the country, and around the world, is that we have a lot of the same issues. They may manifest themselves slightly different but we have a lot of the same issues. For example, parent involvement is a universal issue... but one thing that I've taken away from the program is it doesn't matter if your mom is drugged out and selling crack or using crack or if your mom is at a conference in Aspen, Colorado, you're still neglected.

Student and Staff Safety in an Urban School Setting

In Figure 5.3 and Table 5.3 we see that four participants - one elementary school principal, two high school principals and Francis, the district director -believe staff and student safety is a significant issue and a challenge in the urban school setting. For example, in her case study Henrietta described the gatekeeper role she has assumed in her high school to "keep folks out of my building who shouldn't be there." Artifacts of student and staff safety issues and challenges include the metal detectors and single point of building entry into his high school building mentioned in George's case study; multiple examples of neighborhood crime discussed by Francis; Mary's concern that rats from abandoned buildings might compromise the health and safety of students playing in her elementary school playground; and Henrietta's unfortunate experience and on-going concern with break-in and property theft in her high school.

Over the past 30 or 40 years, the issue and challenge of ensuring student and staff

safety in my participant's urban school district have increased as a diverse collection of once vibrant and thriving urban communities have eroded into what I think of as "toxic neighborhoods." Toxic neighborhoods where urban youth, many serving as youthful parents, are enticed and encouraged to participate in dangerous activities, are disproportionately affected by high underemployment or unemployment, and constantly exposed to illegal, harmful or life threatening behaviors. Behaviors and activities such as youth violence and victimization researched by (Feigelman, Howard, Li, & Cross, 2000; Nadel, Spellmann, Alvarez-Canino, Lausell-Bryant, & Landsberg, 1996); mental health issues exposed by (Xue, Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, & Earls, 2005); early childhood behavior problems examined by (Winslow & Shaw, 2007); high-risk behaviors including drug use, drug trafficking or weapons carrying reported by (Black & Ricardo, 1994); a rising trends in asthma prevalence and severity exposed by (Wright & Steinbach, 2001); and adolescent sexual behaviors that include early first sexual intercourse and increased risk of pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases documented in research studies completed by (Cubbin, Santelli, Brindis, & Braveman, 2005; Upchurch, Levy-Storms, Sucoff, & Aneshensel, 1998). From my perspective a major issue contributing to toxic neighborhoods in the African-American urban communities include poverty levels that contribute directly and indirectly to family stress and conflict, adolescent children with a negative sense of self-worth, a propensity for violent behavior among urban youth, and high school graduation rates of African-American children that are significantly lower than the national average (Ensminger, Lamkin, & Jacobson, 1996; Paschall & Hubbard, 1998).

Time, Money, and People Resources

In this paper, I use the term resource to refer to time, money or people. All

participants discussed multiple issues and challenges regarding the lack of adequate resources they have for their schools. As shown in Figure 5.3, participants identified nine resource related issues and challenges that they believe have a deleterious effect on their leadership capacity, students, staff, and the efficient operation of their schools. The nine issues and challenges include: (1) their inability to manage and control their time; (2) old school buildings in need of maintenance and repair; (3) addressing the multiple needs of urban children; (4) maintaining an adequate custodial staff; (5) the need for school finance reform that increases the amount of money for student instruction and school operations; (6) additional classroom instructional technology; (7) the lack of gender-based alternative schools for middle school students; (8) building principals not authorized to have an assistant principal; and (9) the lack of ethnic textbooks.

Marietta, a high school principal, and Francis, the district director, both discussed the issue and challenge of serving the multiple needs of urban students. In her case study Marietta used the example of the district's zero-tolerance policy and practice to argue that one key difference between serving the needs of suburban versus urban children is the degree of judgment that can and should be exercised at the school building level. Francis, the district director of leadership training, confessed that during her 13 years as an elementary school principal, she attempted to maintain an appropriate balance between her teachers and support staff that she thought necessary and sufficient to meet the diverse needs of her urban student population. She explained:

> My concept when I was a principal was that we [her elementary school] were a full-service agency and all those things [support staff skills and capabilities] were available, and that's how I spent my Title I money. I had a nurse, I had a full-time social worker, I had a full-time attendance officer. I bought another day for the psychologist. So, I didn't put my Title I money into supplies as much as I put it into people. Yeah, people.

Figure 5.4 shows administrator, teachers and support staff personnel positions participants said that they are authorized to have in their schools - assuming they have adequate funds. Based on my review of school personnel data supplied by eight of the

Figure 5.4: Urban school personnel classifications.

Administrator	Teachers	Support staff
Administrator classifications • Principal • Assistant principal • Curriculum leader • Curriculum coordinator	Teacher classifications • Classroom teacher • Special education • Special education aide • Art • Computer • Physical education • Home economics • Music • Literacy coach	Professional support • Psychologist • Social Worker • Nurse • Speech and Language Impaired • Guidance Counselor Student and staff safety • Public Safety Officer • Crossing Guard Food service • Food Service • Noon hour aide-Lunchroom Assistant Transportation • Bus Driver • Bus Driver Special-Education Assistant Academic support • Librarian • School Service Assistant • Education Technician • College graduate aide Building maintenance • Engineer • Boiler Operator • Custodian Administrative support • Secretary/Bookkeeper

Note: Personnel classifications derived from participant interviews.

participants I calculated that 33% of the total employees working in the eight schools are support staff personnel, 62% are teacher resources and 5% are school administrators. The percentage of support staff resources ranged from a low of 28% in Marietta's 850 student high school to a high of 53% in Mary's 587 student K-8 elementary school. Looking across my participant's schools, the teachers, as a percentage of total school staff, ranged

from 44% to 65%. Participants explained that the number of teachers in the school is determined by the district based on grade level, class-size considerations and student enrollment. Support staff positions however, are recommended and funded by the district but, as Francis indicated earlier, participants have limited amounts of categorical or grant fund dollars that the principal can use to hire additional support staff personnel. Multiple participants acknowledged that they do have limited flexibility to assess their school support staff resource requirements and then attempt to serve the academic, psychological, and physiological needs of students in their school - as best they can.

Case study research conducted at the Harvard Medical School emphasizes the importance of having adequate support staff in schools located in an urban setting. Research conducted by (Wright & Steinbach, 2001)) explored the rising trend in asthma prevalence and severity among poverty level minority youth living in high risk urban neighborhoods. Wright's research findings suggest that youth who face persistent exposure to street violence, domestic violence, or victimization in the form of threat or actual physical assault may incur increased levels of stress that may increase their risk for asthma - or exacerbate a pre-existing asthma condition. Wright's research findings serves to illustrate and provide additional support for my fourth finding that the urban school principals participating in the study must focus on a myriad of "nuts-and-bolts" issues and challenges that are affecting their urban school.

Time Management Issue and Challenge

We see in Table 5.3 that time management was identified as a major issue and challenge by all participants – including Francis the director of leadership training. All participants indicated that the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the urban school setting makes managing their time a major challenge. Francis was quick to point out that

time management training is included in the leadership training she provides for aspiring and current school principals; however, from her perspective the training has not helped principals develop effective strategies or skills for managing their time. She explained why time management training was such a challenge:

> ...time management for a principal, and time management as it's taught in a business class, for example, they collide. So we've [the district] struggled with how to teach that...because they'll [private sector] say shut your door and say, you know, for 30 minutes, nobody can bother me. Well, if a [angry] parent walks in the door, and you don't come out, they're either gonna flip out, or they're gonna go downtown and say that principal was in there and wouldn't open the door. I mean, so it's kind of a struggle. And that's why I think most of being a principal is instinctive. I think it's a gift. The training [time management] can help you but...

Francis concluded:

> To be a good urban principal, you have to be able to multitask. So I agree with what people say about how, you know, it should be [flip it] but the reality of, you know, what we have, it is what we have. It was very rare that I did paperwork during the day, [I only did] something that had to be downtown. My paperwork got done after people left, because people were more important to me than paper. My school day was like, well, it was usually from 7:30 in the morning till 7:30 at night, you know. I could get a lot of paper...but I didn't allow it to interfere, because I did it at a different time.

Leadership Preparation

My fifth finding is that leadership preparation in this urban school district is a continuous process that includes six overlapping activities that help aspiring and experienced principals acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience required to develop and enhance their capacity for urban school leadership. Three supporting themes, summarized in Figure 5.5, emerged as participants shared stories, artifacts and their perception and understanding of the district's preparation process input, activities, and output. The first emergent theme suggests that the primary input to the preparation process is participants who will have the time, money, and people resources their elementary, middle, or high school requires. Second, the preparation process consists of six overlapping activities that include personal reflection and self-assessment; school

leadership training; leadership opportunity and visibility; exposure to urban settings and

Figure 5.5: Urban school district leadership preparation process

Preparation process input:

- Principals with time, money, and people resources their school requires

Preparation process overlapping activities:

- Personal reflection and self-assessment
- School leadership training
- Leadership opportunity and visibility
- Exposure to urban settings and urban research
- Mentoring
- On-the-job experiences in an urban school

Preparation process output:

- Principals with urban school leadership capacity

Source: Participant interviews, focus group, and case study analysis.

urban research; mentoring; and on-the-job experiences in an urban school. And third, participants believe the primary output of the preparation process is principals with leadership capacity necessary and sufficient to address the nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges they will face in their urban schools.

Process Input of Time, Money, and People Resources

Unless urban principals are provided with adequate resources of time, money, and people participants in this study believe a principal may be prepared to provide school leadership but find it extremely difficult to do their job and to get the job done. In the first column of Figure 5.3, participants cited specific examples of a lack of time, money,

or people resources having a negative effect on their ability to provide effective leadership for their respective school. The nine specific resource issues and challenges mentioned by participants included: (1) their inability to manage and control the amount of time they devote to instructional leadership or school administration activities; (2) old school buildings in need of constant maintenance and immediate repair; (3) the on-going challenge and difficulty of addressing multiple needs of the children attending their school; (4) the challenge of maintaining an adequate number of school support staff due to declining student enrollment and school budget cuts; (5) the lack of significant reform of Michigan's current approach to school financing; (6) the need for additional classroom instructional technology; (7) the lack of gender-based alternative schools for middle school students; (8) the fact that some participants are not authorized to have an assistant principal; and (9) the lack of an adequate quantity of ethnic textbooks.

First Process Activity Personal Reflection and Self-Assessment

During interviews each of the nine participants commented on the importance of being introspective and honest with themselves about their reasons and motivations for seeking the urban school principalship. Kathy, a middle school participant reflected on her mental preparation for urban school leadership and confessed that making the commitment to pursue an urban school principalship was just as important as her decision to pursue a university degree in education. Her primary motivation for seeking the principalship was, she said, "I really believed I could make the biggest impact in an urban setting."

Mary, a K-8 principal, shared a similar story of personal reflection and introspection regarding urban school leadership. She noted that during the 16 years she worked as a classroom teacher and four years as an assistant principal, she developed an

understanding and appreciation for just how difficult and challenging it would be if she were to become an urban school principal. It took her 20 years to finally get the principal job, but now, after serving 16 years serving as an urban school principal Mary is confident that she made the absolute right decision. Her advice to aspiring principals is to assess and then reassess their personal aspirations and career goals before deciding to become an urban school principal because, from her perspective, "urban school leadership is something you absolutely have to want to do."

In his case study, George, a high school principal admits that his strong sense of personal responsibility to African-American children and desire to play a professional role in urban education are two key reasons he feels privileged to have had a 33 year career in this urban district. In 1982 his mounting frustration with district politics, excessive bureaucracy and low pay drove George to quit his teaching job in the district and take a private sector job selling life insurance. George explained why it was not long before he returned to his teaching job in the district:

> After about a year, I realized that I really missed the teaching part, so I ... came back into teaching school... for half the money...but there are rewards the other job couldn't provide. I was feeding my family but.... People would ask me, What do you do for a living? When I told them I was a teacher, I was proud of it...when I told them I was an insurance rep, it was just a job. That was really what it was. So when I came back in 1983, I realized that, okay, I'm in for the duration...this is what I'm supposed to do.

