Leadership Needs of California Rural School Administrators

by

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Leadership Needs of California Rural School Administrators

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by

Grace Cortez-Jiminez
DEDICATION

To my loving husband,

Michael M. Jiminez.

To my encouraging and supportive mother,

Maria Lizarraga.

To my wonderful and understanding children,

Edward, Ernest, Jacob, and Sebastian.
The purpose of this study was to identify the professional development needs of administrators in rural schools in California. The author examined the perceptions of rural school administrators relative to their leadership practices to improve student achievement and to be effective in their job. Specifically, this study was guided by three research questions: (a) How do rural California administrators rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job? (b) How much time do rural California administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as administrator? and (c) What are administrators’ perceived needs for their continued leadership development?

Using an adaptation of a survey of rural Nevada principals, this study surveyed California rural administrators. The researcher sought to discover professional development needs of rural school administrators in order to assist school districts and education agencies in general as they move forward to reform building level administration expectations and support administrators to lead schools effectively.

Results of the study suggested that administrators are knowledgeable in research-based skills necessary to improve student achievement; however, respondents generally reported they spend the majority of their time on paperwork and dealing with parent and student issues, as well as other mundane tasks that are not necessarily connected to increased student achievement.

Implications and conclusions of the study include the need to develop systemic, on-going leadership development programs that include assistance in implementation,
mentoring, and monitoring and evaluation of school administrators’ continued development in knowledge and skills that make a difference for student achievement.
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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

As our country focuses on educational reform that will increase student achievement, principals are faced with changes in leadership practice and their responsibilities to lead schools that meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Specific skills have been identified by various researchers to improve student achievement. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) performed a meta-analysis of 69 different educational studies which identified 21 leadership behaviors that correlated to improved student achievement.![](image)

In fact, the behavior most valued by the students (i.e., relationships) had the lowest correlation at .18, while the behaviors, visibility (.20), and involvement in instruction (.20) were slightly higher. The principals’ behavior of monitoring and evaluating received the highest correlation (.27) in the Marzano et al. (2005) meta-analysis. Furthermore, student perceptions were validated and found to coincide with prior studies of educational leadership behaviors. As per Marzano et al., one of the responsibilities of a principal is optimizer, in which the leader inspires and leads new and challenging innovations, where principals play active roles as transformational leaders in their schools and districts. In addition, Cotton (2003) performed a synthesis analysis of educational leadership behaviors of principals which also positively influenced student learning. The findings reported by Cotton, specifically in relationship to “high expectations for student learning, visibility and accessibility, emotional and interpersonal support,” as well as “collaboration” were among the skills identified to improve student achievement.

Researchers have noted that the administrator is the key position essential to improving student outcomes (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006; Hallinger & Heck,
1996; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Cotton (2003) stated that what principals do makes a difference, noting that schools with high academic achievement have effective principals that lead them to success. Leadership is also considered to be vital to the success of many other aspects of a school. Not surprisingly, the traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are no different from those in other institutions (Marzano et al., 2005). According to Cotton (2003), the principal plays a primary role in developing the vision and goals of the school.

Too often administrators begin the job underprepared to assume the fundamental responsibilities of their new role. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) stated that most administrators are concerned about issues of student learning in their jobs, indicating that 90% of administrators say they need more staff development in order to meet the expectations of their role. In addition, the responsibility is multiplied for administrators in rural schools, which traditionally function with fewer resources, therefore, increasing their responsibilities (Bard, Gardener, & Wieland, 2005). Thus, administrator professional development will be effective to the degree it assists school leaders in further developing successful characteristics and practices as identified by the research. Whitaker (2001) stated that a shortage of prepared administrators has resulted from the increased responsibilities that stem from current pressures such as teacher shortages, special education, school violence, reduced school funding, and high-stakes testing.

Formal and informal support systems are important for all administrators, especially administrators new to their jobs (Fullan, 2005; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 1990: Whitaker, 2001). A considerable amount of research has emerged as researchers continue to investigate administrator professional
needs that will support them to lead schools effectively. This concern fueled the
development of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)
standards in an attempt to delineate the knowledge and skills that school principals should
possess (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1996). The CCSSO (1996)
consortium developed these standards with the goal to provide a shared vision for
effective leadership based on professional development. The standards provide a
foundation of the knowledge, performances, and dispositions administrators need in order
to lead effective schools. Further, state and national accountability systems have created
a sense of urgency resulting in renewed focus on identifying priorities and responsibilities
for administrators.

**Statement of the Problem**

The current mandates under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) have forced
school administrators to transition from the role of the manager to that of an instructional
leader. In the 1950s, principals were characterized as instructional managers (Murphy,
1990). However, more recent studies have focused on the special context of schools and
their mission, which in turn has encouraged policymakers to focus on programs
developed to improve leadership skills (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These leadership skills
range from the ISLLC standards developed by CCSSO (1996) to the 21 responsibilities of
administrators resulting from a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano et al. (2005). Over
the last few decades, researchers have taken the time to identify key leadership skills for
administrators; however, the need for qualified candidates to do the job continues to
increase. In 2002, Grogan and Andrews predicted a 47% shortage of administrators in
elementary schools and a 55% shortage of high school and middle school administrators.
According to Hopkins (2000), many possible candidates view the task of the administratorship as undesirable and/or impossible to perform. A recent study showed that principals are seeking help for their increased responsibilities in issues of special education, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

The NCLB (2001) reform mandates accountability for all schools, and is a challenge for many. This challenge is accentuated in rural schools where sparsity of population and isolation create barriers in the recruitment and development of human resources. For example, rural school administrators are consistently faced with attracting and keeping highly qualified teachers. In addition, budgets for rural schools are allocated according to their number of students, impacting their staffing needs, which results in principals wearing many more hats to fulfill their responsibility (Salazar, 2007). It is evident that NCLB has pushed for a reform movement that has reshaped the principalship, and there is a need to prepare administrators for this new era of accountability.

**Purpose of the Study**

Given the increasing complexity of school administrators and the increased pressure on administrators for increasing student achievement, this study seeks to identify the professional development needs of administrators in rural schools in California. Using an adaptation of a survey of rural Nevada principals (Chance, 2008), this study will survey California rural administrators. The survey will ask respondents about their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent
in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development. It is the intent of the researcher to develop a menu of professional development opportunities that will assist school districts and education agencies in general as they move forward to reform principalship and support administrators to lead schools effectively.

**Research Questions**

Specifically, this study will address the following questions:

1. How do rural California administrators rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job?
2. How much time do rural California administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as administrator?
3. What are administrators’ perceived needs for their continued leadership development?

**Research Design and Methodology**

This study is an adaptation of a study of the 2008 Nevada Administrator Online Survey conducted and developed by the Center for Outreach in School Leadership Development at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2008. The Nevada survey was designed in collaboration with West Ed, the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA), and the Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs serving rural areas. The adaptations made on the California survey will provide updated information and include language based on the terminology used specifically in the state. In addition, it will solicit responses about school administrators’ current knowledge,
experience, and skills as they lead rural schools. The participants will also have the opportunity to share their thoughts on their perceived staff development needs.

The California survey for this study includes six sections: (a) demographic information about the administrators and their schools; (b) initial training and induction experiences of participants; (c) participants’ perceptions of their knowledge, skill, and practices of school leadership; (d) time spent in various administrative functions; (e) participants’ perceptions of their professional development needs; and (f) open-ended questions related to school leadership.

Population

The data for this study were collected by conducting an online survey of current administrators in rural schools throughout the state of California. The participants for this survey included administrators in schools of identified rural school districts in California as categorized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2011). The USDOE offers funding to rural school districts through The Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP), Part B of Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The REAP initiatives are the Small, Rural School Achievement Grant (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School Grant (RLIS). The SRSA has listed specific Local Education Agencies (LEA) that are eligible to be part of the SRSA.

Schools are identified as rural based on their location and size. The California Department of Education (2012) website includes a list of rural school districts that are eligible for the SRSA an RLIS. The list has further identified school districts to be rural as follows:
1. An LEA must have a total average daily attendance (ADA) of fewer than 600 students or serve only schools that are located in counties that have a population density of fewer than ten persons per square mile.

2. An LEA must serve only schools that have a school locale code of 7 or 8 (assigned by the U.S. Department of Education [ED] National Center for Education Statistics [NCES]) or be located in an area of the state defined as rural by a governmental agency of the state. (para. 3 & 4).

Locale codes of 7 and 8 were redefined after the 2000 census; however, the listing by the USDOE (2011) used by this study continued to use Locale codes 7 and 8, rather than the new urban-centric codes, in which the National Center for Education Studies (NCES) identifies rural schools based as rural fringe, rural distant, and rural remote. Rural fringe (Locale code 41) is rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster; rural distant (Locale code 42) is rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Rural remote (Locale code 43) is rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster. Locale codes 7 and 8 are considered to be equivalent to the new locale codes of 41, 42, and 43 (NCES, 2010).

**Significance**

The results of this study helped to identify the professional development needs of rural administrators in California relative to their daily tasks and skills needed to lead schools toward increased academic achievement. This study provided information on
how administrators perceive their current administrator training prepared them for their position and their current professional development needs based on their current duties and responsibilities. The researcher triangulated the data collected about current administrator duties and responsibilities, time spent on the specific duties and responsibilities, and their perceived professional development needs that will prepare them to perform their job more effectively. School districts may utilize the findings to develop successful staff development programs for administrators that will support and mentor them in effective leadership.

**Limitations**

While beneficial information was gathered from this study, the findings had several limitations. This study surveyed current administrators in rural school districts. Therefore, the study’s findings were not generalizable to urban or suburban administrators. Further, the study was limited to administrators’ perceptions of their needs for professional development and their own assessment of their skills and knowledge. Thus, the results may not be a true reflection of administrators’ skills or knowledge. Finally, the study is delimited to rural administrators in the state of California, and results may not be generalizable to the needs of administrators in other locations.

**Definitions**

*Administrator:* The researcher has opted to use the word administrator instead of principal due to the complexity of the job duties administrators are responsible for in rural schools. Rural school districts may give the lead administrator a title that encompasses all their duties, not necessarily a principal position.
Professional Development: “Used as part of a comprehensive learning plan that includes clear goals for educator learning based on student learning needs, opportunities to engage in collaborative learning, and ongoing support, these tools can enhance professional learning for whole faculties or teams” (National Staff Development Council, 2011, para. 2).

Rural Schools: Rural schools are defined as those schools located in districts defined as rural, based on the district’s eligibility to receive Small, Rural School Achievement Grants (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School Grants (RLIS) as determined by the USDOE (2011).

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, the topic of staff development needs for rural school administrators of the 21st century was introduced. The research identified various reform movements that have changed the roles of administrators, placing high accountability and expectations on administrators. Chapter 1 includes background information, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, a description of the methods that were used, limitations, and definitions. Chapter 2 includes a review of the research related to leaders in effective schools, history on reform efforts, standards, job functions, and skills needed for the administratorship, leadership development needs of administrators, and special considerations for rural school contexts. Chapter 3 provides an outline of the methodology used to examine the staff development needs of rural administrators in California. Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the data and will offer conclusions based on findings and research. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last 30 years, there has been a progression of research and policies that have attempted to define the complexities of knowledge and dispositions necessary for effective school leadership. Beginning in the 1970s, research around effective schools identified the critical role of the principal as an instructional leader. The 1970s marked the beginning of the Effective School Movement based principally on research conducted by Edmonds (1982), and Lezotte (1990). In addition, a report published by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA, 1987) examined the quality of educational leadership in the United States focusing on the role of principals and superintendents finding several deficiencies in educational leadership. According to the report our country is lacking (a) a definition of good educational leadership; (b) leadership recruitment programs in the schools; (c) collaboration between school districts and universities; (d) minority and women administrators; (e) systematic professional development for administrators; (f) high quality candidates and preparation programs relevant to job demands; (g) licensure programs promoting excellences; (h) national cooperation in preparing school leaders; and (i) sequence, modern content, and clinical experiences in preparation programs. The report seeks to change school administration to include specific skill sets that promote increased student achievement.

By the 1980s, calls for school reform dominated the landscape after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983). Reformers were critical of the nation’s lack of productivity, and a major focus of reform turned to efforts to ensure that schools were accountable for student achievement. Murphy (1990) described this era of reform as having three waves, where
the first wave focused on the educational system and curriculum; the second wave focused on teachers, and the third focused specifically on students. This oversight regarding the importance of school and district leadership necessary for educational reform efforts was the impetus for the Danforth Foundation’s effort to improve the preparation of school administrators. The efforts of the Danforth Program were supported by the report, *Leaders for America’s Schools* (NCEEA, 1987), in which weaknesses in administrator preparation programs were cited.

Following the decade of the 1980s, professional organizations concerned about administrator preparation programs began to focus on defining the skills and standards required of effective administrators. Beginning in 1993, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) defined 21 domains essential to the preparation of school administrators. This was followed in 1996 by the development of six broad standards known as the ISLLC standards.

Shortly after the celebration of the new millennium, with the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001), researchers began to explore the connection between leadership and student achievement. Most notable of this early 21st century research was work done by McREL’s Balanced Leadership and on three decades of Leithwood and others’ research on transformational leadership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

The research has resulted in the identification of specific leadership skills for principals of the 21st century. Leithwood (2005) asserted that not only does leadership matter, but it is second only to teaching among the factors that impact student achievement. In addition, Waters et al. (2003) identified balanced leadership as a
framework that was developed by three key bodies of knowledge: a quantitative analysis of 30 years of research, a review of theoretical leadership and the team’s 100 years of combined wisdom on school leadership. Lastly, there has been a continued identification of specific leadership skills throughout the last 30 years as identified by various researchers (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006; Dean, 2007; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Marlow & Minehira, 2010; McGough, 2003).

As researchers have made connections between successful leadership and student achievement, it has become evident that professional development for quality school leaders is a key factor in reform efforts focused on improved academic achievement. Policymakers and educators have raised their concerns regarding adequate professional development for principals (Dean, 2007). Researchers have established that there are many challenges leaders are facing due to the lack of ineffective and inappropriate professional development programs for principals (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002).

In addition to the challenges leaders face due to lack of effective professional development, these are increased for rural school principals due to the fact that they have limited resources and high turnover rates (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006). Even though rural schools have many challenges, federal and state mandates continue to demand accountability for student achievement. This has resulted in the federal and state government identifying many rural schools as low performing and underachieving (Salazar, 2007). The leadership make-up of rural schools impacts the principal roles and their leadership responsibilities due to the fact that they operate with less staff and resources. For example, rural schools in general do not have assistant superintendents or curriculum directors, which results in principals taking over these roles, as well as their
own. This leaves administrators to become generalists and responsible for doing it all, therefore, placing an added urgency for the need of professional development programs that will support and assist current rural school administrators in their multiple roles (Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL], 2005).

The purpose of this study is to examine the professional development needs of administrators in rural schools, given the current era of accountability, which in the past 10 years has primarily been defined by the NCLB (2001) legislation. Administrators are responsible for ensuring their respective schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and lead their staffs towards that goal through effective leadership. As a result, the administratorship has changed, and school administrators are faced with demands for increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gaps related to socioeconomic status, language, and ethnicity. Administrators are required to be visionary leaders of their respective schools and to have knowledge about instructional strategies, curriculum, and teaching techniques. In addition, they must continue to be effective in the management aspects of the school. The current environment of high stakes accountability has awakened an interest in the identification of the characteristics of effective leaders. Our nation’s schools face high accountability, placing pressure on administrators to lead schools toward high academic achievement. A meta-analysis performed by Marzano et al. (2005) resulted in the identification of 21 responsibilities that define the role of school leaders. Scholars continue to study how leaders adapt and enact these generally successful practices within specific contexts in order to realize their predicted effects (Leithwood, 2005). In order to recognize the professional development needs of 21st century administrators, it is important to identify the various roles of
administrators and understand the effects of reform and accountability on school leadership, and specifically how these affect the administratorship in rural schools.

This study surveyed administrators in rural school districts and asked respondents about their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development. It was the intent of the researcher to develop a menu of professional development ideas that will assist school districts and education agencies in general as they move forward to reform leadership and support administrators to lead schools effectively.

Researchers have noted that the school administrator is the key position essential to improving student outcomes (Cotton, 2003; Gurr et al., 2006; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Marzano et al., 2005). Cotton (2003) stated that what principals do makes a difference, noting that schools with high academic achievement have effective principals that lead them to success. Leadership is also considered to be vital to the success of many other aspects of a school. Not surprisingly, the traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are no different from those in other institutions (Marzano et al., 2005). According to Cotton, the principal plays a primary role in developing the vision and goals of the school. In addition, school administrators communicate the expectations to schools’ personnel and teachers. Too often school administrators begin the job underprepared to assume these fundamental responsibilities.