Personal reflection and assessment is equally important for experienced urban school principals. Henrietta is an excellent example. In her case study she explains that taking stock and assessing her leadership style and capability against the leadership requirements and needs of her urban high school was an activity that helped her better understand how the "bottom-line focus" leadership style she had developed working in the private sector was not appropriate for her high school staff. Henrietta said after

personal reflection she decided to modify her leadership style by, she said "slowing down and taking time to stop and say, you know, you're doing a good job... and thank you." Henrietta believes her personal reflection and self-assessment helped prepare her to be an even better urban school leader.

Second Process Activity School Leadership Training

The second preparation activity participants mentioned was their training. The consensus of all participants was the combination of university training, district professional development, multiple in-service sessions, and Michigan recertification training had done a good job of proving the data and knowledge they need to function as an instructional and administrative school leadership. Ruby, a K-5 principal, has 26 total years of service in the district and 4 years experience as a principal. From her perspective, her ongoing training has helped her to develop and implement strategies that address a wide range of both student and staff issues that could have negatively affected her K-5 elementary school. Ruby is one of the three elementary school principals participating in this study that made AYP in 2005-2006 and the only participant that has consistently achieved her AYP or other school improvement objectives for 13 years in a row.

Third Process Activity Leadership Opportunity and Visibility

Several participants emphasized how important it was for them to have had the opportunity to be the leader of a school work-group, school-wide project, or district program while they were still a teacher, on district staff, or an assistant principal. The key point made by several participants was how important it is for aspiring principals to demonstrate that they have the confidence, ability, and leadership skills required to get a group of people – who may or may not report directly to you - to focus on and successfully complete a task or achieve a common objective. In addition, aspiring

principals should welcome the opportunity to learn from their leadership mistakes, recover from unexpected obstacles, and deal with the inevitable political issues that will arise in an urban school building or district as different parties attempt to satisfy their diverse needs and personal self-interest.

Demonstrating leadership ability and meeting or exceeding expected results can result in positive visibility within the district and help to launch or accelerate the career of an aspiring principal. In her case study Henrietta explained how her success leading several projects while she was a teacher and later on district staff gained her positive visibility both within the district and with the Governor of Michigan. She believes her promotion to high school principal was due in large part to her project success, demonstrated team leadership, and consistently producing positive results. While it took Henrietta 13 years to get promoted to principal, it took George 26 years to get his promotion to principal. The similarity, and the irony, is that George is convinced that the primary reason he was finally promoted was the successful implementation of a high-visibility project that resulted in a drastic reduction of student absence within the high school where he was a math and computer science teacher. George gained district-wide visibility when his approach was implemented in many other schools within the district. In 1994 George was promoted to assistant principal and in 2003, was selected from the principal eligibility list, interviewed by the principal selection committee of his current high school, and was selected to be principal.

In his case study George advises aspiring principals that being trained and prepared for urban school leadership and getting your name on the eligibility list is simply not enough. He advises aspiring principals that "getting positive visibility and making your mark on the district" is an effective way to increase the odds of getting an

interview with a principal for an assistant principal position or an interview with a selection committee for school principal. From his perspective, the key is to take full advantage of opportunities to "visibly" demonstrate your ability to lead school change and deliver positive results.

Fourth Process Activity Exposure to Urban Settings and Urban Research

The third component of preparation in this district is daily exposure to a variety of urban school settings and professional development sessions centered on urban school research. This theme began to emerge when two participants, Daniel, a middle school principal and George, a high school principal, discussed how their exposure to multiple grade levels - middle school and high school - had helped prepare them to develop strategies and programs that they believe will help middle school students get off to a fast academic start in high school. George for example, discussed the one-week transition and orientation program he and his four assistant principals were conducting during the summer of 2006 for all ninth grade students coming into his high school. Daniel, the middle school principal, is taking a different approach to the issue of ninth graders transitioning to high school. Based on his review of urban school research that examined the outcome and results of single gender schools for African-American urban students- especially African-American boys - George has developed and submitted a proposal and recommendation that the district establish a single gender alternative school for middle school students. In his case study I quote Daniel as saying, "we have alternative high schools in urban areas but the problems we see kids experiencing they don't just start in the ninth grade."

A good example of research helping to prepare participants for urban school leadership is provided by George in his case study when he discusses research that

invested teaching and student learning in an urban school setting. Based on his research (Schlechty, 2002) concludes that the primary role and responsibility of urban teachers and urban school principals are to provide engaging classroom instruction and insist that all student participate in learning experiences that are academically rigorous and relevant to the current environment and future aspirations of each urban student. Using Schlechty's research as his touch-stone, George shared in his case study that he is implementing a strategy and plan in his high school to increase the "academic rigor and relevance" of the classroom instruction all of his teachers provide for the 1000 students that attend his urban high school.

Fifth Process Activity Mentoring

Mentoring was the fourth preparation component to emerge. Each participant discussed how mentoring hand helped increase or improve their leadership skills, knowledge or career within the district. Because this urban district does not have a formal mentoring program for aspiring principals the mentoring participants received was based on informal relationships that participants had established and maintained throughout their careers. For instance Marietta, a high school principal, insists that the majority of her high school administration and operations skills and knowledge are the result of informal mentoring she received while working for the same high school principal for 15 years as his assistant principal. Another high school principal, Henrietta, explained that she did have a formal mentor during the 12 years she worked in the private sector before joining leaving that company to start her career in 1990 as a business teacher in this urban school district. After joining the district Henrietta feels she was fortunate and spiritually blessed as a new teacher to develop and be able to maintain an informal mentoring relationship with her building principal. Her mentor, Henrietta says, has remained

actively involved throughout Henrietta's career by (1) teaching her small and large group communication skills; (2) helping her to improve her school leadership knowledge and skills; (3) assigning her to high visibility projects that have helped to accelerate and advance her career; and (4) actively supporting Henrietta's promotions to higher levels of school and district level responsibilities - up to and including Henrietta's nomination and selection in 2005 as principal of her current high school.

Each participant shared wonderful stories and memories of the mentoring they had received from a variety of mentors. Mentoring, for example, they had received from past principals they had worked for, new principal cohort group members, or educational professionals working in the private sector who are working with the district on a consultative basis. The five participants that had the opportunity to attend the district's assistant principal leadership training program that began in 2003 all commented on the value of the informal mentoring they had received from Francis, the district director of leadership training who runs the training program. Participants were unanimous in their belief that informal mentoring is an effective method for improving an aspiring principal's leadership skills, knowledge and preparation for urban school principalship.

Sixth Process Activity On-the-Job Experience in an Urban School

The fifth principal preparation component participants identified is on-the-job experience. Although I discuss it as the seventh and last component in the district principal preparation process all participants believe it is perhaps the most important and valuable component of their leadership preparation. Marietta, for example, believes 15 years of on-the-job experience as a high school assistant principal made her a much better high school principal. She also believes 15 years as an assistant principal was too long. From her perspective she is convinced she was well qualified and prepared for the job

long before she was promoted into the job. The most important ingredients of an urban school leadership preparation process, Marietta believes, are university training, on-the-job training, mentoring, and lots of on-the-job experience. She said in her case study:

> People do need to get that university training... they need to get that. And then they need to have something like a student teaching experience in an urban school. Once they get that experience... then put them in a place where there is a real mentor, somebody who's been exposed to all there is about the job. So, you know... they get that field-based experience.

The question of how much experience is enough, how long does it take to prepare a principal for urban school leadership, and should mentoring be formalized or remain informal in this urban district or all important questions – but, unfortunately, well beyond the scope of this research.

Primary Process Output is Urban School Leadership Capacity

The primary output of the district leadership preparation process is principals with the leadership capacity necessary and sufficient to address the nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges of their urban school (see Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3). Linda Lambert (2005) notes that "educators use the term 'leadership capacity' as an organizational concept meaning broad based, skillful participation in the work of leadership that leads to lasting school improvement" (P.38). A different interpretation of leadership capacity is offered by Richard Elmore (2000) who argues that the school principal must have the leadership capacity to perform two key functions. First, the leadership capacity to guide and coach classroom teachers as they provide classroom instruction at the "technical core" of the school. And second, the capacity to manage and control the administrative and operational "structures and processes around instruction" that provide teachers and students with a "buffer" of protection from "outside inspection, interference... and [shield teachers and students from] dealing with disruptions inside and outside the system" (p.7).

Participants in this study did not use the term leadership capacity when responding to my interview question regarding the attributes and characteristics of an outstanding urban school leader. Instead, in their case studies, participants talked in terms of the knowledge, skills, resources, and experience an urban principal must have in order to be effective in what participants believe are six major categories of urban school leadership. The six categories include: (1) implementing strategies that educate urban children; (2) active participation in urban school leadership preparation; (3) meeting urban school stakeholder expectations; (4) minimizing the effects of external forces on urban students and school staff; (5) addressing multiple needs of urban children; and (6) demonstrating professional and personal commitment to urban education.

Based on participant case study comments regarding principal performance evaluations and my review of the district's school principal evaluation form, my seventh finding is that, as shown in Figure 5.6, principals in this urban district are measured, assessed, evaluated, and receive performance feedback on only three out of the six categories of school leadership capacity participants believe are necessary to be an effective urban school principal. For example, in the first category - implementing strategies that educate urban children - a principal's capacity for instructional leadership is assessed and evaluated based on student scores on standardized tests, AYP results, and staff professional development activities that have occurred during the school year. In this same category, a participant's capacity for school administration and operations is assessed based on financial audit results; timely submission of reports; procedural efficiency; progress towards school improvement goals; maintaining a clean and safe school building; emergency procedure documentation and practice drills; and implementation of student discipline according to the district code of student conduct. In

Figure 5.6: Urban school principal leadership capacity

Principal leadership capacity being assessed and evaluated:

1. Implement strategies that educate urban children
   - instructional leadership -academic rigor and relevance
   - school administration and operations -management and procedures
   - allocation of time, money, and people resources
   - grade level nuanced solutions -elementary, middle, high school

2. Active participation in urban school leadership preparation
   - mentor aspiring principals
   - staff mentoring
   - peer mentoring
   - principal's professional development

3. Meet urban school stakeholder expectations
   - students – test scores and academic achievement
   - parents – communication and relationships
   - staff – performance evaluations and professional development
   - boss – produce results
   - community – interaction and partnerships

Principal leadership capacity not being assessed or evaluated:

4. Minimize effects of external forces on urban students and school staff
   - family – family structure, value for education
   - poverty – underemployment, unemployment, generational poverty
   - class, race, ethnicity and gender – systemic societal issues
   - neighborhood – property values, abandoned homes
   - urban setting – crime, drugs, violence, victimization
   - lack of resources – declining student enrollment, school finance reform

5. Address multiple needs of urban school children
   - special education - eleven categories in IDEA 1997
   - psychological –stress, trauma, victimization
   - physiological – sex education, health screening, lunch programs, safety
   - social - negations, mediation, communication, conflict resolution
   - growth – nurturing, self-actualization, life skills
   - future – high school graduation, college, dreams, aspirations

6. Demonstrate professional and personal commitment to urban education
   - urban school principalship - average 30 years working in urban schools
   - education organizations - active membership
   - action research - best practice implementation, sharing results

Source: Participant interviews and case studies and research literature review.

the second category, entitled active participation in urban school leadership preparation, school principals are evaluated and assessed based on assistant principal participation in professional development, providing mentoring opportunities for school staff, and active participation in school principal professional development sessions.

In the third category participants are assesses and evaluated on his or her ability to meet or exceed the expectations of key stakeholders in their school. For instance, student test scores may be used to determine if student expectations for academic achievement are met. Parent expectations could be assessed based on how well the school principal provided timely communications and maintained positive relations with parents. Documentation of professional development activities and completed performance evaluations could be used to assess and evaluate how well the principal is meeting the expectations of the school staff. The principal's boss expects the building principal to address and resolve issues and challenges that arise in the school and only escalate to the district executive level when necessary or appropriate. The principal's boss also expects no negative stories about the school will appear on TV or in the newspaper. The local urban community is a major stakeholder in each of their urban schools and expects school principals to establish effective partnerships and maintain positive interactions with parents, businesses, institutions and community-based organizations.