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) stated that most school administrators are concerned about issues of student learning in their jobs, indicating that 90% of administrators say they need more professional development in order to meet the
expectations of their role. In addition, the responsibility is multiplied for school administrators in rural schools, which traditionally function with fewer resources (Bard et al., 2005). Thus, professional development for school administrators will be effective to the degree it assists school leaders in further developing these successful characteristics and practices as identified by the research.

This review will provide a historical background on the school administrator beginning with the Effective Schools Movement in the 1970s, comparing past school administrator responsibilities to current expectations. Accountability and reform initiatives of the 1980s, including recommendations of the NPBEA, will be reviewed in order to provide a historical timeline as the roles and responsibilities of school administrators have evolved over time. The Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards will be explored to provide an understanding of how school administrator expectations have been examined by various consortiums and are making efforts to shape school leadership to meet the needs of both state and federal mandates. Literature detailing the comprehensive school improvement initiative, NCLB, is also included in this research to offer insight into the requirements that are expected of school administrators. The review will also provide a listing of specific leadership skills for school administrators of the 21st century, as identified by various researchers (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005). Finally, related research is reviewed to provide an in depth study of school administrator needs and how these needs may be impacted for school administrators in rural schools. The review of the literature focuses on the professional development needs specifically of rural school administrators in this age of accountability (Harmon, Gordanier, Henry, & George, 2007; IEL, 2005).
Historical Background

A historical background is provided to offer historical research on the identification of leadership skills that improve student achievement.

Effective Schools Movement

The journey of the Effective Schools Movement has evolved over the past three decades to create a focus on student academic achievement and the improvement of all students. This evolution started in 1966 with the Coleman report, which indicated that students’ academic achievement was based on family background not the school. According to Lezotte (1999), this led to the development of Title I of the Elementary Education Act, which targeted interventions for low-income children. The focus was on changing students not schools. These findings intrigued researchers, which led to the Effective Schools Movement of 1970, where a growing body of research was conducted to prove that indeed schools did make a difference (Lezotte, 1999). Researchers first focused their efforts on finding successful schools where children succeeded regardless of their family background or social economic status. Once they found such schools among large and small communities, they studied similar characteristics, such as philosophies, beliefs, and their school system overall. Edmonds (1982) asserted that the characteristics of schools—not students’ family circumstances or income levels—determined the academic achievement of students. Edmonds (1982) and Brookover, Erickson, and McEvoy (2009) conducted several studies in elementary schools in the United States, while another team of researchers conducted similar studies in secondary schools in the United Kingdom. The studies were conducted in successful schools regardless of their social economic status or their family background. After conducting several studies,
Edmonds concluded that effective schools shared common characteristics that must be implemented all at once in order to improve school effectiveness. These correlates were (a) the principal’s leadership and attention to the quality of instruction; (b) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (c) an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (d) teacher behaviors that convey expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and (e) the measurement of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation (Edmonds, 1982).

The research conducted by Edmonds (1982), Lezotte (1990), and others also resulted in the identification of the following tenets:

- All children can learn and come to school motivated to do so.
- Schools control enough of the variables to assure that virtually all students do learn.
- Schools should be held accountable for measured student achievement.
- Schools should disaggregate measured student achievement in order to be certain that students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status are successfully learning the intended school curriculum.
- The internal and external stakeholders of the individual school are the most qualified and capable people to plan.
- Implement the changes necessary to fulfill the Learning for All Mission.

(Lezotte, 1990, p. 3)

Edmonds (1982) identified three types of school improvement programs:
(a) programs that are organized and administered within schools and school districts;
(b) programs that are administered by state education agencies; and (c) programs of
research, development, and technical assistance usually located at the university.

Edmonds’ research resulted in the development of improvement programs that were implemented in five school districts located in New York City, Milwaukee, Chicago, New Haven, and St. Louis in 1979. Furthermore, liaisons were hired to complete a needs assessment of each school district of the principal’s leadership style, the instructional focus of the school, the climate, the nature of teacher expectations of pupil performance, and the role of standardized measures of pupil performance in program evaluation. The liaison, along with the school’s committee, developed a plan of improvement where they identified areas of strength and weaknesses based on the five characteristics identified by Edmonds, Lezotte, and others (Edmonds, 1982). Some of the common interventions outlined in the plan included teaching principals about instructional leadership and seminars to improve teachers’ knowledge in the area of assessment and data. The improvement programs were implemented in the five different districts with varying results, depending on the level of implementation and change process of each one (Edmonds, 1982).

The Effective Schools Movement and extensive research conducted over several years continue to support the correlates originally developed and expanded to the following:

1. Instructional Leadership.
2. Clear and Focused Mission.
4. Climate of High Expectations.
5. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress.
6. Positive Home-School Relations.

7. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task. (Lezotte, 1990, p. 3)

Kirk and Jones (2004) examined the correlates and confirmed that indeed these are the elements necessary to increase accountability and increase student achievement. The researchers reported that the implementation of the effective schools correlates will have a positive result on the human capital of schools and society. In addition, they concluded that education centers will be able to teach students regardless of their social economic status, and they can connect the families with students. They reported that the correlates definitely improve the working environment and professional status of Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers and administrators.

Accountability and Reform

The next decade began with the Educational Reform Movement of the 1980s, which marked a distinct type of change. According to Murphy (1990), the 1980s reform brought about the largest amount of change in history and led to progressive opportunities to structure and track educational policies. This reform was initiated by the belief that the United States was falling behind other industrialized countries. A Nation at Risk was publicized in 1983 by the NCEE, under the authority of then-Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell. According to the NCEE (1983), the United States was behind in technology and production in commerce. One of the reform reports described the reform as follows: “Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world” (p. 5).
Murphy (1990) asserted that it did not take long before reformers connected the country’s pitfalls to school outcomes. Reformers were looking for answers, and they concluded that the country’s failure was due to the failure of the country’s educational system. This led to three waves of educational reform as described by Murphy. The first wave focused on the educational system itself, the second wave focused on teachers, and the third wave concentrated directly on students. The reform movement of the 1980s led to special attention to improve teachers. The requirements for teacher certification increased, along with the development of assessments being adopted by 45 states. Moreover, states began to take action on school leadership and management soon after they established the requirements for teacher certification (Murphy, 1990). In addition, Fullan (1991) asserted that school reform legislation responded to corporate America by restructuring a movement that increased accountability on principals where they were responsible for decision-making in their respective schools and ensuring positive collaboration amongst their staff. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD, 1986) pointed out that even though teachers were most impacted by accountability, administrators were held accountable. Murphy noted that the focus on administration was directed toward certification rather than toward preparation programs and asserted that neither the recruitment nor preservice training of principals received much attention. Some states proceeded to develop a variety of programs, such as postemployment training, selection, school based management, principal evaluation, rewards, and sanctions for administrators and schools. However, these particular programs were implemented at different levels, and not all states participated. Murphy referred to the example of how the state of Illinois attempted to increase principal
accountability; however, neither incentives or support were provided. He suggested that because careful planning and financial resources were lacking, implementation was weak.

**National Policy Board for Educational Administration**

As reforms continued to focus on the principal’s role in raising student achievement, the NPBEA developed a list of skills principals needed to become more effective. The NPBEA issued a report entitled *Principals for Our Changing Schools: The Knowledge and Skill Base* (Thomson, 1993), in which they identified 21 “domains,” defined as skills of effective school leadership. The 21 domains were described as essential elements for preparation programs for elementary, middle, and high-school administrators and stated that departments of educational administration should focus their efforts on these skill-based components rather than on the content-based curriculum, then common to university administrator preparation program. The 21 domains were essentially a production of the NPBEA in an effort to create a core of essential skills and knowledge that administrators needed in order to fulfill their job responsibilities professionally. The domains were categorized into four areas: (a) functional domains, (b) programmatic domains, (c) interpersonal domains, and (d) contextual domains.

Functional domains were those related to organizational processes and techniques by which the mission of the school is achieved, including (a) leadership, (b) information collection, (c) problem analysis, (d) judgment, (e) organizational oversight, (f) implementation, and (g) delegation. Programmatic domains focused on the scope and framework of the educational program and reflected the core technology of schools: (a) instruction and the learning environment, (b) curriculum design, (c) student guidance and development, (d) staff development, (e) measurement and evaluation, and
The interpersonal domains recognized the significance of interpersonal connections in schools, acknowledging the critical value of human relationships to the satisfaction of personal and professional goals, and to the achievement of organizational purpose. These domains included (a) motivating others, (b) interpersonal sensitivity, (c) oral and nonverbal expression, and (d) written expression. The contextual domains reflected ideas and forces within which the school operates, such as intellectual, ethical, cultural, economic, political, and governmental influences upon schools. The contextual domains included (a) philosophical and cultural values, (b) legal and regulatory applications, (c) policy and political influences, and (d) public relations (Thomson, 1993).

**Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium Standards**

Soon after the development of the 21 domains, the ISLLC standards were developed under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The CCSSO is a nonprofit, nationwide organization of public officials who lead elementary and secondary state education agencies in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. As an advocate for these educational organizations, the council obtains consensus on major educational issues and is in close communication with civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium was an example of such consensus building where an assembly of professional education organizations, under the leadership of CCSSO and the NPBEA, worked to develop the standards for school leaders in 1994. The standards delineate knowledge, performances, and dispositions that educational
leaders need in order to direct schools towards increased educational outcomes. The purpose of the development of the ISLLC standards was to develop common standards for leaders nationwide. The standards have been adopted in 35 states and are also part of many accreditation processes, including the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In addition, they are the only standards that have been developed by a national body of state departments (CCSSO, 1996).

The consortium focused on specific dynamics that will shape the future of education. In addition, great consideration was given to trends related to global society and economy. Also, the consortium paid special attention to cultural diversity including language, culture, and race, along with the impact of high poverty. The consortium was convinced that this set of standards would provide a focus for administrators and guide them in this age of reform and accountability (Petzko, 2008). The ISLLC standards are written as follow:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and a stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 12)

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 professional growth. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 14)
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operational resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 16)

4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, and mobilizing community resources. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 18)

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. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 20)

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. (CCSSO, 1996, p. 22)

The ISLLC standards were revised in 2008 under the leadership of the NPBEA ISLLC Steering Committee, based on input from various member constituencies. The revised standards retained the six guiding principles but deleted the lengthy lists of specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions, replacing these with an abbreviated list of leadership functions related to each standard (CCSSO, 2008).

While much attention was given to the skills necessary for effective school leadership in the 1980s and 1990s, a large number of students continue to perform below grade level. These reform efforts set a foundation for the stringent assessment and accountability system that would follow. As the 20th century passed, issues of high academic standards, highly qualified teachers, and accountability for all educators were the impetus for the passage of NCLB in 2001. No Child Left Behind placed increased
emphasis on academic achievement and put into effect specific accountability systems for schools. This, in turn, placed a major emphasis on the role of the administrator and his/her responsibility to increase student achievement (Cotton, 2003, Marzano et al., 2005; McGough, 2003).

**Leadership Skills for Administrators of the 21st Century**

Key leadership skills are provided to organize specific leadership areas identified by the research.

**Transformational Leadership**

As the increased demands placed direct accountability on school administrators, researchers made efforts to confirm and understand specific leadership skills related to increased student achievement. A growing body of evidence underscores a significant relationship between effective schools and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Leithwood, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001). The school administrators’ role as instructional leader has been the focus of reform in the past three decades; however, transformational leadership is the innovative approach of instructional leadership as accountability continues to increase for school administrators (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Leithwood (1994) developed a model which he described as the four I’s of transformational leadership, which are necessary skills for school administrators to meet the demands of the 21st century. The first I is individual consideration, which denotes the leader’s ability to meet the needs of individual staff members, especially the ones that are left out. The second I is intellectual stimulation, meaning that an administrator must be able to lead staff members to think of old problems in new ways. Inspirational motivation is the third I, which requires the school administrator to motivate staff
members and students to communicate high expectations. The fourth is idealized influence, where the school administrator serves as a model for teachers on the expectations and behaviors they must display (Leithwood, 1994; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001). The leader develops a vision and permeates respect, pride, and trust among those whom he leads. Furthermore, Wilmore and Cornell (2001) stated that transformational leadership focuses on five specific beliefs. These include (a) defining the need for change, (b) creating visions and collecting commitment to the visions, (c) concentrating on long-term goals, (d) inspiring followers to transcend their own interests for higher-order goals, (e) changing the organization to accommodate their vision rather than working within the existing one, and (f) mentoring followers to take greater responsibility for their own development and that of others. Transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978). According to Leithwood (1994), transformational leadership is the act of facilitating power that is visible through the people, not over the people. Wilmore and Cornell (2001) identified three elements that create transformational leadership: (a) a collaborative, shared decision-making approach; (b) an emphasis on teacher professionalism; and (c) empowerment and understanding of change including how to encourage others.

According to Larson (2009), leaders are required to be focused, optimistic, visionary, and a leader that instills collaboration among all stakeholders, while staying focused on student academic achievement. He further suggested that leading schools in a time of global cultural shift is challenging for school level administrators, because as the global economy changes so does the need to focus on competencies and skills that
include creativity, adaptability, collaboration, resiliency, and global awareness. Both Larson (2009) and Marks and Printy (2003) suggested that these changing times require not just effective leadership, but transformational leadership. Transformational leadership plays an important role in change, where followers and leaders work together in the change process. Transformational leadership is characterized by a leader’s ability to develop followers to their fullest potential by raising followers’ awareness about the organizational goals and motivating them to improve themselves for the sake of the organization.

Marks and Printy (2003) researched the success of restructured schools with leaders who implemented instructional and transformational leadership skills. Their study compared transformational and instructional leadership using a sample of 24 nationally selected restructured schools including 8 elementary, 8 middle, and 8 high schools. The schools selected were among the 300 schools that were nationally recognized for their reform efforts. The researchers wrote a case study summarizing and synthesizing interviews, observation information, and documentation data, including student assessment results for one school year. Researchers also observed governance and professional meetings at each school, and they collected and analyzed written documentation pertaining to the school’s restructuring efforts. The results of their study confirmed that transformational leadership, coupled with instructional leadership, indeed showed a positive increase in student achievement.

**Balanced Leadership**

Educators have known for a long time that leadership makes a difference. Many of the early studies on school effectiveness reported that leadership, specifically
instructional leadership, was one of the characteristics of successful schools.

Waters et al.’s (2003) research resulted in a framework they named Balanced Leadership. The Balanced Leadership Framework was developed through meta-analysis of quantitative studies and theoretical literature on effects of school leadership.

The meta-analysis indicated that there is a true relationship between leadership and student achievement, and they identified 21 leadership responsibilities that impact student achievement significantly. The 21 responsibilities are culture, order, discipline, resources, curriculum and instruction assessment, focus, knowledge of curriculum and instruction assessment, visibility, contingent rewards, communication, outreach, input, affirmation, relationship, change agent, optimizer, ideals/beliefs, monitors/evaluates, flexibility, situational awareness, and intellectual stimulation. Each of the responsibilities have associated practices that provide detailed actions for each (Waters et al., 2003).

Furthermore, Waters et al. (2003) referred to the magnitude of change as either “first order” or “second order” change, based on how stakeholders perceive the change initiative. First order of change is incremental. It can be the most obvious next step for change to occur. Second order of change is not incremental at all. It is drastic and dramatic, most well known as the “deep change.” The administrator must know which change is being implemented and how it will affect stakeholders to determine leadership practices and strategies needed to initiate the change. In addition, effective leaders need to be skillful in knowing which practices need to be executed in order to increase student achievement and to ensure the change does not fail (Marzano et al., 2005).

Finally, Waters et al. (2003) defined the 21 responsibilities in terms of a knowledge taxonomy. The knowledge taxonomy is organized in four categories:
experimental knowledge (knowing why this is important), declarative knowledge (knowing what to do), procedural knowledge (knowing how to do it), and contextual knowledge (knowing when to do it). The importance of taxonomy is the organizing of the knowledge in theoretical research on leadership, change, systems, organizational learning, diffusion, supervision, and institutions to use on the 21 leadership responsibilities. The taxonomy piece is the second half of the “balanced leadership framework.” Balanced leadership offers administrators a format and can be used as a tool that will help leaders and leadership teams add value to the work of all stakeholders to improve student achievement (Waters et al., 2003).

Specific Leadership Skills for School Administrators

The school administrator’s role in the instructional process is to facilitate, improve, and promote the academic progress of students. A profuse amount of research has been focused on the identification of leadership skills that result in high academic achievement. Cotton (2003) stated that a leader is the vision holder and the keeper of the dream or the person who has a vision with a purpose for the organization, and that leaders not only have the vision, but they need the skills necessary to communicate it to others. A large body of research suggests that a school administrator must be an instructional leader, manager, problem-solver, caring individual, a craftsperson, and a change agent (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006; Dean, 2007; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Marlow & Minehira, 2010; McGough, 2003).

Erlandson and Witters-Churchill’s (1990) research suggested that effective instructional leaders:
1. Understand the various aspects of curriculum development and implementation.

2. Are informed of current trends in instruction.

3. Understand the relationship between curriculum and assessment.

4. Know how to provide appropriate staff development to support teachers in implementing curriculum and instruction change.

5. Are able to provide adequate resources to teachers for curriculum implementation.

6. Are able to communicate effectively with parents so the school’s curricular and instructional programs are relevant, understood, and supported by the community.

7. Are able to incorporate all of these activities and understandings in a coherent plan that ultimately leads to improved student learning.

While the responsibilities of school administrators have been amply identified in the literature, the development of skills related to such practices and responsibilities has been barely chronicled.

In a synthesis of studies from seven countries, Leithwood (2005) completed a review on the Journal of Education Administration, which summarizes multiple case studies of successful school administrator leadership in seven countries. A total of 63 cases were analyzed in the country reports and critical information was provided about the contexts in which school administrators practiced their leadership. The country reports provided important contexts in which school administrators practiced their leadership skills.
Some of the findings included successful practices, such as collaborative school culture, creating structures to encourage participation in decision-making, and building productive relationships with parents and the wider community. Successful principals in most country reports encouraged cultures of collaboration by practicing distributed leaderships, particularly in Norwegian cases. These reports provided some indication that researchers are beginning to learn from their colleagues in other countries. Similarly, Dufour and Berkey (1995) stated that the best way for principals to fulfill their roles is by creating the conditions necessary to promote growth and professional development. Furthermore, they suggest that programs do not bring change, people do. This brings light to many of the researcher’s findings, that the school administrator indeed has the role of the staff developer and mission holder with the ability to change practices, beliefs, and understandings of school personnel toward a common goal (Fielding & Schalock, 1985).

Furthermore, Fullan (2001) identified five themes for successful leadership: (a) moral purpose, (b) understanding change, (c) developing relationships, and (d) knowledge building and coherence making. Moral purpose focuses on the belief that leaders must treat everyone fairly and basically be a good citizen. He based this statement on the Monsanto company, which made great transformations under its new CEO, Robert Shapiro, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, a nationwide initiative where Great Britain improved literacy in 20,000 schools. The second theme on change is understanding the change process by involving all stakeholders. An assessment of the stakeholders’ level of knowledge and understanding has to take place along with the provision of resources in order for stakeholders to become fully immersed and
The next theme focuses on relationships, which is a process. Fullan used a 32-school district in New York as an example of drastic improvements based on relationships. Change needs to be focused on long term results, but many times as a leader the focus is on short term results, which may include a quick fix for state testing results. Another theme noted by Fullan is “knowledge building.” Essentially, he focused on the difference between knowledge and information. Knowledge is understanding the information you receive and the knowledge base that is going to endure lasting change. The last theme focuses on “coherence building” where Fullan described the leader as the guidance leader, leading others through their differences and understanding the role they play in the whole picture. Leithwood (2005) described successful leadership as building a collaborative school culture where staff is part of the decision-making process.

Leithwood and Montgomery (1984) commented:

Highly effective principals . . . seek out opportunities to clarify goals with staff, students, parents and other relevant members of the school community. Highly effective principals appear to understand that school improvement goals will only direct the action of staff, students and others to the extent that these people also adopt them as their own. (p. 12)

Moreover, Sillins (1994) identified effective school-administrator skills by developing transformational and transactional leadership scales that measured specific skills. Transformational leaders are those who possess vision, set goals, encourage intellectual stimulation, and provide individual consideration and support in a collaborative problem solving style. Transactional leadership was identified by the constructs of technical orientation and management by exception. Sillins collected data
from 58 South Australian metropolitan schools where 291 teachers provided responses to the survey. The survey was broken into two parts with the first focusing on transformational and transactional leadership skills. The second part of the survey focused on school performance. A quantitative approach was followed to arrive to final findings. The findings indicated that each of the leadership characteristics, visionary, individual consideration, and collaborative problem solving, made a difference to teacher outcomes. Collaborative problem solving made a difference to curriculum outcomes, ethos also made a difference to school culture and goal achievement. Finally, Sillins suggested that if the areas of performance to be improved are identified, then it is possible to identify specific leadership behaviors and skills that are most likely to improve student outcomes.

As researchers identify effective school administrator skills, an emergent body of research is concerned with linking school-administrator behaviors to student achievement. Cotton (2003) completed an analysis of educational behaviors of principals which impact student achievement and make a positive difference in student learning. The research Cotton analyzed from the 1970s and early 1980s showed that strong administrative leadership, including instructional leadership, is a key component of schools with high student achievement. In relation to Binkowski (1995), high expectations for students are an integral part of high achieving schools. In the high performing schools, as per the research conducted in the Binkowski studies, principals believed that all their students had the capability to achieve the goals they had established. In addition, Cotton concluded that the research repeatedly showed that principals of high achieving schools empowered their staff through shared
decision-making opportunities and involved them in school governance. A positive and supportive school climate, along with collaboration and parent involvement, were among the other key behaviors that were found in high performing schools as per Cotton and were revealed in the study examined by Binkowski. Much of the research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s that focused on the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning process did so by emphasizing that the principal would make the difference (Wilmore & Cornell, 2001).

Professional Development for School Administrators

As the school administrator’s role changes, so do the needs for ongoing professional development that prepares school administrators for the demands of this century. Technology, demographic shifts, testing and accountability, changes in the economy, legislative initiatives, such as NCLB, have all shaped the expectations for school principals (McGough, 2003). Principals are looked up to lead their schools effectively in this age of accountability (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). According to DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003), there is a belief that good principals are the cornerstones of good schools and that we will not be successful in increasing student achievement without the principal’s leadership efforts. Therefore, an increased emphasis on professional development for school administrators that will help them to lead schools effectively is essential.

While many districts offer programs and on-the-job training for school administrators in their respective schools, administrators still feel they need more support to be successful in their jobs (Petzko, 2008). Petzko (2008) stated that school administrator preparation programs have been an area of focus for the educational
literature of the early 21st century. According to McGough (2003), staff development for school administrators is not often provided in reforming and renewing the practice of school administrators. Scholars have also noted that school administrators must be committed to becoming experts in becoming true visionaries and instructional leaders (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; McGough, 2003; Peterson, 2002).

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) examined principal roles along with the concerns and conditions of principals in Virginia. The researchers developed a survey with an advisory board composed of themselves; two principal associations, including the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) and Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP); as well as elementary, middle, and high school principals. The survey included 176 questions that queried the conditions and challenges of the participants work as principals. Originally, 4,237 surveys were mailed to principals throughout the state of Virginia; however, only 1,543 surveys were used. The survey respondents included an even mix of males and females with 49% male and 51% female. The elementary principals that responded included 62% female and 38% male, with 71% high school males and 29% high school female principals. The respondents’ race was identified as 16% African American, and less than 1% were identified as Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or other. The participants were from various types of schools, with 44% from suburban, 36% rural, and 19% from urban schools. Also, 47% of the respondents were administrators at schools with 600 students or less, 65% of the schools had a population of 800 students or less, and 4% were from schools with enrollments larger than 2,000. The data analysis consisted of descriptive statistics between respondents from high school, middle, or elementary school. The
results were disaggregated among five categories: preparation for principalship; conditions of employment; problems, or issues in the field; the changing role of the principal; and supply.

Preparation for principals showed that 88.3% of them felt that graduate school helped them in their respective job as a principal; 86.5% of the principals felt teacher experience certainly helped, and 71.7% of them felt that their previous positions as assistant principals certainly helped. Working conditions of employment resulted in 84% of the principals working 50 hours, 31% worked 55-59 hours, 16% reported working 60-64 hours weekly. An astonishing 12% reported working more than 65 hours a week. Problems and issues confronting principals was the third category the researchers identified. The respondents identified instructional leadership as the most exasperating role they had since the expectation for increased student achievement on state tests. A high number of respondents indicated that they needed more staff development in the use of data to increase student achievement. In addition to instructional leadership, more than 90% indicated they needed staff development due to the increased demands of their role as a principal. Principals also reported that they lacked the authority to make personnel decisions in their respective schools. Lastly, in regards to supply and demand, many expressed that the salary is not very rewarding, so many are not interested. Others expressed that the long hours coupled with the stress were the main reason for lack of interest in the position (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). They concluded that the lack of support and professional development has resulted in a shortage of principals.

Jones (2001) contended that even though there were two to three times the number of graduates as the number of principal vacancies, superintendents felt that
candidates were underqualified for the position. Petzko (2008) pointed out that principals need continued professional development programs in order for them to become qualified and be prepared to sustain the expectations connected to the role of the principal.

As mentioned earlier many districts offer on-the-job in-service programs; however, they do not offer enough time to learn it before practicing. Peterson (2002) examined various professional development programs, including those offered by national professional organizations; state administrator associations; university institutes; state departments of public instruction; regional laboratories; independent consultants; and for profit firms. He identified critical program structures and important cultural elements. These include four objectives: (a) developing individual leadership effectiveness; (b) enhancing career transition into leadership positions; (c) instilling the vision, values, and mission of the organization; and (d) developing skills and knowledge to implement long-term objectives. In addition, a variety of professional development programs for principals were reviewed, and he noted that a well structured professional development for leaders should focus on student learning. The case studies reviewed demonstrated that there are many professional development programs for training leaders; however, structural and cultural features are critical. Peterson suggested that, in order for staff development programs to be effective, they must be structured to be long term, carefully planned, job embedded, and focus on student achievement and how it is reached. Programs should support reflective practice and provide opportunities to work, discuss, and solve problems with peers and coaching. In addition, the National Staff Development Council suggested that core cultural features such as positive norms and assumptions be reinforced in programs. Peterson noted that many opportunities for
professional development programs are available; however, there is a need for programs that provide cumulative and deeper understanding.

McGough (2003) stated that it is important to provide training for principals that will teach them to be managers, instructional leaders, and problem-solvers and help them understand their day-to-day responsibilities. Principals need to be well prepared to respond to the demands of the communities they work with and need to be ready for the countless daily decisions they have to make. The ISLLC’s standards for school leaders provide guidance for administrators (CCSSO, 1996). The ISLLC standards provide a common set of requirements for principals to know how to do and execute and learn in university preparation programs. However, many current principals did not complete a university program and were either hired without the proper credential program completion or they took a shortcut program that got them credentialed (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) reported that the increased job complexity and increased student achievement accountability have led to school administrators feeling they cannot do it all. The researchers studied the concerns of current vice principals and school administrators in the state of Virginia. An advisory board which included both the VASSP and the VAESP, along with the two researchers, developed a seven-page survey with 176 questions on the conditions and challenges of their work as administrators. The survey was mailed to 4,237 participants, and they were given the option to either complete the survey on paper or online. The participants received a postcard 2 weeks later as a follow up. Fifty-two postcards were returned because of wrong addresses, and a total of 1,666 surveys were returned, 1,406 paper and 236 electronically; however, 83 could not be used because they did not have a title. Only
1,543 surveys were used for the study, which was a 38% response rate. The participants included both principals and assistant principals with 49% men and 51% women. Elementary administrators included 62% women and 38% men, middle school included 62% men and 38% women, and finally high school included 71% men and 29% women (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The findings of this study included the increased role of instructional leadership specifically in the area of state assessment and increased student achievement. Special educational law and legal issues including student suspension were among the findings, as well. Principals reported the need for professional development in the area of special education law with 34% saying there was a high need and another 64% responding it was a high or average need. In addition, principals indicated the need for professional development in the area of communication, with the two major areas including communication with parents and the need for time to network and collaborate with their peers. Principals also indicated a need for professionalism where they communicated their need for professional development in the area of “managing stress” and “preretirement counseling.” In the area of useful professional development, 50% of the administrators indicated local school district training, informal discussions with peers, and training offered by their state professional development organization as the top three sources (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

School administrators are required to create a team relationship among staff members, acquire and allocate resources, promote teacher staff development, improve student scores, and build effective community networks (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). In most instances, the learning takes place on the job without any formal training for school administrators. Thus, as Fenwick and Pierce (2002) noted, school administrators need
continuous professional development opportunities now more than ever in order to support them in the endeavors and expectations toward school improvement and to renew their commitment to creating and sustaining positive learning communities.

The IEL (2005) held a series of meetings to examine the professional development needs of school administrators in rural schools. These meetings resulted in the following recommendations for rural school leadership preparation and professional development, in light of accountability pressures being placed on school administrators as a result of NCLB legislation:

1. Identification, selection, and preparation of education leaders in rural America require tailored solution and approaches. (p. 1)

2. A clear vision of the leadership skills and qualities needed must be developed; then each school must work with universities, colleges, and other partners to create preparing program that meet those needs. (p. 3)

3. New partnerships are needed to provide better links between theory, research, and practice. (p. 4)

4. Ongoing relationships with skilled and carefully matched mentors offer a powerful source of leadership preparation and support. (p. 4)

5. Community is a potent—but sometimes overlooked—source of leadership and support in many rural schools. (p. 5)

6. Technology—combined with face-to-face sessions—provides an important tool for increasing access to more diverse school leadership preparation and support services. (p. 6)

7. Certification, licensing, and pension policies need to be revised. (p. 6)
There is a need for greater awareness of and more research on rural school. (p. 7)

Money matters. (p. 7)

The IEL (2005) convened a national task force in 2000 to raise public awareness about the issues facing educational leadership. The task force included business, civic, education, and government groups. Their discussions led to two overarching principles. The first was that school administrators focus their leadership on learning above all else. Learning must be the priority for them. The second was that currently school administrators cannot focus on learning because they are responsible for building management and operations. They reported that school administrators responsible for the day-to-day operations of a school cannot also set the vision for learning and act as the stewards for the vision through successful leadership practices (IEL, 2005).

The task force identified three essential capacities for principals:

1. Instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability.

2. Community leadership manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school’s role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relation with parent and others, and advocacy for school capacity building and resources.

3. Program Visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside school building. (IEL, 2000, p. 4)
The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute also identified another three important components in what principals need to be able to do:

1. Develop deep understanding of how to support teachers.
2. Manage the curriculum in ways that promote student learning.
3. Develop the ability to transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students. (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p. 4)

These expectations reflect the changing role of the principal from manager to instructional leader.

As the expectations and roles of principals increase, the number of qualified candidates to take on the principal position decreases (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Cray and Millen (2010) contended that a lack of high quality principals has been a huge, national concern. Some of the issues range from a smaller pool of applicants to principals preparedness to successfully transition into principalship. Another concern is the expectation for school administrators to enter the workforce with exemplarity relationship building skills that allow them to bring people together. School administrators are also expected to be instructional leaders that come with curriculum knowledge and its pedagogical skills. They are expected to have a broad knowledge in curriculum and programs.

According to Cray and Millen (2010), principals roles have changed from being an effective site manager to a visionary leader able to work in their defined environment and to successfully lead all players towards student achievement. Cray and Millen examined principal preparation programs by interviewing superintendents and to identify
areas in which new school administrators face challenges and exhibit needs. Two types of rural schools were chosen for the study, schools with 300 students or less and schools with 301-600 students. The participants were superintendents who were asked to share their perceptions of the efficacy of principal preparation delivery models to school leaders in Colorado and their perceptions about first year principals in rural school settings. All superintendents were contacted through a letter of introduction and invited to participate in the two-tier study. Forty-three percent of the superintendents from small school districts participated and 57% for the mid-sized districts with 301-600 students. The superintendents were surveyed on the seven principal preparation programs available to principals in Colorado. The programs included (a) district cohort program offered at a district site with an identified group of principal candidates from the participating districts, (b) university cohort program offered to a designated group of principal candidates with classes held at the university, (c) individual enrollment in program offered at the university campus, (d) individual enrollment in program offered at the university campus with some online components, (e) individual enrollment in an inclusively online program, (f) participation in the state-approved alternative certification program, and (g) district/university partnership program with a designated cohort of participants and shared teaching among district and university personnel. The second part of the survey was an open-ended question asking superintendents to list the deficits they observed in their newly appointed principals. The findings concluded that the majority of superintendents believed the district cohort structures were the preferred delivery model for principal training. The district cohort structure allowed principals to join other
colleagues from other rural districts, providing an opportunity for networking and to keep focus on school leadership.