Assuming my analysis of participant interview data and case studies is correct, it appears principals in this district are only being assessed, evaluated, and receiving feedback on the first three leadership capacity categories shown in Figure 5.6: (1) implementing strategies that educate urban children; (2) active participation in urban school leadership preparation; and (3) meeting urban school stakeholder expectations. Unfortunately, principals may not be receiving performance evaluation feedback in the

three categories of leadership capacity shown in the bottom of Figure 5.6 that each of my participants believe are critical for effective urban school leadership: (4) minimizing the effects of external forces on urban students and school staff; (5) addressing the multiple needs of urban school children; and (6) demonstrating their personal and professional commitment to urban education.

Capacity to Minimize the Effects of External Forces

As shown above in Figure 5.6, six external forces of family, poverty, class and race, neighborhood, urban setting, and lack of school resources are included in the capacity category of minimizing the effects of external forces on students and school staff. Individually and collectively these six diverse and overlapping external forces can make it extremely difficult for an urban school principal to serve the multiple needs of their students. For example, an urban school principal must have the capacity to help students who may be underachieving in the classroom due to the stress of family homelessness, a nontraditional family structure, family members incarcerated in prison, or extended family members who have a low level of education and cannot effectively communicate or visibly demonstrate the value or benefits of getting a good education.

Multiple researchers (Kozol, 1991; Payne, 2005) have explored the detrimental effects poverty can have on the maturation and educational experiences of urban children struggling to survive in a family environment where underemployment, chronic unemployment, or generational poverty is the norm. In this particular urban school district in March of 2008 the percentage of unemployed African-American adults is more than three times the national percentage of 5.2% unemployed workers in the United States. One reason the external force of unemployment has a disproportionate effect on African Americans is that high percentage of African-Americans who live in this urban

community. The primary causes of the high unemployment are major downturns in local industry revenues and massive job layoffs as businesses in Michigan attempt to survive. The high percentage of African-Americans living in this urban community are reflected in the student population. My participants estimate that 87% of the 5,821 students enrolled in their nine schools are African-American and 82% qualify for free and reduced lunch (see Table 3.1 in Chapter 3). This high percentage of African-Americans student is one reason why the majority of my participants believe socio-economic class is more of an external force on their students then race, ethnicity, or gender. Several participants make the point in their case study that, from their perspective, children who have similar socioeconomic backgrounds will likely exhibit similar classroom behavior and a similar value for education - whether they attend an urban, suburban or rural public school.

The majority of my participants provided vivid examples of their leadership capacity to deal with the mostly negative external forces exerted by their local school neighborhood on the teaching and learning activities of students and staff in their respective school. For example, each participant commented or shared stories about the prevalence, proliferation and potential hazards of burned buildings, abandoned homes, unsafe structures, drug houses in close proximity to their school building, and the daily exposure of their students to these highly visible structures each day as they journeyed to and from school. In several instances, participants told stories of actions they were forced to take in an attempt to decrease the potentially harmful affects these neighborhood hazards might have on students or school staff.

The last two external forces in this category - the urban setting and lack of resources - are inextricably linked together by the continuing decline in student enrollment across the entire school district. In Michigan the per-pupil funding provided

by the state of Michigan flows directly to the school district where the student is enrolled. From my participants perspective the dramatic decrease in student enrollment and school district financial resources that has been occurring over the past 40 or 50 years appears to have accelerated over the past 10 or 15 years. As a result, my participants confided that their students and school staff have been affected by significant cuts in district support services, school closures, school mergers, relocation to different schools within the district, and mandatory reduction of teacher and support staff personnel. School principals affected by the decline in student enrollment have been reassigned to other schools, accepted district staff support assignments, gone back into the classroom a teacher, or retired from their chosen profession.

Capacity to Address Multiple Needs of Urban School Children

Urban principals must have the resources, knowledge, skills, and experience to address multiple needs of the urban children attending their elementary, middle, or high school. As shown in Figure 5.6, principals having leadership capacity in this fifth category would attempt to address each student's need for (1) special-education for 11 different classifications of disability defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment (IDEA) of 1997; (2) psychological services for stress, trauma, or victimization; (3) physiological support services for sex education, food programs, vision, dental, and health screening; (4) socialization skills for negotiations, mediation, communication, and conflict resolution; (5) personal growth focusing on maturation, self-actualization, gender roles and responsibilities, and life skills; and (6) each student planning for the future based on their dreams and aspirations after high school or college graduation. Detailed discussions of programs, approaches, or services that might be appropriate for each of these areas of student need are outside the scope of

this paper, however, each of the nine participant case studies in Chapter 4 do provide examples of how my participants are attempting to address the unique needs of their students.

For example, similar to her peers, Mary's approach to addressing the multiple needs of her 587 students appears to be based on her allocation of teaching and support staff resources. In her case study she provides insight into her rationale and approach for resource allocation by explaining that the 94 personnel working in her K-8 school includes 41 teachers, 50 support specialist, and three school administrators. Twenty one (22%) of her staff are regular classroom teachers; sixteen (17%) are special-education teachers for aides; and three (3%) are school administrators – an assistant principal, a curriculum leader, and herself as building principal. The fifty four (55%) support staff personnel roles and responsibilities in her school includes psychologist, social worker, language impaired, guidance counselor, food service, building engineer, and custodian. In her case study Mary disclosed her rationale for staff allocation and explained why she has more support staff and administrators than teachers on her school staff:

> The sociological needs of the children, I am not going to say they outweigh the academic needs, but they are extremely important. I know it's something that people don't like to hear because they say that urban administrators are using it as an excuse. I absolutely believe all children can learn. I thrive on that. But I also know that the negative sociological factors that impact families have a direct bearing on how a school functions.

In his case study Daniel explained that 100% of his 652 students are African-American, 81% qualify for the free and reduced lunch program, and that the percentages of students in his school that require special-education services are perhaps twice the 13% district average. Daniel also made it clear that (1) his middle school is already in AYP phase 5 restructuring and (2) serving the special-education needs of his 6-8 middle school

students is one of his top priorities. Research conducted by (Dentith & Frattura, 2004) highlights the focus and accountability No Child Left Behind (NCLB) places on school principals to address the special-education needs of urban students. In their research they comment that:

> Moreover, since the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) the necessity of inclusion has been even more consistently legislated. The NCLB legislation clearly delineating the inclusion of even children with disabilities, academically at-risk, and those with English as a second language must be assessed and provided instruction through content-licensed personnel.

Daniel shared that his strategy for addressing the special-education needs of his students involves reallocating his school staff resources and developing and enhancing his capacity for providing special-education leadership within his school.

After receiving permission from the district, Daniel reallocated his school staff so that 40 (38%) are regular education teachers; 26 (26%) are special-education teachers or aides; 30 (31%) provide a variety of staff support services; and six (6%) are in school administrator positions. It is interesting to note the contrast between Mary, who we learned in an earlier paragraph, has 587 students that attend her K-8 school and 16 (17%) of her 94 school staff personnel are special-education teachers or aides versus the 26 (26%) special-education resources Daniel has allocated for his school. The dramatic difference in school resource allocation serves to highlight the importance of each urban school principal having the knowledge, skills, experience, and resources to address the unique needs of their urban students.

Anne Price (2008) notes that IDEA legislation passed in 1997 lists 11 separate disability categories: mental retardation; hearing impairments (including deafness); speech or language impairments; visual impairments (including blindness; serious

emotional disturbance; autism; traumatic brain injury; orthopedic impairments (physical impairments; other health impairments; specific learning disabilities; or developmental delay (p.2). The following warning posted by Price is particularly appropriate for Daniel and other urban school principals who may have little or no special-education training but are required by NCLB and their district's practices of inclusion or mainstreaming to provide site-based leadership for special-education activities and services within their school:

> The disabilities are based on what is sometimes referred to as "educational diagnosis" as opposed to a "medical diagnosis". This means that the criteria for special education may be different than diagnostic criteria for the medical or mental health profession. This is often confusing to parents and doctors, psychologists and others not familiar with the criteria necessary for special education.

Daniel is convinced that he and his entire teaching staff - both regular and special-education teachers - would benefit from special-education in-service training that would improve their skills and leadership capacity to assess, diagnose and understand which of his 652 students need, or do not need, special-education services and support. In his case study Daniel explained why he believes special-education training is an important first step in preparing him to address the issues, challenges, and resource needs of his special education students:

> This whole special ed piece... training would help. Students who have been misdiagnosed or who are borderline, how do we recognize those students? We had a workshop yesterday... focusing on students exhibiting the same types of behaviors as kids in special-ed but the parents refused to sign the documents. How do we in-service teachers who have been teaching [for] 25, 30 years, but who don't understand what inclusion means...don't know how you reach that population of youngsters... how to do a lesson plan that would allow them to...get the students started and pull a couple of kids out to give them some additional one on one? If I were more knowledgeable about how that's done I could provide that to my staff... when there was a need.
>
> We may not be able to tap into special-education funding because the students have not been diagnosed... but there are other resources out there. We could possibly reduce class sizes in a couple of areas... to provide more one-on-one instruction... but when you've got 32 kids and one teacher, there's no way...not a whole lot of time you can devote to one or two individuals who need more time than you're able to give them. Or, their parents don't want the stigma. Or, in some instances, parents have agreed to have them placed, but they tested a little bit above the area that would allow them to receive the services. A lot of these kids have not been diagnosed, and they're

sitting there, and they're failing.

Professional and Personal Commitment to Urban Education

As shown in the sixth category of Figure 5.6 three themes emerged from participant case studies to help validate and provide convincing evidence of my participant's individual and collective commitment to urban education. For example, strong evidence of their collective commitment is the fact that, as shown in Table 5.1, their years of service ranges from Henrietta's 14 years to Roberts 40 years of service - with a group average of 30 years working in this urban school district. With 29 years of service in the district, George testified to his personal and professional commitment when he shared the following story of why, at one point in his career, he left urban education and, equally important, why he returned:

> I knew I wanted to work with our [African-American] kids, and... I loved the classroom. To me it was the best job I could ever have cuz it was enjoyable and, you know, the rewards were right there. ...all of these youngsters coming to you for the content, and that role model piece. I felt uplifted by that...I loved it. But, I didn't feel like I'd influence enough children in the course of a year... only 165 kids a year... that's as many as you can touch... so I felt limited. In addition, I was so disgusted with the [district] bureaucracy, the politics ... we couldn't make a change. So the opportunity came to leave... and the money was better... so I left... sold insurance...and made about double what I was making as a teacher.
>
> After about a year, I realized that I really miss the teaching part so I ... came back into teaching school... for half the money...but there are rewards the other job couldn't provide. I was feeding my family but.... People would ask me, What do you do for a living? When I told them I was a teacher, I was proud of it...when I told them I was in insurance rep, it was just a job. That was really what it was. So when I came back in 1983, I realized that, okay, I'm in for the duration...this is what I'm supposed to do.

Active membership in educational, community based, state-wide, or national organizations provided additional evidence of my participants' personal and professional commitment to both urban education and their urban community. During one-on-one interviews participants discussed or provided documentation of their active participation in: the Optimist Club; Michigan Reading Council; the Professional Women's Network;

church music and choir director; NAACP; Urban League; Boy Scout urban scouting program; National Association Of Black School Educators; board member of the Michigan Association Of Secondary School Principals; board member a community shelter for battered women; church affiliated prison ministry and literacy program; president of a national women's organization; Phi Delta Kappa; Michigan Elementary And Middle School Principals Association; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Michigan Alliance For Leadership Development; Business Professionals Of America adviser; member of the North Central accreditation steering committee.

The third theme providing support for my participants' capacity for personal and professional commitment to urban education were stories they shared regarding the implementation educational past practice and sharing results. For example, George and Henrietta have both implemented and shared the results of transition programs they have implemented to help middle school students acclimate and integrate into their respective high school. In his case study George explained that based on his objective of finding a way to smooth a student's transition from middle school to high school, and get his ninth graders off to a fast start, he said, "I'm trying a different kind of orientation with my ninth graders." He then explained:

> The district wants us to give them an orientation on the academic stuff... but my ninth graders are falling off the path for behavioral reasons, for the most part a lack of refusal skills. How to tell that kid, no, I don't want that marijuana. No, I'm not gonna skip. Or, no, I'm not going to do premarital sex this early in my life. They just aren't getting those skills. I'm running the orientation [one-week during the summer] like a seminar, a little video, question and answer, stand and deliver. My intent is for me and my four assistant principals to establish one-on-one relationships with about 100 kids each. At the end of that week there'll be 100 kids that feel like they know the principal and 100 kids that feel like they know an assistant principal. So, when they come [start high school in the fall] they don't feel abandoned. If you look at our stats, the ones that are falling off the mark and not graduating on time, the damage is done in the ninth grade, their first year of high school. They're supposed to come out of the ninth grade with 60 hours... if they come out with 45, you know, I'm losing the battle. But if I can get them to walk out of the ninth grade with 60 hours, and develop a workman's like approach to acquiring an education, and knowing that they have a part to play, then...

While George is focused on improving his high school graduation rate up from an estimated 66% Henrietta is confident that helping her ninth graders have a smooth transition and get off to a fast start in high school can help her maintain or improve her current 98% high school graduation rate. In addition to helping with academic performance, Henrietta is hopeful that a smooth transition can help improve student behavior and reduce the growing number of discipline issues she and her staff had to deal with. In her case study Henrietta said:

> We've transitioned into a new building, and because of that we've had some serious issues with discipline. Students transitioned from a very small portable unit to a huge building and all of a sudden, it's like, whoa, it's party time. I guess it's just like moving them to a college campus... you have all this freedom and open space and they have a sense that now let me just try any and everything. I have a discipline log that's probably that thick of students.

During the summer of 2006, Henrietta and her staff planed to conduct a four-week transition and orientation program for all of her ninth grade students. The program will be based on "four pillars" that Henrietta believes will provide a solid foundation for her ninth graders success in high school: (1) behavior expectations based on the district student Code of Conduct; (2) character education to discuss "specific character traits that we value... and expect to see... like respect, responsibility and achievement"; (3) hands-on orientation to introduce the new technology tools and techniques students will be using in the fall; and (4) high school academic expectations and requirements. The primary objective of the transition orientation program, Henrietta said, is to, "You know, get them in the building, talk to them, and get them used to some of the staff members so when they are arriving the first day, they're well-prepared to get started."

Despite the difference in duration of one wake versus four weeks both George and Henrietta are personally and professionally committed to achieving the same outcome

objectives - improving the high school graduation rate of their urban students. George and Henrietta both confided that they had gotten the idea for a middle school to high school transition program while listening to an urban school principal present both the results and the failures of the transition program he had attempted in his urban high school located in state. Based on their personal and professional commitment to improving urban education both George and Henrietta brought the idea back to their respective teaching and support staffs and eventually developed a transition program that their school action team members believe is appropriate for their urban school climate and urban schools students.

My deep concern is that without the benefit of performance feedback and improvement coaching in all six categories, principals in this district may miss the opportunity to develop or enhance their capacity in leadership categories that are just as important - maybe more important for some urban children - than the three leadership capacities that it appears are being evaluated. Fortunately, my cross-case analysis of participant case studies suggest that the district leadership preparation process has intentionally, or perhaps unintentionally, provided the opportunity for each participant to develop critically needed knowledge, skills, and experience in all six categories of leadership capacity.

Leadership Preparation Process and Leadership Capacity Outcome Matrix

Earlier in this chapter we saw in Figure 5.5 that personal reflection and self-assessment; school leadership training; leadership opportunity and visibility; exposure to urban settings and urban research; mentoring; and on-the-job-experience are key activities within the district leadership preparation process. A critical assumption is that these six overlapping activities are essential to the development of the leadership skills, knowledge

and opportunities required to develop and enhance the leadership capability and capacity of aspiring and new urban school principals. Said another way, the district leadership preparation process can help provide aspiring, new, and experienced principals with the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and resources required to develop and enhance a process participant's capacity in the six urban school leadership categories shown in Figure 5.6: implementing strategies that educate urban children; active participation in urban school leadership preparation; meetings urban school stakeholder expectations; minimizing the effects of external forces; addressing multiple needs of urban children; and demonstrating professional and personal commitment to urban education.

The process outcome matrix (see Patton, 2002, p.477) depicted by Figure 5.7, indicates how the six preparation process activities shown in the first row of the figure can help principals achieve the desired process outcomes of skills, knowledge, and opportunity and visibility they will need to develop and continually enhance their capacity for urban school leadership. In this urban district critical school resources of time money people shown in the last column of Figure 5.7 are strongly influenced, tightly controlled, or allocated to each school principal by the district. In the first column of Figure 5.7 I show the six categories of urban school leadership capacity previously discussed in Figure 5.6. An 'X' in an intersecting cell indicates a positive relationship between that process outcome and a category of leadership capacity. For example, row six indicates that principals need skills, knowledge, money, and people to develop the capacity to minimize the effects of external forces on urban students and school staff.

Figure 5.7: Urban school principal leadership preparation process and leadership capacity outcome matrix

Preparation process activities and resources (See Figure 5.5)	- Training - Mentoring - On-the-job experience (OJE)	- Training - Mentoring - Exposure to urban setting and urban research - OJE	- Reflection and self-assessment - Exposure to urban settings and urban research - Mentoring	- Time - Money - People
Leadership preparation process outcomes:	Skills	Knowledge	Opportunity and visibility	Adequate resources
Urban school principal leadership capacity requirements (See Figure 5.6)				
1. Implement strategies that educate urban children.	X	X	X	X = time, money, and people
2. Active participation in urban school leadership preparation		X	X	
3. Meet urban school stakeholder expectations	X	X	X	X = time, money and people
4. Minimize effects of external forces on urban students and school staff	X	X		X = money and people
5. Address multiple needs of urban schoolchildren	X	X	X	X = time, money and people
6. Demonstrate professional and personal commitment to urban education	X	X	X	X = time

Source: Participant interviews, case studies and related research.

Leadership Programs

In this section I discuss my eighth and final research finding, which argues that school leadership training and preparation offered by my participants' urban school district, universities, and a private sector organization New Leaders for New Schools, have significant differences in their leadership training and preparation activities, structure, and outcome objectives. In Figure 5.8 the major activities, structure, and outcome objectives of the three program providers are summarized and serve as a frame of reference for discussing (1) each program and (2) what I believe are major similarities or differences in each of the three different approaches to leadership training and preparation.

The data and information contained in Figure 5.8 was derived from a variety of sources. For example, participant interviews and case study analysis helped clarify and explain the leadership training program and career-long preparation process in my participants' urban school district. My understanding of university educational leadership programs was improved by a wide variety of research literature related to university program curriculum; course content; leadership standards; principal certification; internal and external university pressures; university program assessment and critiques; school principal role and responsibilities; and urban school leadership requirements (Anderson, 1991; Atkin & House, 1980; Bruss, 1986; Cleveland State University, 2003; College of Education at Michigan State University, 2007; Cuban, 2001; Cusick, 1992; Davis et al., 2005; Eikenberry, 1930; Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998; Jackson, 2005; Kottkamp & Orr, 2005; Lashway, 2002, 2003b; Levine, 2005; J. Murphy, 2003; National Center for Education Information, 2003; Norton, 2002; B. S. Portin, 2000; Thomson, 1993; UCEA et al., 2005; Wolcott,

1973; Michelle D Young et al., 2005). And last, data and information related to the New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) private sector program was harvested from multiple research studies, program reports, and several websites of urban school districts where the NLNS program has been implemented (Baltzell, 1983; Boysen, 1992; Carlin, 1992; Center on Education Policy, 2005; Cuban, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Edmonds, 1979; P. Hallinger, 1992; Hill & Celio, 1998; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Lipman, 1998; Memphis City Schools, 2005; National College for School Leadership, 2004a; New Leaders for New Schools, 2005; New Leaders for New Schools, 2006; G. Orfield et al., 2003; Osterman & Sullivan, 1994; Shen et al., 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Data extracted from the U.S. Department of Education (2004) ***Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership*** report allowed me to create the concise summary of key aspects of the NLNS program shown in Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2 of this report.

Urban District Training Program and Preparation Process

Activities: In the previous section of this paper, I discuss the fact that leadership training and preparation in my participants' urban school district is not a program - it is an ongoing process that employs the six genres of leadership preparation activities shown in the first row of Figure 5.8. The six activities are personal reflection and self-assessment; leadership training; leadership opportunity and visibility; exposure to urban setting and urban research; mentoring; and on-the-job experience. Collectively the six leadership preparation activities constitute a career-long process to train and prepare (1) teachers who aspire to become an assistant principal, (2) assistant principals who aspire to the principalship, and (3) experienced principals attempting to enhance their leadership capacity.

Figure 5.8: Program and process activities, structure, and outcome objectives of three different providers of K-12 school leadership training and preparation.

Training and preparation provider	Activities	Structure	Outcome objectives
Study participants K-12 urban school district leadership training program and preparation process	Personal reflection and self-assessment 12 month leadership training program School leadership opportunity and visibility Exposure to urban settings and urban research Mentoring On-the-job urban school experience	Continuous career-long process - no process owner Key activities are - "loosely-coupled" Participant responsible for his/her active participation Candidate selection criteria, screening and assessment coordinated by director leadership training Cohort groups No participation fee	Develop and enhance K-12 school leadership knowledge, skills, experience, and capacity Prepare participants to be urban elementary, middle or high school assistant or building principal Assistant principal candidates interview with school principal Principal candidates entered into eligibility pool Principal candidates interview with school principal selection committee
University K-12 school leadership training programs	Training • Teaching • Administration • Leadership • Policy K-12 urban, suburban, or rural school internship	2 to 7 year advanced degree program Core curriculum and cognate courses Cohort groups Student tuition fee	Graduation with MA, Ed.S. Ed.D. or Ph.D. Education theory Research methods Satisfy urban, rural, or suburban district degree requirements
New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) private sector K-12 urban school principal training program and preparation process (See Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2 for more details)	Four phase candidate assessment Personal reflection Training • Local university • Urban school residency • Field based training • Problem-based in case study • Action research Formal mentoring • Coaching On-the-job urban school experience "authentic learning"	12 month program Candidate selection criteria and screening University leadership classes in addition to 6 week university summer training 12 month internship School leadership performance standards Cohort group receives 2 to 5 years of cohort support District, university, and private sector partnership No participation fee	Placement as principal or assistant principal and commit to stay in that urban district for 3-5 years Will prepare traditional and non-traditional candidates from outside of education for urban school leadership Graduates satisfy program completion criteria Graduates satisfy district and state principal certification requirements Program assessment and feedback 3 to 5 year program delivery contract with each urban district Nonprofit objectives

Source: Participant interviews, case studies and literature review.

Structure: Candidates for the urban district leadership training program are nominated by the person to whom they report. Participants in the program pay no fee to participate in the training but are required to actively participate and learn together in cohort groups. It is important to note that the leadership preparation process is not a formal, rigidly structured process. As a result, each participant in the preparation process must be proactive and aggressive as they create and then take advantage of opportunities to engage in the six preparation activities. The one exception is the 12 month school leadership training program that is managed and facilitated by Frances, the district director of leadership training.

Outcome objectives: The primary outcome objective is to develop or enhance participants' urban school leadership knowledge, skills, experience, and capacity. Aspiring principals and assistant principals who complete the leadership training program have their names listed in the district "eligibility pool" indicating they are eligible to be selected to interview for an available assistant principal or building principal position within the district. Assistant principal candidates are interviewed and can be hired by a school principal. Candidates for building principal are interviewed by a five or six person school principal selection committee representing the school teaching staff, teachers union, parents, and the district executive to which the principal would report.