Similarly, Browne-Ferrigno and Allen (2006) examined the challenges rural schools face in leading a rural school district in Central Appalachia, Pike County, and the changes that were implemented to transform leadership and increase student achievement. The study examined a staff development program for administrators called Principals Excellence Program (PEP). The PEP was the result of a 3-year award provided through NCLB legislation which authorized the funding for such a program. It is an innovative program with strong connections between the district and university. Both entities created a partnership where they take the time to explore the needs of schools in Pike County by identifying future administrators and nurturing their learning experiences in order for them to be successful. Some of the key elements that surfaced from PEP were that professional development must be delivered over time; it must be job embedded and should provide time for reflection. The review suggests that it is important to include training on the supervision of instructional and assessment programs and to learn to deal with equity issues and social justice (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006). This provides individuals with growth opportunities, as well as increased academic achievement (Salazar, 2007).

**Leadership Challenges in Rural Schools**

According to a report in the Rural School and Community Trust (2011), the number of people living in rural areas has increased since the 1950s, which has resulted in an increased number of schools in rural communities. About one-third of the country’s schools are located in rural areas and many of these schools have low enrollment causing
them to face budgetary issues consistently. Rural schools are similar to urban and suburban schools when it comes to accountability. Rural schools have to ensure they meet all of NCLB’s mandates. Rural schools are quite different when it comes to location, size, and other unique characteristics (Harmon et al., 2007; Mathews & Winkle, 1982; Salazar, 2007). Rural schools are not only different from urban and suburban schools, but there are also vast differences among rural schools. Rural schools reflect the characteristics of their communities and have their own unique needs (IEL, 2005). Some of the uniqueness of rural schools includes the difficulty in attracting and retaining effective leaders. The recruitment pools of rural school districts are very limited (IEL, 2005). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) asserted that current teachers with leadership skills are not interested in increasing their workload for very modest pay. In addition, recruitment of outside people is challenging as well, because it is difficult for outsiders to understand the community’s view of a school leader. This results in increased turnover rates, which results in poor leadership (IEL, 2005; Whitaker, 2001).

Many rural schools have limited resources which results in low academic results, poor leadership, and high turnover rates (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006). A recent study showed that principals are seeking help for their increased responsibilities in special education issues, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development. Often, rural schools do not have assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, or other district staff for support, thus forcing principals to be generalists who are responsible for doing it all (IEL, 2005).
Loveland (2002) confirmed the challenges rural school administrators face in addition to the numerous roles they play in their assigned schools is overwhelming. She provided an overview of rural school administrator challenges throughout a variety of states across America. She concluded that rural school administrators indeed are faced with make-up of schools that impact their school administrator roles. A school administrator at a rural school may sometimes have to be principal to both an elementary school and middle school. Loveland described rural school principals as “the principal has to do it all” (p. 6). A rural school teacher in Nebraska applied for a principal position at an elementary school and got the job to be principal at the elementary job and the nearby middle school. In addition, the principal attends superintendent’s meetings and when they have an assigned task for each principal where they usually get one packet of work, she ends up with two.

Also, the principal has to divide her time between two schools. She has to work at one school on Monday and Wednesday, while she also works at the other school on Tuesday and Thursday; Friday is divided among the two schools. The principal reported that the most difficult task is trying to attend both school events and extracurricular activities. Principals in bigger school districts have many tasks to attend to; however, rural school principals usually have to do it all (Loveland, 2002). While urban schools deal with increasing enrollments, rural schools have been faced with decreasing enrollments, which result in budget cuts that affect their already short staffed schools, resulting in the expansion of their roles and responsibilities in their perspective schools. In addition to wearing multiple hats as a rural school administrator, administrators have yet another challenge—the recruitment of teachers. The salary of teachers in rural
schools is usually far less than that of the urban school districts. This makes it more
difficult to keep teachers and decrease turnaround, further increasing the role of the
administrator, as they have to be creative to attract the best qualified candidates (Salazar,
2007).

Similarly, Starr and White (2008) examined the responses of a group of rural
school principals of small rural schools in Victoria, Australia that described leadership
challenges they encountered in their respective jobs. The principals were interviewed
based on the following research questions: (a) What are the major challenges confronting
principals of small rural schools? (b) How do principals perceive these challenges to be
particular to small rural school contexts? (c) What do principals perceive the causes of
these challenges to be? and (d) How do small rural school principals address the major
challenges they confront?

A significant difference between rural school administrators and their
metropolitan neighbors was the fact that they spend part of their time teaching cross-age,
multi-grade groups of students which takes time away from their administrator duties.
Rural schools are not equipped with the administrative support, such as receptionists,
grounds keepers, and other part-time employees as most urban school districts. However,
they still have to respond to compliance items issued by federal, state, and district level
personnel. School administrators in larger schools have the additional staff and capacity
to assist with the additional managerial tasks. In addition, school administrator responses
included other types of challenges. Some of the themes that surfaced from the interviews
included: workload proliferation, educational equity issues, the re-defined principalship,
escalating role multiplicity, and school survival (Starr & White, 2008).
Another challenge for rural school administrators is the impact their schools have been faced with as the population of English Learners (ELs) continues to increase. According to the Rural School and Community Trust release in 2011, the population of rural English Language Learner (ELL) students is growing. The rural ELL population in the United States has increased in recent decades. The population has doubled in the last 15 years between 1989-90 and 2004-05, which constitutes an increase of more than seven times higher than the rate of increase for total student enrollment. In a 2005 policy brief published by McREL (Flynn & Hill, 2005), it was reported that the number of overall school age children between the ages of 5-17 increased by 19% between 1979 and 2003, with a 124% growth of ELs in the nation. California is one of the five states that currently accounts for 68% of the ELL elementary school students in the nation (Flynn & Hill, 2005). According to Flynn and Hill (2005), it is crucial for administrators to have strong leadership skills. They contended that the administrator needs to ensure the leadership at the school has a “can-do” attitude, and those in leadership roles must serve as the role models. Administrators must develop meaningful communication with parents and instill a welcoming environment for students and their families. In addition, the administrator is responsible for making sure all staff is aware of the legal requirements for serving ELL students. Other requirements from leadership would include support for teachers in the instructional efforts, make staff development a priority for teachers, and create an environment that accepts diversity, allocate resources equitably, integrate ELL programs, expect student achievement in content areas, and monitor and evaluate the ELL program. In addition, staffing needs to meet certain requirements to teach ELL students, and rural schools frequently lack the financial
resources to hire English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. In 2011, a national state-by-state analysis was released by the Rural School Community Trust where it was reported that California’s rural schools were big, enrollment was changing, and basically very little money was provided to meet the needs of students.

The challenge to educate ELL students varies among urban, suburban, and rural school districts; however, for rural school administrators, this challenge is duplicated due to the lack of resources. Even schools with small numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs) are impacted equally due to the fact that administrators must ensure they provide the services regardless if they have 2 or 22 students (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2011). This indicates a need for specialized staff development opportunities for administrators in the area of student achievement for ELs, which has often been a subgroup where schools fail to meet AYP.

Even though rural schools have challenges of location, resources, and economic status, there are also assets to being small rural schools (IEL, 2005). One of these assets is the connection between the school and community. Rural schools are smaller and imitate the patterns found in the community. The schools are strongly influenced by the viewpoints of their community. Rural schools share common values, such as importance of family, strong work ethic, and acceptable behavior norms, which result in a lower dropout rate and higher attendance rates. In addition, rural school communities expect the schooling of their children to transfer to their everyday lives and be successful.

Chance and Segura (2009) confirmed the effectiveness of community as it relates to students achievement. Chance and Segura conducted a case study that examined school reform in the context of Organization Development (OD). Organization
development is defined as a structured approach that is managed from the top with the aim of improving organizational effectiveness. Organizational development requires schools to work together and problem-solve to make changes, and school leadership is in charge of these reforms. The case study was about a rural high school that made student achievement improvements over a 5-year period and was able to sustain the improvements. Pass rates on high school examinations, achievement of AYP standards, graduation, and attendance rates were the elements that were used to measure student achievement. One hour interviews of teachers, students, and parents were conducted through a semi-structured protocol that asked about perspectives on curriculum, instruction, the change process, problem-solving, and involvement of different individuals at different periods of time. Data were collected from the interviews and students progress reports, such as newsletters and yearly accreditation reports. In addition, the interviews classroom observations were conducted during class time and lunch and passing periods. The researchers concluded that organizational practices, as well as instructional leadership, are important in creating a collaborative environment that improves student outcomes. Based on the case-study, three essential elements were identified for successful collaboration as follows: (a) scheduled time for teacher collaboration, (b) structured and focused collaboration time devoted to improving instruction and student achievement, and (c) leadership behaviors that focused on student-centered planning and accountability. In addition, the researchers concluded that a sense of community and contribution to the overall success of a school are important factors for a successful school reform. Lastly, the researchers proposed that rural school communities’ smaller populations, denser relational networks improve the opportunity for
administrators, teachers, parents, and students are connected in many important ways. Also, their shared values, local resources, and community environment can facilitate student improvement (Chance & Segura, 2009).

Furthermore, Bauch (2001) identified six types of family, school community connections that lead to success for rural schools:

1. Social Capital where children are raised in a setting the community values, social structures and relationships which in turn build trust, reciprocity inter-generational connections and shared norms.

2. Sense of place, creates rootedness, worldview, understanding of others and appreciation for the resources of the community.

3. Parent Involvement which is linked to the social interactions central to that community.

4. Ties to the church.

5. School-business-agency connections in the community where individuals bring the community to the school and school children go out to the community.

6. The use of community as a curricular resource. (p. 212)

Rural schools are quite different when it comes to location, size, and other unique characteristics (Harmon et al., 2007; Mathews & Winkle, 1982; Salazar, 2007). However, they must increase student achievement and meet all of NCLB’s mandates. It is important for the literature and research to be reviewed carefully to develop well balanced staff development opportunities for rural school administrators based on their needs.
Synthesis of Literature

The examination of the literature reveals the need to prepare school administrators to lead effective schools. In this time of accountability, it is evident that school administrators play a major role in their schools by setting goals and being the visionary of the school. The research offered extensive studies on the identification of school administrator characteristics and practices that result in effective schools. Many researchers have identified specific themes which continue to support each other by overlapping some of the same ideas. The literature offers a body of research on programs that have been developed over the years by educational consortiums, universities, and task forces that have taken the initiative to network and develop professional development ideas for leaders. In addition, CCSSO (1996) developed the ISLLC standards for administrators that provide a foundation for staff development opportunities for school administrators. The NCEEA (1987) examined the quality of educational leadership in the United States, focusing on the role of principals and superintendents finding several deficiencies in educational leadership.

Conclusions

Based on the current research, this study seeks to identify the professional development needs of administrators in rural schools in California. Using an adaptation of a survey of rural Nevada principals (Chance, 2008), this study surveyed California rural administrators. The survey asked respondents about their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development. It is the intent of the researcher to develop a menu of professional
development ideas that will assist school districts and education agencies in general as they move forward to reform administratorship and support administrators to lead schools effectively.

The research makes some very clear recommendations on the roles and school leaders. It is evident that school administrators at the novice and experienced stage face many challenges as they become administrators. Reform has been in progress for decades, and currently, with the NCLB legislation in place, many changes have been adopted.

The accountability measures designed through NCLB provide for extensive changes in the role of school administrators. These challenges are proliferated by other factors such as budget constraints, socioeconomic disadvantages, and much more. School leaders need the tools necessary to deal with the everyday life situations and continue the focus on student learning. School administrators need the professional development necessary to be a manager and instructional leader for their educational institution.
CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Given the increasing complexity of the principalship and increased pressure on school administrators for increasing student achievement, this study seeks to identify the professional development needs of school administrators, specifically the needs of rural school administrators in the state of California. Previous chapters presented the research problem, the hypotheses guiding the study, and introduction to the study’s population and participants. In this chapter, the research methodology is described including: (a) the study’s design and rationale, (b) the population and participants, (c) the instrument and materials which were used to collect the quantitative data, and (d) the plan for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

Through a survey based on the Nevada Administrator Survey (Chance, 2009), this study will describe rural school administrators’ perceptions of their own knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study will address the following questions:

1. How do rural California school administrators rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job?

2. How much time do rural California school administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as school administrator?
3. What are school administrators’ perceived needs for their continued leadership development?

**Rationale for Survey Research Design**

A quantitative self-assessment survey design was chosen for this study based on four factors noted by Creswell (2009). First, the survey design saves time and money. Surveys can be developed and sent out in less time than it would take to travel to rural schools and interview administrators. Rea and Parker (1997) asserted that a survey project can be organized so that the data gathering process is done in a short period of time. In addition, the cost of not traveling and sending the survey via email will not impose any cost on the researcher. Respondents may be more responsive to an online survey when compared to a face-to-face interview because they will have greater anonymity and can complete the survey at their own pace and time. Second, a well-structured survey generates standardized data that are amenable to quantification and consequent computerization and statistical analysis. Given that the researcher will use Qualtrics software system to develop the survey and generate responses, the email survey is the most appropriate for the researcher and participants. Updated and fast technology systems have enhanced rests for researchers (Rea & Parker, 1997). Third, the survey design will provide a numerical amount of responses to each question in the different parts of the survey. Finally, a survey design is the most appropriate given that no treatment will be administered during the study (Creswell, 2009).

This study was an adaptation of a study conducted by the Center for Outreach in School Leadership Development at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in the early fall of 2008. The study was aligned to the research questions and the three primary works
that were used for the development of the Nevada survey. The adaptations made on the survey provided updated information, filled in gaps, and included language based on the terminology used in California.

The 2008 Nevada Administrator Online Survey was based on scholarly literature related to school leadership standards and the skills and knowledge base that school administrators need in order to be effective school leaders. Three documents that strongly influenced the development of the Nevada survey were: (a) The ISLLC Standards for School Leaders (CCSSO, 1996); (b) McREL’s research on Balanced Leadership (Waters et al., 2003), and Learning from Leadership Project’s How Leadership Influences Student Learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). The Nevada survey was developed in collaboration with University of Nevada Las Vegas educational leadership faculty and WestEd senior research associates. Survey developers also solicited input from professional organizations in Nevada that provided staff development and training for school administrators in order to check content validity of the instrument.

Following the format of the 2008 Nevada Administrator Online Survey, the California Rural School Administrator survey was designed to determine the skills, knowledge, and professional development needs of rural school administrators in California. This study was conducted in order to gather data relevant to the professional development needs of rural administrators in California. The study followed a quantitative paradigm to gather descriptive data revealing specific information through an online questionnaire. An advantage of online surveys is that they are inexpensive and can be completed at the participants’ discretion at a convenient time. Online questionnaires are fast, and it is possible to get a large number of responses. However, one disadvantage
of surveys is that responses may be based on biased sample because there is no control over which participants will respond.

**Population**

The participants for this survey included school administrators in schools of identified rural school districts in California as categorized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2011). The USDOE offers funding to rural school districts through The Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP), Part B of Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Rural Education Achievement Program initiatives are the Small, Rural School Achievement Grant (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School Grant (RLIS). The USDOE (2011) website includes a list of rural school districts that are eligible for the SRSA an RLIS. The list has further identified school districts to be rural as follows:

1. An LEA must have a total average daily attendance (ADA) of fewer than 600 students or serve only schools that are located in counties that have a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile.

2. An LEA must serve only schools that have a school locale code of 7 or 8 (assigned by the U.S. Department of Education [ED] National Center for Education Statistics [NCES]) or be located in an area of the state defined as rural by a governmental agency of the state.

The researcher will survey all schools within the 387 school districts as identified on the SRSA list in order to ensure a significant response rate for the purpose of this study (see Appendix A).
The current SRSA list codes rural schools with a code of seven or eight; however, updated information through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2010) codes rural schools as follows:

41—Rural, Fringe: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.

42—Rural, Distant: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.

43—Rural, Remote: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

The school administrators selected for this study included all current administrators in these schools regardless of experience or gender. The selected administrators’ contact information was listed on the SRSA listing on the California Department of Education. There was a population of 296 schools identified in the SRSA list. The list did not include a listing of the emails for each administrator. The researcher purchased a listing of all California School Administrators’ emails and contact information and then cross-matched this list, selecting only rural school administrators in districts identified in the SRSA list. The researcher tested random email addresses by calling schools to double-check listing of emails were correct. The researcher confirmed that the email contacts were pure and correct. The researcher then proceeded to send out a bulk email to all the California rural school administrators on the list and introduced herself, explained her study, provided a confidentiality disclosure and informed the
recipients that she would be sending a survey within the next week. The information included in the e-mail explained that they would be asked questions about their administrative position, experience, and knowledge as a school administrator. The email also informed potential participants of the benefits that may result from this study including possible insights into the professional development needs of rural school leaders.

A single-stage sampling procedure was completed when the researcher had access to names in the population and sampled the people directly (Creswell, 2009). The participants were purposefully selected and were able to make a decision about their participation and understand the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

Specific criteria were used for the purposeful selection of the participants in the study. It is important for researchers to be certain that the selected population possesses the knowledge and information required to fulfill the requirements of the research project (Rea & Parker, 1997). The criteria selected for the participants include the following: (a) participants are credentialed school administrators; (b) have been working in a rural school setting, and (c) are willing to participate.

**Instrumentation**

Quantitative research provides a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population sample by studying their responses in a survey (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research has been historically linked to the post-positivist worldview, which is seen as the traditional form of research. The post-positivist worldview is the scientific method or science research (Creswell, 2009). Post-positivists possess a belief that causes determine effects and outcomes; therefore, the problems studied are the need to
understand certain outcomes and results. Given that this study focused on exploring the staff development needs of school administrators through an online survey, a quantitative approach was selected as the best method to collect and analyze the data. The researcher was seeking to find data and evidence that shaped the knowledge needed to develop staff development opportunities for school administrators.

The researcher used the Qualtrics software system, which is a sophisticated system that provided the researcher with applications that included data graphs and response rates. The survey was divided into six sections: (a) demographic information about the administrators and their schools; (b) initial training and induction experiences of participants; (c) participants’ perceptions of their knowledge, skill, and practices of school leadership; (d) time spent in various administrative functions; (e) participants’ perceptions of their professional development needs; and (f) open-ended questions related to school leadership. The researcher also developed a matrix that aligned the 20 items about the participants’ knowledge, skill and practices to balanced leadership, ISLLC standards and Leithwood’s work on leadership skills that influence student achievement. The Qualtrics software system was utilized to distribute the survey to all respondents (see Appendix B).

The demographic section provided the researcher with information about the respondents’ background, knowledge, and experience, along with information about the school he or she was serving. The questions about the school are related to the number of students, teachers, and principals that have served at the school within the last 5 years. The training and induction experiences section provided information about the school administrators’ training and staff development opportunities to better understand the
participants’ knowledge and skills they were equipped with when they started their job experience as a school administrator. Section 3 questions focus on the participant perceptions of their own skill and knowledge at performing specific administrative activities as outlined in the survey. Section 4 asked participants to provide time spent on specific activities and duties school administrators perform on a daily basis. Section 5 provided an overview of school administrator staff development needs based on their perceptions. The last section of the survey provided an opportunity for school administrators to share final thoughts on leadership. The first and last section consisted of open-ended questions, while a Likert scale was used to rate sections 2, 3, and 4. Finally, an analysis of the frequency of how school administrators rate themselves was conducted, and responses to open-ended questions allowed the researcher to report on the findings and provide conclusions useful in the development of staff development opportunities for school administrators.

Survey Distribution

After the development of the survey was completed, the Qualtrics system generated a link that was sent out to all participants via email. The link served as the access to the online survey system and provided the opportunity for participants to complete the survey in one or several sittings. The researcher used the Small Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) list downloaded from the California Department of Education (2012) website. The SRSA list included all schools identified as rural by the state of California. There was a population of 296 schools identified in the SRSA list. The list did not include a listing of the emails for each administrator. The researcher purchased a listing of all California School Administrators emails and contact
information. The researcher analyzed the listing and selected only the rural school administrators by matching the listing with the schools on the SRSA list. The researcher ensured the listing included legitimate email addresses by verifying common schools and administrator contact information known by the researcher. The researcher also tested some of the unknown schools and administrator email addresses by calling schools to double-check listing of emails were correct. The researcher confirmed that the email contacts were pure and correct. The researcher then proceeded to send out a bulk email to all the California rural school administrators on the list and introduced herself, explained her study, provided a confidentiality disclosure and informed the recipients that she would be sending a survey within the next week. The information included in the survey explained that they would be asked questions about their administrative position, experience, and knowledge as a school administrator. The email also informed potential participants of the benefits that may result from this study including possible insights into the professional development needs of rural school leaders.

After the initial contact, 20 emails were returned to the researcher with either a message that the recipient does not accept emails from nonapproved senders or that the current email was incorrect. The researcher deleted these from the listing and proceeded to send the survey link to 276 of the schools on the SRSA list. The first email resulted in 44 responses, which resulted in a 20% response rate. The researcher followed up with two reminder emails to participants in order to improve the response rate. The follow-up email reminders resulted in 101 respondents who completed all the multiple choice and fill-in questions portion of the survey, resulting in a response rate of 37% of those sampled and 34% of the entire population.
Analysis of the Data

Because this was a descriptive study, the researcher analyzed data by reporting frequencies of response, using measures of central tendency (Rea & Parker, 1997). The researcher used the Qualtrics software system to analyze the raw data. The data results and response rates were automatically generated through the system. The researcher analyzed the data and highlight responses to open-ended questions that provide an understanding of the staff development needs of rural school administrators. Next, the researcher classified and categorized responses based on frequencies reported. The researcher used the statements and frequency patterns to write descriptions of what participants described as their professional development needs to be effective leaders in rural schools.

Potential Benefits

Benefits of this study include the identification of professional development needs of rural school administrators in California relative to their daily tasks and skills needed to lead schools toward increased academic achievement. School districts may utilize the findings to develop successful staff development programs for school administrators that will support and mentor them in effective leadership. Results of this study may benefit universities and state agencies as they plan for advanced educational leadership studies to support rural school administrators.

The results of this study will help identify the professional development needs of rural school administrators in California relative to their daily tasks and skills needed to lead schools toward increased academic achievement. School districts may utilize the
findings to develop successful staff development programs for school administrators that will support and mentor them in effective leadership.

**Ethical Issues**

The researcher considered the ethical nature of the subjects and the potential political outcomes resulting from investigation processes. The potential risks for participants in this study were minimal. Prior to the study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained through San Diego State University. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, they were free to withdraw at any time without penalty, and, if interested, they could receive an outcome brief denoting the results at the conclusion of the study. No sensitive data were being collected and responses were anonymous. Data were aggregated so that no single participant would be identified. The researcher kept the identities of school administrators confidential and used pseudonyms. Data collected were protected via a secure password on the computer. Any hard copies were kept in a locked briefcase and stored in a secured closet at the researcher’s office. All participants received a consent disclosure that informed them of the confidentiality steps that would be taken to ensure their participation is not disclosed. Their participation in the survey was used as their agreement to all information on the consent disclosure.

The researcher expressed gratitude for participants’ contributions to the research on staff development need of rural school administrators. Anonymity and sensitivity to the needs of the subjects was maintained at all times. The researcher thanked participants for their willingness to complete the survey.
Limitations

While beneficial information was gathered through this study, the findings had several limitations. First of all, a mailed-out survey may result in lower response rate than other methods. Some of the participants may need additional follow-ups in order for the researcher to reach the appropriate number of responses (Rea & Parker, 1997). Rea and Parker (1997) stated that mail-outs generally never achieve a 100% response rate; in best cases 85-90% response rate may be expected. In addition, the fact that no interviewer is present allows opportunity for participants to be unclear and their questions may remain unanswered, and unprompted responses may have not been recorded. Another point to consider is the fact that the study will only provide surveys to current school administrators in rural school districts. The study is limited to rural school administrators and may not be generalizable to administrators in other settings. Furthermore, the study is limited to schools in the state of California, and results may not be generalizable to administrators in other locations.

Conclusions

School administrators have become the icon of accountability for schools, therefore, placing them at the forefront of student achievement. Given the high stakes accountability, it is imperative to identify the support and professional development needed to assist administrators in ascertaining their success in such a demanding job. This study can potentially provide preparation programs, school districts and policy makers, and educational organizations with a clear and concise menu of skills and knowledge needed for the job of school administration.
This chapter discussed the tenets of a survey study research, the design of the study, the participants, and how the data were collected and analyzed. Chapter 3 presented a framework of the leadership skills administrators need to have and implement to lead successful schools.

Chapter 4 will report findings and responses to the online survey completed by various rural school administrators. It will provide further analysis of the data with interpretations offered by the researcher.
Researchers have noted that the administrator is the key position essential to improving student achievement (Gurr et al., 2006; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Cotton (2003) stated that what principals do makes a difference, noting that schools with high academic achievement have effective principals that lead them to success. Leadership is also considered to be vital to the success of many other aspects of a school. Not surprisingly, the traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools are no different from those in other institutions (Marzano et al., 2005). According to Cotton, the principal plays a primary role in developing the vision and goals of the school.

In addition, the current mandates under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have forced school administrators to transition from the role of the manager to that of an instructional leader. In the 1950s, principals were characterized as instructional managers (Murphy, 1990). However, more recent studies have focused on the special context of schools and their mission, which, in turn, has encouraged policymakers to focus on programs developed to improve leadership skills (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These leadership skills range from the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards developed by CCSSO (1996) to the 21 responsibilities of administrators resulting from a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano et al. (2005). As demands on school leaders have risen, the number of qualified candidates has declined. In 2002, Grogan and Andrews predicted a 47% shortage of administrators in elementary schools and a 55% shortage of high school and middle school administrators. According to Hopkins (2000), many possible candidates view the task of school administrator as undesirable and impossible to perform. A recent study showed that principals are seeking
help for their increased responsibilities in issues of special education, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) stated that most administrators are concerned about issues of student learning in their jobs, indicating that 90% of administrators say they need more staff development in order to meet the expectations of their role. Thus, administrator professional development will be effective to the degree it assists school leaders in further developing successful characteristics and practices as identified by the research.

Formal and informal support systems are important for all administrators, especially administrators new to their jobs (Fullan, 2005: NPBEA, 1990: Whitaker, 2001). A considerable amount of research has emerged as researchers continue to investigate administrator professional needs that will support them to lead schools effectively. This concern fueled the development of the ISLLC standards in an attempt to delineate the knowledge and skills that school principals should possess (CCSSO, 1996). The CCSSO (1996) consortium developed these standards with the goal to provide a shared vision for effective leadership based on professional development. The standards provide a foundation of the knowledge; performances, and dispositions administrators need in order to lead effective schools. Further, state and national accountability systems have created a sense of urgency resulting in renewed focus on identifying priorities and responsibilities for administrators.

Given the increasing complexity of school administrators and the increased pressure on administrators for increasing student achievement, this study sought to
identify the professional development needs of administrators in California rural schools. Using an adaptation of a survey of rural Nevada principals (Chance, 2008), this study surveyed California rural administrators. The survey asked respondents about their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development. It is the intent of the researcher to discover professional development opportunities that might assist school districts and education agencies to support administrators to lead schools effectively.

**Research Questions**

Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How do rural California administrators rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job?
2. How much time do rural California administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as administrator?
3. What are administrators’ perceived needs for their continued leadership development?

**Research Design and Methodology**

This study is an adaptation of a study of the 2008 Nevada Administrator Online Survey conducted and developed by the Center for Outreach in School Leadership Development at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2008 (Chance, 2008). The Nevada survey was designed in collaboration with West Ed, the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA), and the Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs serving rural areas. The adaptations made on the California survey included
updated information and language changes based on the terminology used specifically in California. The survey solicited responses about school administrators’ current knowledge, experience, and skills as they lead rural schools. The participants also had the opportunity to share their thoughts on their perceived staff development needs.

The participants for this survey included administrators in rural schools in California. Rural schools were identified as those in districts eligible for funds from the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP). The survey was comprised of six sections: (a) demographic information about the administrators and their schools; (b) initial training and induction experiences of participants; (c) participants’ perceptions of their knowledge, skill, and practices of school leadership; (d) time spent in various administrative functions; (e) participants’ perceptions of their professional development needs; and (f) open ended questions related to school leadership.

**Survey Results**

The researcher sent the survey to 276 California Rural School administrators, with the majority holding principal and superintendent/principal positions. One hundred one respondents completed the survey, with an almost equal mix of male and female. Fifty-five percent of the respondents had been in their current administrative position 10 years or more, 23% had between 6 and 9 years, 19% had between 3 and 5 years of administrative experience, and only 3% had between 0-2 years of administrative experience. Sixty-six percent of the participants indicated 10 or more years teaching experience. Twenty-two percent of the respondents had between 6 to 9 years of teaching experience, 7% had between 3 to 5 years, while only 5% had between 0 to 5 years of teaching experience (Table 1).
Eight percent of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 39 years old, 13% were between 40 and 49, 8% were between the ages of 40 and 49, and 45% were between the ages of 50 and 59. Of the respondents, 44% were male and 56% were female. The ethnic background of the majority of people was White at 89%, and 7% were Hispanic. There were 1% of American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander background. There were no Blacks or non-Hispanics who participated in the survey. The majority of the participants held a master’s plus 32 credits (45%), 15% held only a master’s degree, 8% held a master’s plus 16 credits, and 19% held a bachelor’s degree. Two percent of the respondents held an education specialist degree, and 12% held a doctorate degree (Table 2).

Tables 3-5 show characteristics of respondents’ schools, including grade configuration, enrollment, class size, and number of teachers. Twenty-seven percent of the participants work in elementary school settings, 4% in middle school, 7% in high school, 50% in elementary/middle school settings, 1% in middle/high schools, and 12% in K-12 settings. Further, 20 of the 37 high school administrators on the REAP list of California administrators participated in the survey. Additionally, 49% of the respondents reported that their enrollment is declining. Also, 30% of respondents reported their enrollment to be stable, while 20% reported a growing enrollment.
Table 2

*Administrator’s Degree Earned*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s + 16 units</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s + 32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education specialist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*School of Employment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percent of school enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Middle</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/High School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Middle/High School</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Enrollment and Enrollment Trends*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage of administrators in school with enrollment number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-99</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-149</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-199</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-249</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 or more</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Class Size and Number of Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class size</th>
<th>Percentage of administrators in school with enrollment number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 or more</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of administrators in school with enrollment number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 or more</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The literature suggests that attracting teachers in rural school districts is generally difficult (Salazar, 2007). However, 27% of the respondents reported that it was very easy to attract and retain teachers at their schools, 24% reported that it was easy, and 11% reported it was somewhat easy to attract and retain teachers. Eleven percent reported they were neutral, and 12% reported it was somewhat difficult, while another 10% reported it was difficult to retain and attract teachers. Only 6% reported it was very difficult to attract and retain teachers at their respective schools.

When asked how difficult it was to attract and retain teachers with expertise, such as working with English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities, the responses were quite different. Twelve percent of the respondents reported it was somewhat difficult, while 18% reported it was difficult; another 17% reported it was somewhat difficult, 12% were neutral, and 14% indicated it was somewhat easy to attract teachers. A total of 28% reported it was either easy or very easy to attract and retain teachers with expertise.

A total of 28% of the respondents reported their schools do not receive Title I funding, and 45% of the schools do receive Title I funding and are not in program improvement. Of the respondents, 27% reported their schools are receiving Title I funding and are in program improvement.

Eighty-one percent of the administrators in schools receiving Title I funding reported their school to be at some level of program improvement status, as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act, where the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act was passed. All schools receiving Title I funding are held accountable, based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. No Child Left Behind requires states to
develop assessments in basic skills, where schools must meet the proficiency levels set by the state. Schools that do not meet the requirements are placed in program improvement. Schools in program improvement face sanctions due to their lack of progress on the test and not meeting state proficiency levels.

**Research Question 1: Knowledge and Skills**

The first research question that guided this study was: How do rural California administrators rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job? The survey partially addressed this question through items related to administrators’ preparation and professional development. In addition, the survey asked questions related to support administrators receive in order to lead their schools effectively, and their perceived needs for future staff development opportunities. The survey also asked administrators to rate their knowledge and skills in various areas using a Likert scale, from Not Knowledgeable (1) to Expert (5).

**Preparation and Professional Development**

The majority of the respondents, 73%, reported they were prepared for their first administrator position, while 27% reported they did not have the knowledge or skills when they first became a school site leader. Table 6 shows respondents’ reports of the value of various training and staff development opportunities prior to beginning their first administrative positions. When asked which learning opportunities they found most useful, 81% of those who answered this indicated that informal mentoring was valuable as a new school site leader. In addition, of the 48 respondents who received formal mentoring, 63% reported that formal mentoring was valuable, and 28% reported it was somewhat valuable. Only 10% indicated formal mentoring was not valuable for them at
all. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated university based coursework was valuable, while another 45% found it somewhat valuable. Another 50% indicated workshops were valuable, while 48% indicated workshops were somewhat valuable; 11% indicated workshops were not valuable at all.