University Programs

Activities: In the second row of Figure 5.8 we see that the university K-12 education leadership preparation program has two major program activities. First, students participate in an academic curriculum intended to prepare them for a professional role in teaching, school administration, leadership or education policy. And second, each student may be required to participate in a teaching or administration internship at the

elementary, middle or high school grade level in an urban, suburban or rural school district.

Structure: University school leadership programs may be structured to allow students to select cognate courses that supplement and hopefully complement required classes within their core curriculum. Students pay tuition for each credit hour of instruction, attend classes according to their class schedule, and may be expected to meet several times during each semester as a cohort group of learners.

Outcome objective: Students in the Michigan State University, College of Education who satisfy all program requirements for graduation may receive a BS, M.A., Ed.S., or Ph.D. in their area of study. Advanced degree graduates are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of educational theory and research methods skills. Based on the job requirements of the institution, organization, urban, suburban or rural school district where the student might apply for employment, the students undergraduate or graduate degree in K-12 education will likely satisfy the employer's educational requirements.

NLNS Urban School Principal Training Program and Preparation Process

In the research report *Innovations in education: Innovative pathways to school leadership* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) the author states that the primary focus of the New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) program is to prepare principals to serve in urban K-12 school districts:

> New Leaders for New Schools is a national, New York City based nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster high academic achievement for every child by recruiting and developing the next generation of outstanding leaders for the nation's urban public schools. It has already established successful partnerships with public school systems and charter schools in New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Memphis, and the San Francisco Bay Area, and plans call for expansion to additional urban areas each year (p.49).

Activities: The five key preparation and training activities of the NLNS program

are (1) candidate assessment; (2) personal reflection; (3) training; (4) formal mentoring and coaching; and (5) on-the-job "authentic learning" experience in an urban school setting. The report notes that in 2004, of the 1,100 applicants that applied only 6% or 56 candidates were admitted into the program (p.50). After acceptance into the program, participants are required to attend university leadership training classes at a local university that is working in partnership with the urban school district and the NLNS program. Each participant is assigned an experienced urban school principal who serves as his or her formal mentor and coach throughout the 12 month program period. When not attending class, participants are required to work as interns in an urban school. The objective of the urban school internship is to get hands-on, on-the-job experience working directly with members of the urban school's leadership team who are attempting to address and resolve 'nuts and bolts urban school issues and challenges' similar to those I discussed earlier in this chapter (see Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3).

The third row of Figure 5.8 shows that all applicants are subjected to a four phase applicant assessment and screening that consist of an online application, multiple interviews, written response to a case study, and communication assessment tools to assess each candidate against the following nine selection criteria:

> An unyielding belief in the potential of all children to excel academically; Persistence and determination; Problem-solving skills; Project management skills to deliver results; Knowledge of teaching and learning; Self-awareness and commitment to ongoing learning; Excellent communication and listening skills; The ability to build successful relationships; and the ability to collaborate and build teams (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Structure: The *Innovations in education: Innovative pathways to school leadership* report (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) claims that the NLNS preparation program is structured to help each participant develop 12 standards-based leadership competencies that NLNS believes are exhibited by successful urban school

principals. The competencies were not specifically identified or discussed in the report and I was only able to confirm that the urban school l principal competency standards NLNS claims to have established for its program participants fall into three categories - personal competencies, school competencies, and operational leadership competencies.

Participants work in cohort learning groups and contractually receive between two and five years of mentoring and coaching support after they satisfy and complete all program criteria. Leadership training provided by the university partner is intended to satisfy local school district and state requirements for principal training and certification.

Outcome objectives: The primary objective of NLNS is to develop a three to five year contractual relationship with an urban school district to train and prepare assistant principals and school principals to work in that urban school district. Participants who complete all NLNS graduation requirements are contractually obligated to work in the urban school district for a period of three to five years. Candidates with private sector management and leadership experience can be and have been accepted into the NLNS leadership training program and preparation process. The school leadership training and preparation that the NLNS participants receive will satisfy principal certification requirements for that school district in the state in which the school district is located. NLNS is reported to be a nonprofit organization (U.S. Department of Education, 2004)

Similarities and Differences in Activities

On-the-job experience in an urban school setting is the primary difference between a university educational leadership training program and an urban school district or NLNS program. For example, a university student may not participate in an internship or in-service training in an urban school setting because (1) an internship or in-service training is not a program requirement (2) may be optional or (3) the student may prefer to

do their internship or in-service training in a suburban or rural school district. By contrast, NLNS participants are, hopefully, immersed in urban school issues and challenges during their mandatory 12 month internship. In a similar fashion, participants in an urban school district preparation process are exposed to the urban school setting and immersed in urban school nuts-and-bolts issues and challenges on a daily basis.

Similarities and Differences in Structure

Discussing the concept of loosely coupled systems Karl Weick (1976) notes that:

> ...when people describe loosely coupled systems they are often referring to (1) slack times-times when there is an excessive amount of resources relative to demands; (2) occasions when any one of several means will produce the same end; (3) richly connected networks in which influence is slow to spread and or is weak while spreading; (4) a relative lack of coordination, slow coordination or coordination that is dampened as it moves through a system; (5) a relative absence of regulations; (6) planned unresponsiveness; ...(9) infrequent inspection of activities within the system; (10) decentralization; ... (12) the absence of linkages that should be present based on some theory - for example, in educational organizations the expected feedback linkage from outcome back to inputs is often nonexistent. (p.5)

Using Karl Weick's brief discussion of loose coupling as my frame of reference, I submit that each of the three approaches to principal preparation – the urban district training program and preparation process; the university educational leadership training programs; and the NLNS urban school leadership training program and process - are loosely coupled systems that are structured and being implemented to (1) satisfy the school leadership requirements and objectives of their respective K-12 school stakeholders and (2) accomplish the mission and achieve the short and long term goals of each provider institution.

Similarities across the three loosely coupled systems include (1) applicant assessment and selection, (2) school leadership training, (3) school leadership preparation activities, (4) cohort learning groups (5) program and process completion criteria. These loosely coupled components appear to be the basic structural ingredients that get mixed,

matched, and packaged into different configurations, and then marketed to key stakeholders as an effective approach for preparing a large number of candidates for school principalship.

Significant structural differences among the three approaches are (1) the duration of the training program and preparation process; (2) definition and variety of training and leadership preparation activities; (3) candidate interview and selection process; (4) mandatory placement as an urban school assistant principal or principal; and (4) fee or tuition requirements for program or process participation.

University training programs: University leadership program activities are structured around a predefined core curriculum supplemented by the students' selected cognate courses that hopefully supplement and complement the teaching, administration, leadership or policy degree programs offered by different departments within the college of education. Two themes emerged from participant's case studies regarding the structure of university training programs. The first theme was a collective concern that university training programs are maniacally focused on educational theory versus helping participants understand why, how, and when educational theory should or could be translated into educational practice. And second, participants believe university professors are incorrect when they espoused or discussed educational theories of teaching, learning, and school administration as if the theories are equally applicable to urban, suburban, or rural K-12 students and schools. Participants believe there are degrees of difference between urban, suburban, and rural environments and that aspiring principals and school principals must be aware of and understand.

Urban school district training and preparation: Earlier in this report I noted that leadership preparation in my participant's district is not a program it is a process. As

shown in the middle section of Figure 5.5, the leadership preparation process in my participants' urban school district includes the following six activities: personal reflection and self-assessment; school leadership training; leadership opportunity and visibility; exposure to urban settings and urban research; mentoring; and on the job experiences in an urban school. From my perspective each activity - with the exception of school leadership training - appears to be undocumented, unstructured, participant driven, and unpredictable.

I use the term undocumented because the only documentation available regarding principal training and preparation was documentation I received from ~~of~~ the aspiring and new principal school leadership training program run by Francis, the district director of leadership training. The five undocumented preparation activities emerged from my cross case analysis of participant case studies and one-on-one interview discussions.

In addition to being undocumented the five leadership preparation activities also appear to be unstructured. For example, the mentoring activity that each participant said they actively engaged in at some point in their career was in reality an informal relationship that had evolved between the participant and a person who volunteered to serve as the participant's informal mentor. Another example of an unstructured leadership preparation activity is the opportunity and visibility that resulted from participants taking the initiative to volunteer for opportunities to lead projects or participate on instructional or operational project teams while each participant was still a classroom teacher or working as a district staff specialist. These two examples of unstructured activity also help support my argument that the five leadership preparation activities participant driven activities. Each of the nine case studies provides multiple examples and evidence that my participants' supervisors, principals, or school district executives were not involved in the

vast majority of my participants' leadership preparation activities. From my perspective my participants structured, implemented, and controlled their involvement in five of the six leadership preparation activities.

My major concern is not that leadership preparation activities are undocumented, unstructured, or participant driven - my major concern is that preparation activities in my participants urban school district appear to be unpredictable. If, as I predict, a large number of baby boom age principals decide to leave this district within the next 10 years as I predict (see Table 5.0), the district may not have an adequate number of aspiring principals who are prepared, ready, and perhaps more important, aspiring principals who want to assume a school principal leadership role and responsibility within the district.

New Leaders for New Schools training and preparation: As I show in column 6 of Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2, the NLNS training curriculum is structured around 12 essential competencies that emerged from NLNS's research of successful urban school 'turn-around' principals (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). On their website (New Leaders for New Schools, 2005) NLNS notes that, "Our curriculum is organized into three strands, which align to our Principal Leadership Competencies, the critical skills of successful principals as identified by New Leaders for New Schools." The 12 competencies are divided into three curriculum strands entitled personal leadership, school leadership, and operational leadership. The 12 competencies are the building blocks for a customized training curriculum that is developed for each new NLNS urban school district customer by selecting competency elements from each of the three NLNS strands and integrating them with leadership competencies desired and required by the urban school district that has signed a contractual agreement with NLNS for principal training and preparation services.

As shown in column 8, 9 and 10 of Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2, NLNS preparation activities documented in each new and existing urban district contract may include, for example, a 12 month internship within the district, mentoring, coaching, local university training, and summer institute training at the Wharton school of management. The important point is the urban school district is required to document its wants, needs, leadership training outcome objectives. In addition, a specified number of program participants are agreed upon before NLNS training resources and preparation capacity are structured, aligned, and documented in a legally binding contract and clearly defined partnership agreement is agreed upon by the district, local university, and NLNS. Each contract is structured with the intent of providing the urban district with a specified number of assistant or school principal candidates by the end of the contract. As noted in column 5 of Figure 2.3 since 2001 NLNS has placed 230 or 95% of its program graduates – each contractually committed to work a minimum of three years in the urban district that sponsored their NLNS training and preparation.

Similarities in Differences in Outcome Objectives

The primary objective of the university, district, or NLNS approach is to select, train, and prepare aspiring principals to fill new or vacant school principal job openings. Study participants believe a school principal selection committee in their urban district would prefer school principal candidates that have prior urban school experience and a portfolio that includes examples on successful project implementation and instructional and operational leadership experience in an urban school setting. An applicant with 12 or more months of urban school exposure and work experience gained in the NLNS or an urban school district program would likely have a significant advantage over a university graduate with little or no on-the-job experience attempting to resolve nuts and bolts issues

and challenges an urban school principal will face.

University training programs: In their case studies my participants say they believe the primary objective of university preparation programs are to graduate a large number of students who satisfy the education decree requirements for entry level employment in urban, suburban or rural school districts. In addition, participants believe university programs graduate students who (1) understand theories of teaching, educational policy and administration; (2) may have participated in an internship or in-service training; and (3) can design, conduct, and interpret educational research projects. However, unless the student has years of experience working in an urban school district, participants do not believe they would be successful as an assistant principal or school principal in an urban school setting. From my participants prospective, while the myriad of issues and challenges facing urban schools can be discussed in theoretical terms, the best equipment for attacking end resolving urban school issues and challenges are experience, knowledge, and skills developed and enhanced while working in an urban school setting. From their perspective, students completing university requirement for an undergraduate or graduate level degree in education will have satisfied the outcome objectives of the university but will not be adequately trained or prepared for urban school leadership.