Table 6

Initial Training and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Valuable (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat valuable (%)</th>
<th>Not valuable (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal mentoring</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regards to ongoing development and support, 45% of those who responded reported that formal mentoring was valuable, 43% responded that it was somewhat valuable, while another 11% reported that it was not valuable at all. Informal mentoring was reported as most valuable, with 76% of the participants stating it was valuable, 22% reporting it was somewhat valuable, and only 1% reported it was not valuable at all. Twenty percent of the respondents reported finding that university-based courses were as valuable, and an additional 50% of the respondents found the courses were somewhat valuable. Surprisingly, 30% found university-based courses not valuable at all. When asked how workshops supported their ongoing staff development opportunities, 40% reported that workshops were valuable, 51% found them somewhat valuable, while 7% found workshops were not valuable at all (Table 7).
Table 7

*Ongoing Staff Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Valuable (%)</th>
<th>Somewhat valuable (%)</th>
<th>Not valuable (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring?</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal mentoring?</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University-based courses or administrative endorsement program?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops?</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if their respective schools had a plan to support their development when they first became a school administrator, 79% of the participants reported that their district did not have such a plan. When asked if their school district currently has a plan to support new administrators, 81% reported there is no plan for supporting new principals.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked if they have helped colleagues become principals and what support they provided for them. Sixty-four percent reported that as a school leader they have helped colleagues become principals by providing support. The most common support provided was through informal mentoring. Forty-eight percent of the participants reported to learning through informal mentoring.

When asked what kind of training would have been most helpful to them when becoming a principal, 25% of those responding suggested coursework that would have been helpful. The suggestions ranged from more case studies and real applications to specific content areas, such as data driven decision-making and interpersonal skills.
Twenty-three percent suggested that additional individual mentoring would have been helpful in their preparation program.

One respondent reported that she was trained at a large urban school district, which prepared her well for the position. She further reported that nothing would have prepared her for what she had to do in a rural school district. This respondent reported that she often has to speak directly with auditors and the state for clarification on what she needs to do because no one else in her school know what needs to be done. She stated that her district is so small, no one really knows what is going on. Her experience from urban school district has helped her to know about certain aspects on accountability.

Another respondent reported that she had no regrets; working in a rural school district gave her many more opportunities to develop leadership skills and participate in all aspects of school governance. Overall, mentoring, coaching, and internships were the most popular responses to the kind of support administrators would have liked to have as they became school principals. Twenty-three percent of the respondents reported that mentoring would have been one of the most helpful training to receive. Twenty-five percent of the respondents reported their coursework was helpful in their becoming a school administrator.

Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to report any other information about the leadership training they received. Forty percent of the participants reported gaining knowledge from training through their credential program as part of their clearance requirements. Another 33% of the respondents reported learning many skills on the job, by asking questions or doing their own research.
In addition to items related to training and professional development, the survey asked respondents to rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job. When asked how knowledgeable and skilled they were in areas related to student achievement and supporting teachers in the improvement of academic achievement, a high percentage of the respondents indicated they were very knowledgeable in the skill sets needed to promote high academic achievement. For example, 79% reported they were very knowledgeable in assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students, and 73% reported they were very knowledgeable in the implementation of strategies for improving student achievement. However, fewer reported that they were knowledgeable in ways to promote student achievement among various subgroups. For example, 47% reported they were very knowledgeable in helping teachers to promote high academic achievement among special education students, and only 27% responded to being very knowledgeable in the skill sets to helping teachers promote high academic achievement among ELs.

In regards to helping teachers adopt effective instructional practices, 76% of the administrators reported they were very knowledgeable or expert in this area, with only 25% being somewhat knowledgeable in this area. Furthermore, 75% reported being knowledgeable or very knowledgeable in the area of promoting a culture of high academic expectations, and 24% ranked themselves as somewhat knowledgeable in this skill.

When asked about their skills to promote a welcoming and safe school climate, 91% of the respondents were knowledgeable or very knowledgeable in this area. Only
9% reported to being somewhat knowledgeable. A higher percentage of administrators (89%) considered themselves very knowledgeable or an expert in areas dealing with parents and teachers, particularly when there are especially challenging issues. Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported they were very knowledgeable or expert in managing administrative issues to run the school. Figures 1 and 2 show graphic representations of the percentages of respondents reporting being Somewhat or Not Knowledgeable (Figure 1) and Very Knowledgeable or Expert (Figure 2) in these specific leadership areas.

Through an open-ended question, respondents were also asked to share the knowledge and skills they believed to be particularly important for effective leadership in their respective schools. Sixty-seven respondents provided answers to this question. Approximately 25% indicated they needed to be able to multi-task and manage their time wisely. In addition, 53% noted that communication was important, while only 18% indicated knowledge in best practices was a key skill important for effective leadership at their school.

When asked what was the one practice administrators do regularly that best supports effective instruction, respondents generally referred to activities in which they reported not spending enough time. For example, 50% indicated that classroom observations were important to effective instruction. In contrast, only 12% listed data driven decision-making, and 22% noted communication as key in the effective instruction of their school.
**Figure 1.** Rank order by percent of respondents reporting some or no knowledge in specific leadership areas.
Figure 2. Rank order by percent of respondents reporting to being very knowledgeable or expert in specific leadership areas.
Knowledge and Skills Based On Experience

Responses were disaggregated by administrative experience in order to compare those with 6 or more years of experience and those with 5 years of experience or less. Both experienced and less experienced administrators ranked the following four areas as lowest in knowledge and skills. Forty-one percent of the experienced and 60% of the less experienced administrators indicated they were not knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable in facilitating school wide improvement reforms. Assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities was another skill set that had similar responses among the administrators, with 46% of experienced administrators and 53% of less experienced administrators reporting not being knowledgeable or only somewhat knowledgeable in this area. Fostering partnerships with the community was another skill set that both groups of administrators had similar responses, with 53% for experienced and 74% of the less experienced administrators not having knowledge or being only somewhat knowledgeable. Assisting teachers to promote achievement of ELs was another area where both groups reported having little knowledge. Sixty-eight percent of experienced administrators and 67% of less experienced administrators reported not having knowledge or being only somewhat knowledgeable in this area. Table 8 displays four areas where both experienced and less experienced administrators were the least knowledgeable.

Knowledge and Skills Based On Educational Background

The researcher further analyzed the data on administrators’ knowledge and skills based on their educational background by seeking patterns in the responses of administrators with a doctorate degree compared to administrators with master’s degree,
Table 8

Common Knowledge and Skills of Experienced/Less Experienced Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Experienced administrators</th>
<th>Less than 5 years experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not knowledgeable/</td>
<td>Very knowledgeable/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat knowledgeable (%)</td>
<td>expert (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating school-wide improvement reforms</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering partnerships with the community</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote achievement of English Learners</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

master’s plus additional units and administrators with education specialist degree. Administrators indicated they were the least skilled in assisting teacher to promote achievement of ELs. Eighty percent of the administrators with a doctorate degree either indicated they were not at all or only somewhat knowledgeable in this area. Similarly, 66% of administrators without a doctorate reported they were either not at all knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable in assisting teachers to promote achievement of ELs.

Fostering partnerships with the community was also at the top of the list as a skill in which 46% of the administrators with a doctorate degree either indicated they were not at all or somewhat knowledgeable. Sixty percent of administrators without a doctorate reported they were not at all or somewhat knowledgeable in this area. In addition, 37% of
the administrators with their doctorate degree reported to being not at all or somewhat knowledgeable in assisting teachers to promote achievement of students with disabilities, while 49% of those without a doctorate reported being not at all or somewhat knowledgeable in this area. The last skill both sets of administrators ranked as areas of least knowledge was in the area of supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices. Here 28% of administrators with a doctoral degree and 42% of the administrators without a doctoral degree were either not at all or somewhat knowledgeable in this area (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Commonalities Between Administrators With and Without Doctorate Degree*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Administrators w/doctorate degree</th>
<th>Administrators w/o doctorate degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not knowledgeable/somewhat</td>
<td>Very knowledgeable/expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>knowledgeable (%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote achievement of English Learners</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering partnerships with the community</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first research question that guided this study asked rural California administrators to rate their knowledge and skills in the various aspects of their job. The results varied among administrators, with them rating themselves knowledgeable in many
of the skills that effect academic achievement. There were also some differences where administrators with a doctorate rated themselves less knowledgeable in skills such as fostering partnerships with the community and assisting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices when compared with administrators without a doctorate.

**Research Question 2: How Administrators Spend Their Time**

Research question 2 asked how much time rural California administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as school administrators. The researcher sought to find out how much time administrators spend in specific research based activities that have been identified for administrators to lead effectively. Administrators were asked to report the time they spend in the same activities in which they rated their knowledge and skill levels. They were asked their perceptions of the amount of time spent in these areas as being: (a) too much; (b) not enough, or (c) the right amount.

A high percentage of respondents reported they did not spent enough time in areas related to student achievement. Sixty-six percent reported they did not spend enough time assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students. As well, 60% indicated they do not spend enough time supporting teachers to use standards-based lessons and curriculums. Fifty-one percent reported not spending enough time helping teachers to adopt effective instructional practices; 61% responded they did not spend enough time implementing strategies for improving student achievement. In addition, 62% said assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities was another area where they do not spend enough time. In the area of assisting teachers to promote
achievement of ELs, 54% indicated they did not spend enough time. Further, this was the only area in which 0% of the respondents indicated they spend too much time.

Fifty-eight percent reported they did not spend enough time guiding instructional decisions by using student performance data. Seventy-five percent reported not spending enough time in the area of supporting teachers to use formative assessment practices. Figure 3 is a graphic representation of how respondents perceive the amount of time they send in each of the 20 areas. Figure 4 rank orders the 20 leadership areas by respondents’ reporting not spending enough time.

Over 50% of the respondents reported not spending enough time on 16 of the 20 tasks that are focused on having a direct impact on student achievement (see Figure 5). Further analysis of the data showed similarities between experienced and less experienced administrators. Of the top six areas in which each group reported not spending enough time, four of the six were the same for both experienced and less experienced administrators. For example, 86% of less experienced and 69% of experienced administrators reported not spending enough time supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices. When asked about assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students, 74% of the less experienced and 64% of experienced administrators reported not spending enough time. Additionally, helping teachers to adopt effective instructional practices was another area where 74% of less experienced and 66% of experienced administrators reported not spending enough time. Finally, 73% of both groups of administrators reported not spending enough time fostering partnerships with the community.
Figure 3. Rank order by percent of respondents reporting not spending enough time on specific administrative duties.
Figure 4. Rank order by percent of respondents reporting to not spending enough time on specific administrative duties.
Figure 5. Rank order by percent the skills 50% or more of the respondents report to not spending enough time on specific tasks.
Participants were asked to report the number of hours they spent per week in various activities associated with the job of the principal and to report duties they were assigned in addition to building level responsibilities. Fifty-six percent reported they were responsible for other central administrative functions, 14% indicated they teach, 23% reported having other responsibilities, 3% indicated responsibility for before/after-school programs, and 4% had coaching responsibilities.

Regarding time spent per week on specific activities at their school sites, 45% of the respondents indicated they spent less than 2 hours per week in consultation with staff and teachers about instruction. Thirty-five percent shared that they spent between 2 to 4 hours, while another 14% responded they spent between 5 to 8 hours in consultation with staff and teachers about instruction. Only 7% responded they spent between 9 to 16 hours in consultation with staff and teachers. Similarly, 41% of the respondents reported they spent less than 2 hours in consultation with staff and teachers about instructional issues. Another 37% reported they spent between 3 to 4 hours while 20% spent between 5 to 8 hours in consultation with staff and teachers about instructional issues. Again, a low 3% reported to consulting with staff and teachers about instructional issues between 9 to 16 hours of their time per week.

Furthermore, 49% of the respondents reported to spending less than 2 hours per week observing classrooms, 32% reported to spending 2 to 4 hours, and 21% spent 5 to 8 hours. Only 3% reported to spending 9 to 16 hours observing classrooms per week. Seventy percent responded they spent between 2 to 4 hours per week preparing professional staff development, 23% spent between 2 to 4 hours, and 5% reported to spending between 5 to 8 hours per week. Only 1% spent between 9 to 16 hours planning
professional development for their teachers. When asked how much time they spent per week on facility management, 35% reported they spent less than 2 hours, 34% reported to spending between 2 to 4 hours, 23% reported to spending between 5 to 8 hours, and 8% reported they spent 9 to 16 hours. When asked how much time they spent per week on parent conferencing, 40% reported spending less than 2 hours, 38% reported spending between 2 to 4 hours, 19% reported to spending between 5 to 8 hours, and only 3% reported they spent 9 to 16 hours. The area that respondents spent the majority of their time on was paperwork. Fifty-two percent reported they spent 9 to 16 hours per week on paperwork, 36% reported spending between 5 to 8 hours, 9% spent between 2 to 4 hours, while only 1% reported spending less than 2 hours.

In addition, 41% of the respondents reported they spent less than 2 hours per week on student discipline, 27% spent between 2 to 4 hours, 34% spent between 5 to 8 hours, while 8% spent between 9 to 16 hours. Similarly, 41% of the respondents reported spending less than 2 hours on positive reinforcement of students, 35% spent between 2 to 4 hours, 15% spent between 5 to 8 hours, while 9% spent between 9 to 16 hours. When asked how much time they spent in attendance at extracurricular activities, including athletics, 45% reported to spending less than 2 hours, 31% spent between 2 to 4 hours, 16% spent between 5 to 8 hours, and 8% spent between 9 to 16 hours per week. Lastly, 23% reported they spent less than 2 hours per week on district business away from site, 36% spent between 2 to 4 hours, 28% spent 5 to 8 hours, and 12% spent between 9 to 16 hours. Figure 6 displays the amount of time reported by respondents.
Figure 6. Amount of time spent per week on various administrative duties.
When asked if the time spent on specific activities was not enough, too much, or the right amount of time, a high number responded they did not spend enough time on the areas that focused on instruction and student achievement. Of the participants, 65% responded that they do not spend enough time on consultation with staff and teachers about instruction, 1.3% responded they spend too much time, and 33.7% responded they spend the right amount. Another 60% responded that they do not spend enough time on consultation with staff and teachers about instructional issues, 1.3% responded they spend too much time, and 39.1% responded they spend the right amount. A total of 65% responded that they do not spend enough time observing classrooms, 1.3% responded they spent too much time, and only 33.7% responded they spend the right amount. Question 1 and 3 had exactly the same percentage responses. There were 50% that responded they do not spend enough time planning the professional development of staff, 0% responded they spend too much time, and 50% responded they spend the right amount. Of the 101 respondents, 65% responded that they did not spend enough time on consultation with staff and teachers about instruction, 1.3% responded they spent too much time, and 33.7% responded they spent the right amount. In regards to facility management, 17.8% of the respondents reported they did not spend enough time, 19.1% responded they spent too much time, and 63% responded they spent the right amount of time.

When asked about parent conferencing, 15% responded they do not spend enough time on parent conferencing, 12.3% responded they spend too much time, and 72.6% responded they spend the right amount. A low 14.8% responded that they do not spend enough time on paperwork, 68.9% responded they spend too much time, and 16.2%
responded they spend the right amount. An overall 4% responded that they did not spend enough time on discipline of students, 34.2% responded they spend too much time, and 61.6% responded they spent the right amount. Regarding positive reinforcement of students, a high 56.7% responded they did not spend enough time, none of the respondents indicated they spent too much time, and 43.2% indicated they spend the right amount of time. When asked about their attendance to extracurricular activities, including athletics, 17.5% indicated they did not spend enough time, 13.5% responded they spend too much time, while 43.2% indicated they spend the right amount. Only 8% of the respondents reported they do not spend enough time on district business away from site, while 44.5% reported they spend too much time and 47.3% reported they spend the right amount (see Figure 7).

Research question 2 asked how much time rural California administrators report they spend in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as school administrators. Over 70% of respondents reported spending 4 or less hours per week in areas supporting instruction, including classroom observations. Paperwork was by far the activity where respondents spent the most time; over 50% reported spending 9-16 hours per week in this area. Further, over 50% of respondents reported not spending enough time on 15 of the 20 areas associated with increasing student achievement.

**Research Question 3: Administrators’ Perceived Leadership Needs**

The third research question sought administrators’ perceived needs for continued leadership development. Administrators were asked 16 Likert-type questions about their access to specific staff development opportunities offered through university-based programs, workshops, formal mentoring, and informal mentoring or on the job
Figure 7. Perception of sufficiency of time spent on specific activities.
experience. Administrators were also asked to rate the quality of their leadership development opportunities and to indicate the value of receiving leadership development training by workshop, lecture attended in person, professional conferences, web-based meeting, community of colleagues, and independent reading. The researcher first looked at the responses provided by each administrator and analyzed each item question, further determining the areas administrators reported to access, how they prefer to learn and overall, administrators’ respective on the support systems and training they need.

When asked to rate their access to leadership development needs administrators responded as follows: 64% reported to being satisfied and 13% were very satisfied. A total of 23% of the respondents reported to being either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Respondents were also asked about their access to university-based courses or administrative endorsement program, and 11.8% strongly disagreed, 22.3% disagreed, 47.4% agreed, and 18.4% strongly agreed. Four percent strongly disagreed, 11.8% disagreed, 61.8% agreed, and 22.4% strongly agreed to having access to workshops. When asked if they had access to formal mentoring, 39.2% reported they strongly disagreed, 25.7% disagreed, 27% agreed, and 8.1% strongly agreed. In regards to informal mentoring, 8% reported they strongly disagreed, 13.3% disagreed, 46.6% agreed, and 32% strongly agreed to having access. A high percent (53.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed to having access to on the job experience, 41.3% agreed, 4% disagreed, and 1.3% strongly disagreed.

**Staff Development Opportunities**

Participants were also asked to rate their satisfaction of the quality of their leadership development opportunities, and 7% responded they were very unsatisfied,
12% were very unsatisfied, 71% were satisfied, and 11% were very satisfied. Participants were asked about the quality of professional development they have attended. Over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that various types of professional development opportunities they have attended have been of high quality (see Table 10).

Table 10

Percent of Perceived Quality Professional Development Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional or development opportunities</th>
<th>Disagree/strongly disagree</th>
<th>Agree/strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With national experts</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted to needs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on theory and practice</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, participants were asked to rate their preferences on how they receive leadership development training on a scale of least preferred (1) to most preferred (5). Table 11 delineates participant responses.

Table 11

Preferred Professional Development Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community colleges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional conferences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional workshops</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent reading</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture attended in person</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online or web-based meeting</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on data, participants rated professional development through workshops and professional development through a community of colleagues as the preferred
methods of delivery. Sixty-four percent rated workshops at a four or five with a mean of 3.74. Leadership development training through a community of colleagues received a high 74% of participants rating it a four or five with a 4.07 mean (see Table 11).

**Perceptions of Job Related Successes and Challenges**

Respondents were asked to share their greatest successes through open-ended questions. Sixty-six respondents offered their thoughts and shared a variety of successes. The majority of the participants responded that student academic achievement was one of their highest successes. Over 30% of the respondents indicated their greatest successes included increases in academic achievement, as well as the improvement of school culture and climate. Some of the participants basically indicated their Academic Performance Index (API) score, while others indicated they were now a distinguished school or they have moved from Program Improvement (PI) status to high achieving. Over 50% of the respondents reported being able to juggle and balance all their administrative duties, teaching, and other duties for some.

When asked about their most challenging issues through an open ended question, 68 of the respondents offered their thoughts and experiences. The majority of the respondents included the lack of time as one of their most challenging issues. Some mentioned they do not have the time to juggle all their responsibilities, another reported the lack of time to be the instructional leader rather than instructional and facility manager. A total of 24% indicated that the lack of time was challenging. Twenty-three percent reported that budget and finances caused challenges because they had to perform all duties inclusive of duties that would generally be completed by district staff coordinator and directors. In addition, 20% of the respondents indicated that dealing
with difficult parents and staff was challenging issues for them as well. Other challenges included dealing with staff that is not centered on students, disconnected teachers, getting teachers to use direct instruction, and getting all teachers to use more effective and instructional delivery methods. When asked to list what distracts or takes them away from effective performance in their job, 70% of the respondents indicated that paperwork was a huge distractor. In addition, 50% reported that wearing too many hats pulls them in too many directions, not allowing them to do well in one area. Some of the respondents indicated the lack of staff resulted in them performing more duties. For example, some indicated they do not have the budget for full time administrative assistants, assistant principals, or district support.

The last question on the survey gave participants an opportunity to share their thoughts about experiences and perspectives on school. The responses varied with many sharing their frustrations of small schools and the many responsibilities that entailed. The majority of the respondents shared that the state mandates continue to grow, and the funding continues to decrease creating a disconnect in what is important. Some of the respondents focused on their desire to have more staff development opportunities that prepared them for wearing various hats instead of having to learn on the job. The respondents also provided their thoughts on university and college programs. They identified CSU Chico and Sutter County Office of Education as some of the entities that provide an outstanding leadership program.

The third research question sought administrators’ perceived needs for continued leadership development. Administrator’s responses indicated a preference for mentoring,
workshops, and coaching. Administrators also reported to having learned effective skills through their university programs.

**Summary**

The data provided insights and fodder for discussions around the specific skills and training administrators bring to their administrative positions and how valuable they rated these experiences now that they are practicing administrators. Furthermore, administrators rated themselves on how knowledgeable and skilled they were at performing specific research-based strategies. The researcher sought to display the results on these research-based strategies by further analyzing administrators’ responses based on their experience as an administrator and education level. The responses suggested many similarities in their lack of knowledge in specific research-based strategies, particularly in working with students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Respondents’ responses were similar regardless of their education level and years of experience as administrators. Additionally, administrators were asked to report the amount of time they spent in these specific activities, and again their responses were similar where they did not spend enough time implementing these specific research-based strategies. Many of the respondents also reported to spending a lot of time completing paperwork and other duties that were not specifically aligned to research-based strategies. The open-ended questions regarding how administrators spent their time indicated that many felt they did not have time to focus on educational practices because they had duties to attend to.

Administrators were also asked to rate their satisfaction on available staff development opportunities and to discuss the staff development in which they would like
to engage. The majority of the respondents rated workshops, university programs, and mentoring as the staff development opportunities that prepared them well for their administrative position. Administrators also reported their preference of further staff development opportunities through formal and informal mentors, as well as workshops and district support programs.
CHAPTER 5—SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An introduction with background information is provided to structure the discussion around summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Background of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the professional development needs of administrators in rural schools in California. Using an adaptation of a survey of rural Nevada principals (Chance, 2008), this study surveyed California rural administrators. The survey asked respondents about their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and practices of school leadership; the time spent in various administrative functions; and their perceived needs for their own continued professional development. The researcher sought to develop a menu of professional development opportunities that might assist school districts and education agencies to support rural school administrators.

The California Rural School Administrator Survey was an adaptation of a study of the 2008 Nevada Administrator Online Survey conducted and developed by the Center for Outreach in School Leadership Development at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2008 (Chance, 2008). The Nevada survey was designed in collaboration with West Ed, the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA), and the Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs serving rural areas. The adaptations made on the California survey included updated information and changes in language based on the terminology used specifically in the state. The survey solicited responses about school administrators’ current knowledge, experience, and skills as they lead rural schools.
Participants also had the opportunity to share their thoughts on their perceived staff development needs.

Data for this study were collected via an online survey of current California rural school administrators identified as rural. Rural schools were identified as those in districts eligible for the Small, Rural School Achievement Grant (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School Grant (RLIS), as part of the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP).

The survey consisted of six sections. The first section focused on the respondents’ background, knowledge, and experience, along with information about the school he or she is serving. The second section asked respondents about their training and induction experiences. Section 3 focused on participants’ perceptions of their own skills and knowledge regarding specific administrative activities. Section 4 asked participants to report the amount of time they spent on specific administrative activities and duties. Section 5 asked about participants’ perceptions of their staff development needs. The last section of the survey included open-ended questions regarding administrators’ perceptions of leadership challenges and successes. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of central tendency and frequency. Further open-ended questions provided additional data to confirm or augment quantitative data from Likert-scale items.

The researcher attempted to survey the entire population of rural school administrators in California (296 rural schools were identified by the SRSA list). Twenty of the 296 email addresses were not available. The researcher then deleted these from the listing and proceeded to send the survey link to 276 of the schools on the SRSA list. The
first email resulted in 44 responses, which resulted in a 20% response rate. The researcher followed up with two reminder emails to participants in order to improve the response rate. The follow-up email reminders resulted in 101 respondents that completed all the multiple choice and fill in questions portion of the survey, resulting in a response rate of 37% of those sampled and 34% of the entire population.

**Discussion of Findings**

After the researcher analyzed all data, a discussion is offered based upon each of the three research questions. Leadership skills and academic achievement provides an overview of the knowledge and skills administrators report to have acquired prior to becoming a school administrator. These skills were also aligned to the skills research has identified to increase student achievement. Second, the demand of the job depicts how California rural school administrators report they spend their time in various activities related to their duties and responsibilities as the school administrator. Lastly, leadership development offers information based on administrators’ perceived needs for their continued leadership development.

Furthermore, the research findings reflected some similarities to the rural Nevada administrator study completed in 2008. The Nevada survey demonstrated similarities in the administrators’ report on their knowledge and skills on administrative duties when compared to the responses of the California administrators. Over 50% of the administrators from California and Nevada reported to being knowledgeable on skills such as recognizing effective instructional strategies, evaluating teacher performance, and promoting a welcoming environment. In addition, they both reported to lacking knowledge in the area of academic achievement with English Learner (EL) students and
students with disabilities. Another significant finding was the respondents both reported to spending the majority of their time on doing paperwork, working with parents, and on the managerial duties of the school. It is evident that the duties of rural schools may be impacted by the fact that they have a variety of duties to perform, due to the makeup of the school and the lack of district personnel assigned to the various duties.

Research based skills for increased student achievement, as well as the current mandates under NCLB, have forced school administrators to transition from the role of the manager to that of an instructional leader. This has caused the demand for a change in the skills administrators need to lead their schools.

**Leadership Skills for Academic Achievement**

Respondents were asked to indicate how knowledgeable and skilled they were in skills linked to student achievement and supporting teachers in the improvement of academic achievement. According to the data collected, the majority of the participants responded they were very knowledgeable in some of the skill sets needed to promote high academic achievement. They reported to being knowledgeable in assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students and in the implementation of strategies for improving student achievement. However, when asked how much time they spent in various activities, more than 60% reported not spending enough time supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment, helping teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices, and assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students. It is evident there is a discrepancy between what administrators know and the strategies they implement.
The administrators’ responses reflected what the research has offered. According to Hopkins (2000), many possible candidates view the task of the administratorship as undesirable and/or impossible to perform. A recent study showed that principals are seeking help for their increased responsibilities in issues of special education, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The respondents reported needs in some of these skills as well.

Additionally, the participants reported they were not very knowledgeable in the academic achievement of students with special needs or among ELs. Significantly, one must consider the influx of students into schools from other countries and the high number of immigrants in our country today. According to the Rural School and Community Trust release in 2011, the population of rural English Language Learner (ELL) students is growing. The rural ELL population in the United States has increased in recent decades. The population has doubled in the last 15 years between 1989-90 and 2004-05 which constitutes an increase of more than seven times higher than the rate of increase for total student enrollment. In a 2005 policy brief published by McREL (Flynn & Hill, 2005), it was reported that the number of overall school age children between the ages of 5-17 increased by 19% between 1979 and 2003 with a 124% growth of ELs in the nation. California is one of the five states that currently account for 68% of the ELL elementary school students in the nation (Flynn & Hill, 2005). This indicates a need for specialized staff development opportunities for administrators in the area of student achievement for ELs, which has often been a subgroup where schools fail to meet AYP. In addition, the data indicated the need for increased knowledge in assisting teachers to
augment student achievement among special education students, which in many cases is a subgroup large enough where schools may fail to meet AYP for their respective schools. It is important to keep in mind that 27% of the respondents are currently leading schools that are in program improvement status.

Furthermore, many of the respondents indicated they were knowledgeable in the 20 skill sets identified in the survey as skills that increase student achievement. The survey included 20 leadership skills that contribute positively to student achievement, and over half of the participants reported not spending enough time in 16 of these 20 areas.

Further, when data were disaggregated by education level and experience level, there were no appreciable differences in respondents’ perceptions of their knowledge in skills or in how they spent their time. The research has indicated that some of the common interventions outlined in improvement plans included teaching principals about instructional leadership and seminars to improve teachers’ knowledge in the area of assessment and data. Edmonds (1982) completed a study where improvement programs were implemented in five different districts with varying results, due to the level of implementation and change process of each one.

Peterson (2002) suggested that in order for staff development programs to be effective they must be structured to be long term, carefully planned, job embedded, and focus on student achievement with high levels of implementation. Scholars have also noted that school administrators must be committed to becoming experts in becoming true visionaries and instructional leaders (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002; McGough, 2003; Peterson, 2002). Based on the research, lack of implementation can decrease positive
results. According to this survey, principals report to know about the skills, but their implementation may be the reason for lack of increased student achievement.

The NPBEA issued a report entitled *Principals for Our Changing Schools: The Knowledge and Skill Base* (Thomson, 1993), in which they identified 21 “domains,” defined as skills of effective school leadership. The 21 domains were described as essential elements for preparation programs for elementary, middle, and high school administrators and stated that departments of educational administration should focus their efforts on these skill-based components rather than on the content-based curriculum, then common to university administrator preparation program. The 21 domains were essentially a production of the NPBEA in an effort to create a core of essential skills and knowledge that administrators needed in order to fulfill their job responsibilities professionally. Additionally, it was reported that the implementation of these skills was key in order to enhance student achievement scores.

Data from the survey reinforced the notion that administrators do not spend enough time implementing the skills that will increase their students’ achievement when compared to the skills identified by the research. Administrators reported spending the majority of their time on paperwork, working with parents and teachers on challenging issues.

**Demands of the Job**

In a series of open-ended questions, administrators were asked to describe their successes, challenges, and distractions. Administrators generally responded that they make efforts to be instructional leaders and build relationships with teachers and students by building a culture of collegiality and empowering teachers. However, over 50% of the
respondents also shared the lack of time that they had to complete the entire job as one of their biggest challenges.

A further analysis of responses disaggregated by administrators’ experience yielded similar responses between those with less than 5 years experience and those with more than 5 years experience. For example, less experienced and experienced administrators reported not spending enough time supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices. When asked about assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students, again both groups of administrators reported not spending enough time. Thus, years of experience does not appear to be a factor in how administrators spend their time.

Respondents were also asked to indicate any other assigned duties above and beyond their school administrator role. Half reported having responsibilities beyond school administrator including central office functions, teaching, and coaching. Their responses concur with the research that outlines how leading schools effectively is accentuated in rural schools where sparsity of population and isolation create barriers. For example, budgets for rural schools are allocated according to their number of students, impacting their staffing needs, which results in principals wearing many more hats to fulfill their responsibility (Salazar, 2007). Based on respondents’ answers, many of them do wear many hats. Some respondents reported that they “do it all” at their schools. Open-ended question responses included administrators who reported they were teacher, principal, and superintendent of their school. Others reported they could barely keep up with the everyday duties of the day with no time to reflect on the effective
leadership skills and practices they know, let alone the planned implementation of these skills.

According to Hopkins (2000), many possible candidates view the task of the administratorship as undesirable and/or impossible to perform. A recent study showed that principals are seeking help for their increased responsibilities in issues of special education, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). In addition, the responsibility is multiplied for administrators in rural schools, which traditionally function with fewer resources, therefore increasing their responsibilities (Bard et al., 2005).

**Leadership Development**

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) stated that too often administrators begin the job underprepared to assume the fundamental responsibilities of their new role. They further noted that most administrators are concerned about issues of student learning in their jobs, indicating that 90% of administrators say they need more staff development in order to meet the expectations of their role. In addition, the responsibility is multiplied for administrators in rural schools, which traditionally function with fewer resources, therefore, increasing their responsibilities (Bard et al., 2005). Thus, administrator professional development will be effective to the degree it assists school leaders in further developing successful characteristics and practices as identified by the research.

California administrators reported attending well known universities to prepare them for their administrator position, yet 27% of the administrators reported they did not have knowledge and skills to lead their schools effectively when they first became a
school site leader. Furthermore, their responses indicated having learned from a variety of training and staff development opportunities once they were on the job.

When asked what ongoing staff development opportunities they found valuable, 98% of the participants reported that informal mentoring was the most valuable. Ninety-two percent reported workshops were of value, and 70% of the respondents felt their university based coursework was valuable to their current position. Based on the respondents’ answers to their staff development needs and the current research on the preparation of administrators, it is evident that many administrators indeed start the job with a lack of skills to perform their jobs.

When asked to rate their access to leadership development, respondents were equally split as to their access to professional opportunities. Approximately one-third of the respondents reported not having access to university-based courses, but 85% reported to having access to workshops. In addition, over half of the respondents indicated that they did not have access to any formal mentoring. The vast majority reported they learned the skills needed for school administration on the job. These results indicate that administrators learn on the job rather than having an identified training specific to develop the skills needed to lead effectively. Whitaker (2001) stated that a shortage of prepared administrators has resulted from the increased responsibilities that stem from current pressures such as teacher shortages, special education, school violence, reduced school funding, and high-stakes testing.