Urban school district training and preparation: The primary outcome objective of the urban district leadership preparation program is to prepare aspiring principals for assistant principal and school principal leadership within the district. Francis, the district director of leadership training, explained that when a principal job is available in the district, a school principal selection committee consisting of teachers, parents, a teachers union representative, and the district executive to whom the principal would report, interview and hopefully selects a qualified candidate to fill the vacant school principal

position. From my perspective, the districts seemingly undocumented, unstructured, participant driven, and unpredictable approach to principal preparation appears to be satisfying the districts objective of having at least three aspiring principals who are ready, prepared, and eager to interview for vacant or new school principal positions. A major test for my participants urban district training program and preparation process will be meeting the district objective of filling a large number of vacant positions when and if baby boom age principals decide to retire and leave the district within the next 10 years.

New Leaders for New Schools training and preparation: As noted in the *Innovations* report (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), and as shown in column 6 of Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2 of this paper, 95% of the aspiring principals who complete the New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) preparation program are hired within the contracted urban school district as either an assistant principal or school principal. The report notes that of the 230 participants that graduated from the NLNS program between 2001 and 2004, 60% have been placed in urban schools as principals and 35% as assistant principals. It is interesting to note that approximately 60% of the program participants were African-American, 30% were white, 77% were Hispanic and 3% of all participants were Asian American (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

The eight findings that emerged from this research will hopefully stimulate vigorous discussions regarding (1) urban school principal leadership training and preparation, and (2) urban school district replacement strategies for the large number of baby boom generation school principals who may retire or leave urban education between 2006 and 2016. These findings should serve as a call-to-action for principals, superintendents, and school boards in every K-12 urban school district.

The first research finding is that during the ten year period between 2006 and 2016, a significant number of baby boom generation principals will be leaving their job as elementary, middle, or high school principal in my participants' urban school district in Michigan. While baby boom school principal retirement may not be a cause for immediate concern in some urban school districts, I believe all urban school districts should develop or expand their knowledge and understanding of principal training programs and the leadership preparation process within their district. Key inspection points should include (1) a projection and forecast of when and how many assistant principals and principals may be leaving the district; (2) an assessment of the quality, quantity, and career aspirations of aspiring principals within the district; and (3) the districts current resources and capacity for training and preparing an adequate number of assistant and school principal replacements over the next three to five year time period.

My second research finding is that urban school leadership training and preparation is not a program it is an ongoing process that employs seven genres of training to develop

participants skills, knowledge, and capacity for urban school leadership. Case study analysis revealed that the nine urban school principals that participated in this research study worked in the district for an average of 24 years before they were selected to be school principal. Two interesting questions for stakeholders in my participants' urban school district are, How long does it take to prepare a candidate to be a school principal in your district? And, second, How do you know when a candidate is ready for the principalship?

The third finding is that elementary, middle, and high school principals have different issues, challenges, and school leadership priorities. This finding suggests that the district's training and preparation process should be designed or redesigned to facilitate the training and preparation of principals assuming they will have elementary, middle, or high school grade level leadership responsibilities.

The fourth finding argues that urban school principals face a myriad of what they call 'nuts-and-bolts' issues and challenges that fall into one of six general categories: (1) the urban setting; (2) lack of adequate time, money, and people resources; (3) student related challenges; (4) school teaching staff; (5) parents and family concerns; and (6) achieving AYP and NCLB goals and objectives. Classifying each issue or challenge as instructional or administrative highlighted the interesting fact that study participants said they spend 76% of the time on administrative and only 24% of their time addressing the instructional leadership issues and challenges within their respective school.

My fifth finding makes a sharp distinction between program-based leadership training and leadership preparation process activities by arguing that, unlike episodic or programmatic training often delivered in the form of a seminar event or classroom lecture, principal preparation for urban school leadership is a continuous process with six

distinct ongoing preparation activities. The six leadership preparation process activities include personal reflection and self-assessment; school leadership training; leadership opportunity and visibility; exposure to an urban setting and urban research; mentoring; and on-the-job experiences in an urban school. Based on this findings I believe it would be prudent for urban school district principals, superintendents, and school boards to understand how long it would take for their current district training and preparation process to produce an adequate number of candidates who are trained and prepared to replace experienced school principals if and when they leave the district.

The sixth finding is that, urban school principals are responsible and accountable for providing school leadership in six critical areas of urban school leadership: implementing instructional, operational, staff and student support strategies that help educate urban children; actively participating in preparing aspiring urban school leaders; meeting school stakeholder expectations; minimizing the effects external forces such as poverty, the urban setting, and the lack of resources may have on their school, students and school staff; addressing multiple needs of their urban students including special-education, psychological, physiological, social, and personal growth needs of urban students; and demonstrating a professional and personal commitment to urban education. Despite the importance participants placed on each of these six leadership responsibilities my sixth finding also found that principals in my participant's urban school district are not being measured, assessed, or receiving performance evaluation feedback in the last three areas of school leadership. My concern is that without feedback on their performance an urban school principal may miss an opportunity, or not be aware of the need to develop or improve his or her leadership knowledge and skills in a particular areas.

Case study analysis and extensive review of research literature confirmed that urban school leadership training and preparation can be provided by a school district, university departments of education, and private sector organizations such as New Leaders for New Schools. However, my seventh research finding makes it clear that leadership training and preparation programs offered by school districts, universities, and private sector organizations have significant differences in their program activities, structure, and outcome objectives. Based on this finding I strongly encourage urban school districts to establish and maintain a school leadership training program and preparation process that is based on a collaborative, contract-based partnership with other urban school district leadership training and preparation provider organizations.

The purpose and primary objective of this research is to examine the research question, "What does it mean to be prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African-American student population?" Based on my review of research literature, participant focus group and interview discussions, cross case analysis of nine participant case studies, and synthesis of the seven research findings just discussed, my response to my original research question is summarized below in Figure 6.0. As shown, being prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African-American student population means having the resources, knowledge, skills, experience, and opportunity to demonstrate urban school leadership in six critical areas: (1) developing and implementing school-wide instructional, administrative, operational, school staff and student support strategies that help to educate urban children; (2) active participation in principal professional development sessions in addition to coaching, mentoring, and helping to prepare aspiring urban school principals; (3) meeting the expectations of students, parents, staff, district, and community stakeholders ; (4) minimizing the effects

of external forces such as poverty, class, race, neighborhood, and the urban setting on students and school staff; (5) addressing the special-education, psychological, physiological, social, and personal growth and development needs of urban school children; and (6) demonstrating a professional and personal commitment to urban

Figure 6.0: What does it mean to be prepared to be an urban school principal with a majority African-American student population?

Being prepared to be an urban school principal means having the leadership resources, knowledge, skills, experience, and opportunity to:

1. Implement strategies that educate urban children
2. Active participation in urban school leadership preparation
3. Meeting urban school stakeholder expectations
4. Minimizing the effects of external forces on urban students and school staff
5. Addressing multiple needs of urban school children
6. Demonstrating professional and personal commitment to urban education.

Source: Participant interviews, case studies, review of related research, and research findings.

education based on years of service in urban education, active membership in educational organizations, and sharing the results of action research conducted within the urban school.

Implications

Ironically, the fact that research examining K-12 urban school leadership is scarce may have at least two unintended consequences. First, the dearth of research on urban school leadership may serve to increase the research value of the findings and conclusions presented in this report. And second, the scarcity of research on the urban school principal

underscores the importance of listening to the individual and collective voices of the nine highly experienced urban school principals in this research report as they (1) share their unique perspectives as urban school leaders; (2) provide insight, perspective and nuance on urban school leadership as a career choice; (3) explain the intricate and often punitive relationship between student learning and the urban setting; and (4) speak with passion and candor on the critical issue and daunting challenge of training and preparing aspiring principals for urban school leadership.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participants focus group and interview consent form and confidentiality agreement

Appendix A: Participants focus group and interview consent form and confidentiality agreement

Informed consent for participation in research to understand how urban school principals perceive the adequacy of their training, experience, and preparation for instructional leadership of majority African-American schools.

You are being asked to participate in a Michigan State University Ph.D. doctoral research study of principal preparation for instructional leadership of urban schools. The research is being conducted by James D. Smith, a 4th year Ph.D. Candidate in K-12 Educational Administration at Michigan State University. The purpose of this research is to understand how urban school principals perceive the adequacy of their training, experience and preparation for instructional leadership of majority African-American schools.

The themes, findings and conclusions that emerge from this research may be used to (1) review, modify or adjust the structure, curricular components and delivery of principal preparation programs, and (2) serve as input data for follow-on research studies focused on urban school leadership preparation programs. In addition, the output of this research project may be of interest to the following audiences: policy makers and educational leaders responsible for the development and implementation of educational leadership policy; urban school district superintendents; faculty members of colleges and universities offering educational administration and leadership courses and degree granting programs; district administrators involved in principal selection, training, and on-going support; persons external to the district providing professional development for principals; and aspiring or current principals.

Data for this study will be collected between April and June 2006 from one focus group session, nine one-on-one interviews, and analysis of documents and artifacts of principalship training, experiences and preparation programs. One two hour focus group will be conducted with nine Principals. During the focus group session an individual one hour one-on-one interview will be scheduled with each Principal participant. A ninety minute interview will be conducted with a district level administrator to understand the district's approach and perspective on Principal training and preparation for instructional leadership.

All study participants will be asked for written consent to audio tape their focus group and/or one-on-one interview discussions. Your consent to be audio taped is voluntary and will not affect your ability to participate in this study. If you do not consent to being audio taped, but agree to be interviewed, the researcher will make hand written notes during your interview. The researcher will keep the audiotapes after the study data has been analyzed and may use the tapes for future analysis and presentations. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet that will be accessible by the researcher and his Ph.D. dissertation chairman, Professor Christopher Dunbar, Michigan State University.

All interview, focus group data, and study findings will be treated with strict confidence. Each study participant will be assigned an alias name to prevent comments being attributed to a particular individual. The names of study participants will not be identified in any reporting of research findings. The privacy of participants will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you are willing to participate, a time and place acceptable to you will be determined. You are under no obligation to agree to participate in additional interviews or focus group sessions.

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher, James D. Smith, jdsmith2@comcast.net Or the principal investigator, Dr. Chistopher Dunbar, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Education, 407 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact- anonymously, if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the Michigan State University, University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS), by phone, fax, e-mail or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

#1 - General Agreement: Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study;

Date:_____

Name:_____

Signature:_____

#2 - Agreement to be audio taped: Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to be audio taped for this study.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix B

District director of leadership training interview guide

Appendix B: District director of leadership training interview guide

1. What does the term urban school mean to you?
2. How do you perceive and understand the role and responsibility of an urban school principal?
3. What is the typical route to the principalship and has that changed over the years?
4. Were you an urban school principal? Where? How long? What grade level?
5. How did you get to be an assistant principal?

6. As the district director of leadership training, what leadership training programs do you offer?
7. How large is your staff?
8. How many persons have gone through your training?
9. How often do you offer the leadership training?
10. What three instructional leadership activities take the majority of an urban school principal's time?

11. What three administrative leadership activities take the majority of an urban principal' s time?
12. When you were a principal, what percentage of time did you spend on instructional leadership and what percentage did you spend on administrative operations?
13. In a perfect world, what do you think that percentage split should be for an urban school principal?
14. How and when were you prepared for the urban school principalship?.
15. What best prepared you for your role and responsibility as an urban school principal?

16. What academic degrees have you completed?
17. What does it mean to be the instructional leader of an urban school?
18. To what extent are university based educational leadership training and preparation programs useful to an urban school principal?
19. To what extent does the school district contribute to principalship training, preparation or professional development?
20. Are there issues or challenges you believe are unique to urban public school principals?