Given the complexity and focus on administrators and their leadership towards increased student achievement, it is surprising to find such a lack of focus on identified staff development opportunities for future and current administrators. This study showed
a discrepancy in knowledge and time spent on specific duties that impact student achievement. These results suggest time spent should be an area of focus in the development of future staff development opportunities for school administrators.

**Implications and Recommendations**

Given that administrators’ perceptions of their skills and knowledge about research based strategies for increasing student achievement, it is evident that they know about these strategies. The big question is why are administrators not taking the time to implement these strategies? Is it that administrators do not know how to implement the strategies? Administrators may need specific staff development opportunities that will allow them to implement and reflect rather than just knowing about them. The findings also reflect a lack of time spent on these specific strategies as outlined by the research. This was true for all administrators, regardless of their educational background and experience on the job. Administrators may need further assistance in managing and balancing their time to put more effort in implementing strategies that the research has pointed out to increase student achievement. Additionally, administrators reported to doing it all and wearing many hats. Does this imply that rural school administrators need more training on distributed leadership and empowering teachers? According to administrators answers, they spent most of their time completing reports, paperwork, and other state regulatory demands; however, they did not report spending time building leadership among others or working towards the development of teacher leaders.

A systematic, formal training program would be the most beneficial for administrators to not only gain knowledge and skill to become an effective instructional leader, but also to understand how to implement their knowledge and skills. A systematic
approach to training would include the identification of specific assessments and attention
to the determination of goals that need to be developed. In addition, the supports needed
to carry out the goals would have to be in place to ensure implementation. The support
systems need to include not only training but also evaluation of implementation and
results. Given that rural schools have limited resources, it would be important to include
lead teachers and prospective administrators in the training so that rural school educators
become the staff developers for their district, as well as to develop a pipeline for
administrative succession in rural districts. It is also important to note that most
administrators reported they learned best from both formal and informal mentoring, so
support should include coaches who visit the school periodically to work with the
administrator on implementation of specific skills and who provide ongoing collegial
discussions.

**Recommendations for Professional Development Design**

Following are specific recommendations for how to enhance leaders’ knowledge
and skills necessary to improve academic achievement in their respective schools.

- **Develop Leadership Program.** Staff development opportunities must address
  the skills identified by the research and national leadership standards. It needs
to be accessible either via online system or provided on-site. Attendance to the
training must be mandatory and supported, integrated into the culture of the
school. The leadership program must include the development of a plan for
improved student achievement and the responsibilities the school leader must
implement throughout the process.
• **Identify a mentor/coach when possible.** The mentor or coach needs to be a skilled administrator who provides opportunities for new administrators at the school to have open discussions about situations and/or implementation of newly learned skills.

• **Monitor and evaluate the Leadership Program.** The progress and ongoing implementation of newly learned skills needs to be monitored. This could be done by an experienced administrator, school board, or county office of education if available. The district and school must determine if there is adequate progress in the implementation of skills. This could be measured by the improvement of teachers’ teaching skills and student achievement. Assessments for teacher improvement could be monitored through some sort of instrument developed to monitor teacher instruction and benchmark and state assessments for students.

### Limitations

While beneficial information was gathered from this study, the findings have several limitations. The study only provided surveys to current administrators in rural school districts. Therefore, the study’s finding may not be generalizable to urban or suburban administrators. Further, the study is limited to administrators’ perceptions of their needs for professional development and their own assessment of their skills and knowledge. Thus, the results may not be a true reflection of administrators’ skills or knowledge. The study is delimited to rural administrators in the state of California, and results may not be specific to the needs of administrators in other locations. Finally, the study relied on responses made by rural school administrators without giving
explanations to questions or probing questions. Given that an interviewer was not present may result in unclear questions not being answered. There is no guarantee that the questions were answered in the order they were presented, and spontaneous reactions were not recorded. In addition, open-ended questions can be avoided, and answers may not have been provided.

Conclusions

The data provided opportunity for discussions around the specific skills and training with which administrators begin their administrative positions and how valuable they rated these experiences as practicing administrators. Furthermore, administrators rated themselves on their perceptions of their knowledge and skill related to specific research-based strategies to increase student achievement as identified by the research (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005). The researcher sought to display the results on these research-based strategies by further analyzing administrators’ responses based on their experience as an administrator and education level. The responses suggested many similarities in their lack of knowledge in specific research-based strategies, particularly in working with students with disabilities and ELs. The responses were similar regardless of their education level and years of experience as administrators. Additionally, administrators were asked to report the amount of time they spent in these specific activities. Again, their responses were similar regarding where they did not spend enough time implementing these specific research-based strategies. Many of the respondents also reported spending a great deal of time completing paperwork and other duties that were not specifically aligned to instructional leadership or school improvement. The open-ended questions allowed administrators to share how
they spent their time, and many reported to not having enough time to focus on educational practices because they have many other duties to which they must attend.

Administrators were also asked to rate their satisfaction on their staff development opportunities and the staff development they would like to engage in. The majority of the respondents rated workshops, university programs, and mentoring as the staff development opportunities that prepared them for their administrative position. Administrators also reported their preference of further staff development opportunities through formal and informal mentors, as well as workshops and district support programs.

**Significance of the Study**

The results of this study identified professional development needs of rural administrators in California relative to their daily tasks and skills needed to lead schools toward increased academic achievement, as well as on how administrators perceive their administrator preparation programs. School districts may utilize the findings to develop successful staff development programs for administrators that will support and mentor them in effective leadership. It is important to keep in mind that administrators’ training must be focused on preparing them to be the instructional leaders in light of NCLB and state mandates. Beginning in the 1970s, research around effective schools identified the critical role of the principal as an instructional leader. The 1970s marked the beginning of the Effective School Movement based principally on research conducted by Edmonds (1982). Further, Lezotte (1990) indicated that the school leader transitioned from manager to instructional leader.
In addition, it is important to keep in mind the specific needs of administrators in rural school districts and their limited opportunities to attend professional development trainings. Many rural schools have limited resources, which results in low academic results, poor leadership, and high turnover rates (Browne-Ferrigno & Allen, 2006). A recent study showed that principals are seeking help for their increased responsibilities in special education issues, increased student achievement on standardized tests, data driven decision-making, assessment using multiple criteria, and strategies for faculty and staff development (IEL, 2005). Often, rural schools do not have assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, or other district staff for support, thus forcing principals to be generalists who are responsible for doing it all (IEL, 2005). This research confirmed these previous studies.

This study suggests that administrators are knowledgeable in research-based skills necessary to improve student achievement; however, respondents generally reported spending the majority of their time completing paperwork and dealing with parent and student issues, as well as other mundane tasks that are not necessarily connected to increased student achievement.

In addition, further analysis of the data did not reflect that having a doctorate made a difference in how administrators spent their time. It is evident that school administrators’ jobs are unique; therefore, leaving further thought to specific training design for administrators in such schools.

**Future Research Recommendations**

It is evident that the role of school administrators has evolved from school manager to one of school instructional leader. As our country focuses on educational
reform that will increase student achievement, principals are faced with changes in leadership practice and their responsibilities to lead schools that meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Various researchers have identified specific skills to improve student achievement. This study revealed that administrators, while knowledgeable in those research-identified skills needed to increase student achievement, have not implemented strategies focused on student achievement. It is also evident that administrators find mentoring and workshops as the most meaningful staff development opportunities that provide them with the best useful staff development. It would be beneficial for continued research on implementing and assessing staff development opportunities that include workshops and mentoring focused on skills that increase student achievement.

Further research that determines administrators’ knowledge and experience versus the responsibilities they are expected to undertake based on additional duties due to working at a rural school compared to administrators at urban school districts would provide an understanding of why administrators spend their time on nonresearch-based activities rather than activities they know increase student achievement. It would be beneficial to know if leading a school in a rural area indeed impedes focus on student achievement.

Finally, this study suggests that further qualitative studies should be undertaken to gain more specific, contextual information about administrators in both rural and urban school districts to investigate the reasons administrators are not spending time in leadership activities known to be effective.
REFERENCES


doi:10.1177/0013161X02382007


doi:10.1108/09578230510625719


doi:10.1177/0013161X02382006


doi:10.1177/0192636508322824


APPENDIX A

California Administrator Survey

Section I. About You and Your School

1. How many years of assistant principal or other administrative experience do you have? (Enter 0 if none or less than one year)

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have? (Enter 0 if none or less than one year.)

3. What is your gender?
   ○ Male
   ○ Female

4. What is your age?
   ○ 20-29
   ○ 30-39
   ○ 40-49
   ○ 50-59
   ○ 60 or above

5. What is your primary ethnicity?
   ○ American Indian/Alaskan Native
   ○ Asian/Pacific Islander
   ○ Black, non-Hispanic
   ○ Hispanic
   ○ White, non-Hispanic
   ○ Other (please specify)

6. Please indicate the highest degree you hold.
   ○ Bachelors
   ○ Masters
   ○ Masters + 16
   ○ Masters + 32
   ○ Education Specialist
   ○ Doctorate
7. In addition to English, what languages do you speak fluently? (check all that apply)
   - None
   - Spanish
   - Tagalog
   - German
   - Chinese
   - French
   - Korean
   - Other (please specify if others)

8. Which best describes the grades served by your school?
   - Elementary
   - Middle
   - High
   - Elementary/Middle
   - Middle/High
   - Elementary/Middle/High
   - Charter School

9. What is the approximate enrollment at your current school?

10. What is the approximate enrollment in your district?

11. Over the past five years, what is your district's enrollment trend?
    - Declining
    - Stable
    - Growing

12. What is the average size of a class at your school? (NOT the student-teacher ratio)

13. How many teachers are at your current school?

14. Over the past five years, how many principals have served at your school?

15. In general, how difficult is it to attract and retain teachers at your school?
    - Not at all difficult
    - Somewhat difficult
    - Very difficult

16. In particular, how difficult is it to attract and retain teachers with specialized expertise (e.g. English Learners, students with disabilities) at your school?
    - Not at all difficult
    - Somewhat difficult
    - Very difficult
17. Does your school receive federal Title I funding, and if so, is it in NCLB program improvement?
   - No, the school does not receive Title I funding.
   - Yes, the school receives Title I funding, but it is NOT in program improvement.
   - Yes, the school receives Title I funding and is in NCLB program improvement.
   - Not sure.

18. If your school is in NCLB program improvement, what year of program improvement is it in?
   - Year 1/Parental notification and school choice
   - Year 2/Supplemental educational services
   - Year 3/Corrective action
   - Year 4/Planning for restructuring
   - Year 5 or greater/restructuring
   - Not sure
Section II. About Your Training

1. At what college or university did you receive your administrative training and endorsement? (If more than one, please list all)

2. Looking back, at the time you first became a school site leader, did you have knowledge and skills to effectively lead at your school?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

3. Looking back, at the time you first became a school site leader, how valuable did you find the following to help you learn to do your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not valuable</th>
<th>Somewhat valuable</th>
<th>Very valuable</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University-based courses or administrative endorsement program?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring (e.g., sponsored by the school district)?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual mentoring (e.g., you sought support or someone provided mentoring not sponsored by the district or other institution)?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job experience?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. For ongoing development and support, how valuable do you find the following to help you to be effective in your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not valuable</th>
<th>Somewhat valuable</th>
<th>Very valuable</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University-based courses or administrative endorsement program?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring (e.g., sponsored by the school district)?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual mentoring (e.g., you sought support or someone provided mentoring not sponsored by the district or other institution)?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job experience?</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Was there a district plan to support your development to become a principal?
   ○ No
   ○ Yes
   ○ Not Sure
6. Is there currently a district plan to support the development of new principals?
   ○ No
   ○ Yes
   ○ Not Sure

7. As a school leader, have you helped colleagues become principals, and what support development did they need/did you provide?

8. Looking back, what kind of training would have been most helpful to your becoming a principal?

9. Please use this space to describe any other information about the leadership training you have received?
Section III. About Your Knowledge, Skills, and Practices

1. Please indicate how knowledgeable and skilled you are at each of the following activities, then indicated whether the amount of time you spend on each activity is Not Enough, Too Much, or the Right Amount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How knowledgeable and skilled you are</th>
<th>Time spent: Not enough, too much, right amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Drop Down Menu will include the following four choices: Not at All, Somewhat Knowledgeable, Very Knowledgeable, Expert)

Assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students.
Supporting teachers to use standards-based lessons and curriculums.
Supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices.
Recognizing effective instructional practices.
Helping teachers to adopt effective instructional practices.
Implementing strategies for improving student achievement.
Balancing and managing the multiple, competing demands on my time.
Assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities.
Assisting teacher to promote achievement of English Learners.
Working with parents and teachers when there are especially Challenging student issues.
Guiding instructional decisions using student performance data.
Communicating about my school to the public.
Facilitating schoolwide improvement reforms.
Promoting a culture of high academic expectations.
Promoting a welcoming and safe school climate.
Creating and communicating a shared mission about my school.
Fostering partnerships with the community.
Empowering teachers to take ownership in school governance.
Evaluating teacher performance.
Managing the administrative details of running a school.
2. What knowledge and skills are particularly important for effective leadership at your school?

3. What is the one practice you do regularly that best supports effective instruction?

4. Please use this space to describe any other information about the leadership practices in which you engage.
Survey IV. More About Your Practices

1. Please indicate any of your other assigned duties.
   - Central administrative functions
   - Coach
   - Bus Driver
   - Before/after school program coordinator
   - Teacher
   - Other (please specify)

2. Please indicate the amount of time, in a typical week, you spend on the following activities. Then indicate whether that amount is Not Enough, Too Much, or the Right Amount.

   Time spent/week
   Time spent: Not enough, too much, right amount

   (Drop Down Menu will include the following four choices: Less than 2 hrs; 2-4 hrs; 4-8 hrs; 8-16 hrs.)

   Consultation with staff and teachers about instruction.
   Consultation with staff and teachers about instructional issues.
   Observing classrooms.
   Planning the professional development of staff.
   Facility Management.
   Parent Conferencing.
   Paperwork.
   Discipline of students.
   Positive reinforcement of students.
   Attendance at extracurricular activities, including athletics.
   Time spent on district business away from site.
Section V. About Your Leadership Development Needs

1. How satisfied are you with your access to leadership development opportunities?
   - Very Unsatisfied
   - Unsatisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Very Satisfied

2. I have adequate access to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Type</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University-based courses or administrative endorsement program?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops?</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring (e.g., sponsored by the school district)?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual mentoring (e.g., you sought support or someone provided mentoring not sponsored by the district or other institution)?</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>On the job experience?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How satisfied are you with the quality of your leadership development opportunities?
   - Very Unsatisfied
   - Unsatisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Very Satisfied

4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development opportunities I have attended or participated in with national experts in leadership development have been of high quality.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional development opportunities I have attended or participated in that were targeted to my needs as a school leader have been of high quality.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional development opportunities I have attended or participated in that addresses leadership theory and practice have been of high quality.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</table>
5. Please indicate the value to you of receiving leadership development training in the following ways (1 = Lowest value to 10 = Highest value):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By professional development workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By lecture attended in person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By professional conferences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online, or by web-based meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through a community of colleagues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By independent reading.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section VI. Other Thoughts

1. As a school leader, what are your greatest successes?

2. As a school leader, what are your most challenging issues?

3. What distracts you or takes you away from effective performance in your job?

4. Please use this space to write any other thoughts about your experiences and perspectives on school leadership in Nevada, including training and needs.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of these items. Your responses are greatly valued and will provide insightful information.
## APPENDIX B

### About Your Knowledge, Skills, and Practices Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ISSLLC</th>
<th>Balanced Leadership</th>
<th>Leithwood—How Leadership Influences Student Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote achievement for all students.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting teachers to use standards-based lessons and curriculums.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting teachers to develop and use formative assessment practices.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing effective instructional practices.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping teachers to adopt effective instructional practices.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing strategies for improving student achievement.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing and managing the multiple, competing demands on my time.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teachers to promote the achievement of students with disabilities.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting teacher to promote achievement of English Learners.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with parents and teachers when there are especially Challenging student issues.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding instructional decisions using student performance data.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating about my school to the public.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISSLLC</td>
<td>Balanced Leadership</td>
<td>Leithwood—How Leadership Influences Student Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating schoolwide improvement reforms</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a culture of high academic expectations.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting a welcoming and safe school climate.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and communicating a shared mission about my school.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering partnerships with the community.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering teachers to take ownership in school governance.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teacher performance.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the administrative details of running a school.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>