21. What artifacts or documentation of principalship training and preparation can you share?
22. What training and professional development do principals receive after becoming a principal and how does that training help address major issues and challenges in an urban school?
23. What words or phrases would you use to characterize principals' training, experience and preparation for urban school leadership?
24. In retrospect, what do you believe is missing from the training and preparation of an urban school principal and why are those things important?
25. What does it mean for a principal to be adequately prepared for urban school leadership?

26. What are the implications of principals not being adequately prepared for urban school leadership?
27. What additional training, experience, or professional development would improve the instructional leadership of an urban school principal?
28. To what extent do you believe current educational leadership programs are preparing aspiring principals for urban school leadership?
29. What would you recommend be included in a preparation program specifically designed for aspiring urban school principals?
30. If you were a mentor in a principal preparation program, what advice would you give an aspiring or new urban school principal?

31. Last question, what are the characteristics and attributes of an outstanding urban school principal?

Appendix C

Urban school principal interview guide

Appendix C: Urban school principal interview guide

#1: How urban principals perceive and understand their role and responsibilities?

1A: What do you do as an urban school principal? What five things require the majority of your time?

1B: Are there issues and challenges that you believe are unique to urban public school principals?

1C: What does it mean to be the instructional leader of an urban school?

1D: What are the characteristics and attributes of an outstanding urban school principal?

1E: How do you perceive and understand your role and responsibility as an urban school principal?

#2: How urban principals characterize the usefulness of their training, experience and preparation for leadership?

2A: What words or phrases would you use to characterize your training, experience, and preparation for urban school leadership?

2B: What training and professional development have you received after becoming a principal and how has that training helped you address major issues and challenges you face in your school?

2C: What artifacts or documentation of your principalship preparation do you have? Can I get a copy?

2D: In retrospect, what was missing from your training and preparation for the urban school principalship?

2E: Did you have a mentor when you first became a principal? What was that experience like?

#3: How does the urban school setting affect urban school principalship?

3A: What does the term 'urban school' mean to you?

3B: To what extent do you believe current educational leadership programs are preparing aspiring principals for urban school leadership?

3C: What would you recommend be included in a preparation program specifically designed for aspiring urban school principals? Why those program components?

3D: If you were a mentor in a principal preparation program, what advice would you give an aspiring or new urban school principal?

#4: What are the implications of principals being trained and prepared for urban school leadership?

4A: What additional training, experience or professional development would improve your instructional leadership as an urban school principal? Why?

4B: What does it mean for a principal to be "adequately" prepared for urban school leadership?

4C: What are implications of principals not being adequately trained or prepared for urban school leadership?

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Anderson, M. E. (1991). *Principals: How to train, recruit, select, induct, and evaluate leaders for America's schools.*: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403.

Atkin, J. M., & House, E. R. (1980). *The Federal Role in Curriculum Development, 1950-80* (141 Reports--Descriptive). District of Columbia.

Baker, J. (2004). *The urban learner framework* (Unpublished paper). Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University.

Baltzell, C. D., and Robert A. Dentler. (1983). *Selecting American School Principals: A Sourcebook for Educators*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abt Associates, Inc.

Black, M., & Ricardo, I. (1994). Drug use, drug trafficking, and weapon carrying among low-income, African-American, early adolescent boys. *Pediatrics., 93*(6), 1065-1072.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1998). *Handbook of Instructional Leadership: How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning*. California.

Bogotch, I. E., Miron, L. F., & Joseph Murphy Jr. (1998). Moral leadership discourses in urban school settings: the multiple influences of social context. *Urban Education, 33*(3), 303-330.

Boysen, T. C. (1992). Irreconcilable Differences: Effective Urban Schools versus Restructuring. *Education and Urban Society, 25*(1), 85-95.

Broad Foundation & Fordham Foundation. (2003). *Better leaders for America's schools: A manifesto*: See www.edexcellence.net/doc/manifesto.pdf.

Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and School Leadership: An Introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 41*(4), 585-590.

Bruss, L. R. (1986). A University Initiated Model for Developing Instructional Leaders. *Theory into Practice, 25*(3), 197-202.

Carlin, P. M. (1992). The Principal's Role in Urban School Reform. *Education and Urban Society, 25*(1), 45-56.

Center on Education Policy. (2005). *NCLB: urban schools are tagged for improvement at higher rates than suburban or rural schools* (Policy brief). Washington DC: Center on education policy.

Center on Education Policy. (2006). *A Public Education Primer Basic (and Sometimes Surprising) Facts about the U.S. Education System*: Center on Education Policy.

Cerf, R., Farssi, Z., Burgun, B., Trio, J. M., & Kurtz, D. (2000). Strange attractors in human electroencephalographic signals. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Academie des sciences. Série II, Mécanique, physique, chimie, sciences de l'univers, sciences de la terre, 91*, 12-17.

Chell, J. (1995). *Introducing Principals to the Role of Instructional Leadership. SSTA Research in Brief. Access ERIC: FullText* (055 Guides--Nonclassroom No. SSTA-RCR-95-14). Canada; Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, Regina.

Chrispeels, J. H. (2002). The California Center for Effective Schools: The Oxnard School District Partnership. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(5), 382-387.

Cleveland State University. (2003). *Preparing urban educational leaders: The knowledge base for the Ph.D. in urban education at Cleveland State University, College of Education*, from http://www.csuohio.edu/coehs/college/model/DoctoralProgramFramework.pdf

College of Education at Michigan State University. (2007). *Graduate programs*. Retrieved November 2007, from http://www.educ.msu.edu/

Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great : why some companies make the leap--and others don't* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Harper Business.

Cornell, P. S. (2005). *Current practitioners' perceptions of the ISLLC standards and dispositions.* Unpublished 3176497, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, United States -- Illinois.

Cotton, K. (1991). *Educating Urban Minority Youth: Research on Effective Practices Topical Synthesis #4*. Portlan, Or.: North West Regional Educational Laboratory.

Coutts, J. D. (1997). Why Principals Fail: Are National Professional Standards Valid Measures of Principal Performance? *ERS Spectrum*, 20-24.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design : choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Cuban, L. (2001). *Urban school leadership - Different in kind and degree*: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Cuban, L. (2004). Meeting Challenges in Urban Schools. *Educational Leadership, 61*(7), 64-67.

Cubbin, C., Santelli, J., Brindis, C. D., & Braveman, P. (2005). Neighborhood Context and Sexual Behaviors Among Adolescents: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 37*(3), 125-134.

Cusick, P. A. (1992). *The educational system : its nature and logic*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dantley, M. E. (1990). The Ineffectiveness of Effective Schools Leadership: An Analysis of the Effective Schools Movement from a Critical Perspective. *Journal of Negro Education, 59*(4), 585-598.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *Review of research school leadership study: Developing successful principals*: Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

Delpit, L. D. (1995). *Other people's children : cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Dentith, A., & Frattura, E. (2004, Nov 2004). *Barriers and supports to integrated services for all students: Examining roles, structures and processes in one urban district.* Paper presented at the UCEA, Kansas City, MO.

Druian, G., & Butler, J. A. (1987). *Effective Schooling Practices and At-Risk Youth: What the Research Shows. School Improvement Research Series Topical Synthesis #1* (070 Information Analyses). Portland, OR.: Northwest Regional Educational Lab.

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective Schools for the Urban Poor. *Educational Leadership, 37*(1), 15-18,20-24.

Eikenberry, D. H. (1930). The Professional Training of Secondary-School Principals. *The School Review, 38*(7), 498-509.

E-Lead. (2004). *First Ring Leadership Academy | Cleveland State University in Partnership with the First Ring School Superintendents Collaborative*. Retrieved January 16, 2006, from http://www.e-lead.org/programs/firstring/summary.asp

Elmore, R. F. (2000). Building a New Structure for School Leadership. *American Educator, 23*(4), 6-13.

Ensminger, M., Lamkin, R., & Jacobson, N. (1996). School leaving: a longitudinal perspective including neighborhood effects. *Child development, 67*(5), 2400-2016.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships : preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Evans, A. E. (2004, November 2004). *How high schools respond to dramatic demographic change.* Paper presented at the UCEA, Kansas City, Mo.

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (2003). Rolling up their sleeves: Superintendents and principals talk about what's needed to fix public schools. *New York:Public agenda.*

Feigelman, S., Howard, D., Li, X., & Cross, S. (2000). Psychosocial and environmental correlates of violence perpetration among African-American urban youth. *The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine Links, 27*(3), 202-209.

Fenwick, L. T., & Pierce, M. C. (2002). *Professional Development of Principals. ERIC Digest. Access ERIC: FullText* (071 Information Analyses--ERIC IAPs No. EDO-SP-2002-08). District of Columbia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

Forsyth, P. B. (1993). *City Schools: Leading the Way* (010 Books; 020 Collected Works--General). California.

Frankenberg, E. C., Lee & Ofield, Gary. (2003). *A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?* : Harvard University, The Civil Rights Project.

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Gantner, M. W., Daresh, J. C., Dunlap, K., & Newsom, J. (1999). Effective School Leadership Attributes: Voices from the Field., 24.

GAO. (2006). *Baby Boom Generation: Retirement of Baby Boomers Is Unlikely to Precipitate Dramatic Decline in Market Returns, but Broader Risks Threaten Retirement Security* (No. GAO-06-718): United States Government Accountability Office.

Gates, G. S., Kallio, B., & Young., L. (2001, Aug 2001). *Measuring the longitudinal effects of principal leadership adaptability on elementary school student academic performance.* Paper presented at the AERA, Submitted to: Division A:Section1: Leadership.

Gooden, M. A. (2002). Stewardship and critical leadership - Sufficient for leadership in urban schools? *Education and Urban Society, 35*(1), 133-143.

Grantmakers for Education. (2003, February 26-27, 2003). *Fixing urban school systems: Can philanthropy make a difference?* Retrieved March 12, 2006, from http://www.edfunders.com/downloads/GFEReports/UrbanSchools_BriefingReport.pdf

Green, T. F. (1983). Excellence, Equity, and Equality. In L. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook of teaching and policy* (pp. 318-340). New York: Longman.

Greiner, L. E., Bennigson, L. A., & Poulfelt, F. (2005). *The Contemporary consultant : handbook of management consulting : insights from world experts.* Mason, Ohio: Thomson South-Western.

Haberman, M. (2000). Urban schools - Day camps or custodial centers? *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(3), 203-208.

Hale, E. L., & Moorman, H. N. (2003). *Preparing school principals: a national perspective on policy and program innovations*: Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington DC and Illinois Education Research Council, Edwardsville, Illinois.

Hallinger, P. (1992). The Evolving Role of American Principals: From Managerial to Instructional to Transformational Leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration, 30*(3).

Hallinger, P., & Leithwood, K. (1994). Introduction: Exploring the impact of principal leadership. *School effectiveness and school improvement, Five*(Three), 206-218.

Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1986). *Instructional Leadership in Effective Schools* (143 Reports--Research; 070 Information Analyses). Tennessee.

Hallinger, P., Snidvongs, Kamontip. (2005). *Adding Value to School Leadership and Management A review of trends in the development of managers in the education and business sectors*: National College for School Leadership.

Heck, R. H. (1992). Principals' instructional leadership and school performance: Implications for policy development. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 14*(1), 21-34.

Hess, F. M., & Kelly, A. P. (2005). *Learning to Lead? What Gets Taught in Principal Preparation Programs*: American Enterprise Institute.

Hill, P. T., & Celio, M. B. (1998). *Fixing urban schools*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Hoy, A. W., & Hoy, W. K. (2003). *Instructional leadership a learning centered guide*. Boston MA: Pearson Education Company.

Hoyle, J. R., English, F. W., & Steffy, B. E. (1998). *Skills for Successful 21st Century School Leaders: Standards for Peak Performers. Access ERIC: FullText*. Virginia: American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, VA.

Jackson, J. (2005). Leadership for Urban Public Schools. Essays. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 192-2002.

Kimball, K., & Sirotnik, K. A. (2000). The Urban School Principalship: Take This Job and...! *Education and Urban Society, 32*(4), 535-543.

Kottkamp, R., & Orr, M. T. (2005, January 3, 2005). *Taskforce on Evaluating Educational Leadership Preparation: A joint endeavor of the UCEA executive committee and the TEA-SIG of AERA*. Retrieved Jan, 2006, from http://www.aera.net/Printable.aspx?id=451

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1995). *The leadership challenge : how to keep getting extraordinary things done in organizations* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities : children in America's schools* (1st ed.). New York: Crown Pub.

Kozol, J. (1996). *Amazing grace : The lives of children and the conscience of a nation* (1st Harper Perennial ed.). New York: Harper Perennial.

Ladd, H. F., & Yinger, J. (1989). *America's ailing cities : fiscal health and the design of urban policy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education. *Qualitative Studies in education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). Landing on the wrong note the price we paid for Brown. *American Educational Researcher, 33*(7), 3-13.

Lam, C. I. (1999). *School effectiveness: The Background To School Effectiveness Research*: University of Leicester, Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council. See http://www.le.ac.uk/education/ESI/doc1f.html Last updated: October 25,1999.

Lambert, L. (2005). What does leadership capacity really mean? *JSD NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, 26*(2), 38-40.

Lashway, L. (1998). Standards for Administrators. *Research Roundup, 15*(1).

Lashway, L. (2001). *The state of standards*: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, OR.

Lashway, L. (2002). Rethinking the Principalship. *Research Roundup, 18*(3), 6.

Lashway, L. (2003a). Distributed Leadership. *Research Roundup, 19*(4), 6.

Lashway, L. (2003b). *Transforming Principal Preparation.* (071 Information Analyses--ERIC IAPs No. EDO-EA-03-02). Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, OR. ED473360 See http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest165.html.

Lee, C. (2004). *Is resegregation real?* : The Civil Rights Project- Harvard University.

Leithwood, K. (1993). *Contributions of Transformational Leadership to School Restructuring. Access ERIC: FullText* (150 Speeches/Meeting Papers; 070 Information Analyses). Canada; Ontario.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1998). *Distributed Leadership and Student Engagement in School.* (110 Numerical/Quantitative Data; 143 Reports--Research; 150 Speeches/Meeting Papers). Canada; Ontario.

Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What Do We Already Know About Successful School Leadership?* Paper presented at the AERA conference March 2003, Chicago, Illinois.

Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders*. New York: The Education Schools Project.

Lipman, P. (1998). *Race, class, and power in school restructuring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Lytle, J. H. (1992). Prospects for Reforming Urban Schools. *Urban Education, 27*(2), 109-131.

Macpherson, R. J. S. (1998). Accountability in city schools: theory and practice in urban educational administration. *Education and Urban Society, 30*(4), 443-458.

Macpherson, R. J. S. (1998). Accountability in city schools: Theory and practice in urban educational administration. *Education and Urban Society, 30*(4), 443-458.

Maxcy, S. J. (1999). *Leadership reform in a post modern world*: Louisiana State University.

McAdoo, H. P. (1997). *Black families* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Memphis City Schools. (2005). *New leaders for new schools program*, from http://www.memphis-schools.k12.tn.us/NLNS_info.html

Mitchell, D. (1990). *Principal Leadership: A Theoretical Framework for Research. Project Report* (120 Opinion Papers). Illinois: National Center for School Leadership, Urbana, IL.

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Murphy, J. (1991). The effects of the educational reform movement on departments of educational leadership. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 13*(1), 49-65.

Murphy, J. (1998). Preparation for the School Principalship: The United States' Story. *School Leadership & Management, 18*(3), 359-372.

Murphy, J. (2002). *The educational leadership challenge : redefining leadership for the 21st century*. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education: Distributed by University of Chicago Press.

Murphy, J. (2002). How the ISLLC Standards Are Reshaping the Principalship. *Principal, 82*(1), 22-26.

Murphy, J. (2003). *Reculturing Educational Leadership: The ISLLC Standards Ten Years Out* (Information Analyses General (070)). U.S.; Virginia: National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Fairfax, VA. See http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED481619.

Murphy, J., & Schwarz, P. (2000). *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship. :* (A Report of the Task Force on the Principalship). U.S.; District-of-Columbia: Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC.

Murphy, J. E., & Louis, K. S. E. (1999). *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration. A Project of the American Educational Research Association. Second Edition* (Guides Non classroom (055)). U.S.; California.

Nadel, H., Spellmann, M., Alvarez-Canino, T., Lausell-Bryant, L., & Landsberg, G. (1996). The cycle of violence and victimization: a study of the school-based intervention of a multidisciplinary youth violence-prevention program. *American journal of preventive medicine, 12*(5 suppl), 109-119.

National Center for Education Information. (2003). *Certification of principals and superintendents in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Information.

National College for School Leadership. (2004a). *Growing Tomorrow's School Leaders: The challenge: Summary report*: NCSL.

National College for School Leadership. (2004b). *A Model of School Leadership in Challenging Urban Environments*. London, England: London Challenge and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department of Education. See http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/F7B/93/randd-challenging-model-school.pdf.

National Commission for the Principalship. (1990). *Principals for Our Changing Schools: Preparation and Certification*. Fairfax, Virginia: National Commission for the Principalship.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration. (1989). *Improving the Preparation of School Administrators: An Agenda for Reform*. Charlottesville, Virginia: NPBEA.

New Leaders for New Schools. (2005). *Program overview*. Retrieved January 16,2006, from http://www.nlns.org/NLWeb/Residency.jsp

New Leaders for New Schools. (2006). *New Leaders for New Schools personal, school, and operational leadership competencies aligned with required competencies of Chicago Public Schools*, from www.nlns.org

Norton, J. (2002). *Preparing School Leaders: It's Time to Face the Facts*. Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board Leadership Initiative Network. See http://www.sreb.org/main/Leadership/pubs/Leadership_newsletter_F2002.pdf.

Nunley, K. F. (2003). Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due. *Principal Leadership, 3*(9), 26-29.

Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E. D., & Lee, C. (2003). The resurgence of school segregation. *Educational Leadership*, 16-20.

Orfield, G., Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing Our Future: How Minority Youth are Being Left Behind by the Graduation Rate Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

Osterman, K. F., & et al. (1993). *New Principals: Problems, Priorities, and Preparation. Access ERIC: FullText* (150 Speeches/Meeting Papers; 143 Reports--Research). New York.

Osterman, K. F., & Sullivan, S. (1994). *Principals in an Urban Bureaucracy: The First Years. Access ERIC: FullText* (143 Reports--Research; 150 Speeches/Meeting Papers). New York.

Parra, M. A., & Daresh, J. C. (1997). *Developing Educational Leadership in Urban Diverse School Systems.*

Paschall, M., & Hubbard, M. (1998). Effects of neighborhood and family stressors on African American male adolescents' self-worth and propensity for violent behavior. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology, 66*(5), 825-831.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Payne, R. K. (2005). *A framework for understanding poverty* (4th rev. ed.). Highlands, Tex.: Aha! Process.

Portin, B. (2004). The Roles That Principals Play. *Educational Leadership, 61*(7), 14-18.

Portin, B. S. (2000). The Changing Urban Principalship. *Education and Urban Society, 32*(4), 492-505.

Price, A. (2008). *Special Education Disability Categories*. Retrieved April 28, 2008, from http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art35159.asp

Reves, A. H. (2004, November 11, 2004). *Instructional leadership in a post Brown era: A story of high school principals in high poverty and one race schools.* Paper presented at the AERA, Kansas City, MO.

Reynolds, D. (2001). *Effective school leadership: the contributions of school effectiveness research*: National College for School Leadership, University of Exeter, School of Education, See http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/F7B/52/kpool-evidence-reynolds.pdf.

Rossman, S. B., & Morley, E. (1996). Introduction: Safe schools: Policies and practices. *Education and Urban Society, 28*(4), 395-411.

Sammons , P. (2006, January 4, 2006). *School Effectiveness and Equity: Making Connections.* Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, Embracing Diversity: New challenges for School Improvement in a Global Learning Society, Fort Lauderdale Florida.

Schlechty, P. C. (2002). *Working on the work : An action plan for teachers, principals, and superintendents* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (2000). *Principalship, The: A Reflective Practice Perspective*: Allyn & Bacon.

Shen, J., Rodriguez-Campos, L., & Rincones-Gomez, R. (2000). Characteristics of Urban Principalship: A National Trend Study. *Education and Urban Society, 32*(4), 481-491.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2005). *SREB's Leadership Curriculum Modules Engage Leaders in Solving Real School Problems*: Southern Regional Education Board.

States, E. C. o. t. (2005). *A 50-state scan of innovative statewide leadership practices.* Retrieved March 2006, from http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=878&map=0

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical Race Theory and Education: History, Theory, and Implications. *Review of Research in Education, 22*, 195-247.

Taylor, B. (2002). The effective schools process: Alive and well. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(5), 5.

Thomson, S. D. (1993). *Principals for Our Changing Schools: The Knowledge and Skill Base. Access ERIC: FullText* (055 Guides--Nonclassroom; 120 Opinion Papers). Virginia: National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Fairfax, VA.

Tyack, D. B., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia : a century of public school reform*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership, .* Washington, D.C.: Office of Innovation and Improvement.

UCEA, AERA, & NCPEA. (2005, January 24, 2006). *The Joint Research Taskforce on Educational Leadership Preparation*. Retrieved January, 2006, from http://ucea.org/

University of Wisconsin Madison. (1999). *URBAN-13 PROVOSTS VISIT UWM (University of Wisconsin Madison - Milwaukee)*, from http://www.uwm.edu/News//report/old/oct99/21_AcAffairs.html

Upchurch, D., Levy-Storms, L., Sucoff, C., & Aneshensel, C. (1998). Gender and ethnic differences in the timing of first sexual intercourse. *Family planning perspectives., 30*(3), 121-127.

Urban-13. (2006). *21 major urban universities offering doctorate degrees*, from http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwire/peer/urban13.htm

US Office of Management and Budget. (2005). *OMB bulletin number 06-01: Update of statistical area definitions and guidance on their uses*: US Office of Management and Budget.

Wanzare, Z., & Da Costa, J. L. (2001). Rethinking Instructional Leadership Roles of the School Principle: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of Educational Thought/Revue de la Pensee Educative, 35*(3), 269-295.

Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement.*: MREL - Mid-continent research for education and learning.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 21*(1), 1-19.

Winslow, E., & Shaw, D. (2007). Impact of neighborhood disadvantage on overt behavior problems during early childhood. *Aggressive behavior, 33*(3), 207-219.

Wolcott, H. F. (1973). *The man in the principal's office; an ethnography*. New York,: Holt.

Wright, R., & Steinbach, S. (2001). Violence: an unrecognized environmental exposure that may contribute to greater asthma morbidity in high risk inner-city populations. *Environmental health perspectives, 109*(10), 1085-1089.

Xue, Y., Leventhal, T., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Earls, F. (2005). Neighborhood residence and mental health problems of 5- to 11-year-olds. *Arch Gen Psychiatry, 62*(5), 554-563.

Young, M. D., & Creighton, T. (2002). Who is Framing the National Understanding of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice? *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1*(3), 222-241.

Young, M. D., Crow, G., Orr, M. T., Ogawa, R., & Creighton., T. (2005, January 24, 2006). *An Educative Look at Educating School Leaders: UCEA, AERA & NCPEA Leaders Respond to Arthur Levine's Report Educating School Leaders*. Retrieved November, 2005, from http://ucea.org/

Young, M. D., Mountford, M., & Crow, G. M. (2005). Preparing Educational Leaders: A Roadmap to Success. *Educational Considerations, Special Issue: Preparing Educational Leaders, XXXII*(2), 49.

Yukl, G. (1982). *Managerial Leadership and the Effective Principal* (150 Speeches/Meeting Papers; 070 Information Analyses; 120 Opinion Papers). New York.