

AN ANALYSIS OF THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY  
FOR PRINCIPAL RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
A CASE STUDY

by

Jennifer Leigh Harper

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and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the

Degree of Doctor of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. John Taylor Date: April 23, 2009

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. John Pedicone Date: April 23, 2009

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Rose Ylimaki Date: April 23, 2009

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Director: Dr. John Taylor Date: April 23, 2009

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## ABSTRACT

Research on school principals has been narrowed to the factors leading to attrition or retention with little focus on the recruitment and development of school principals. The last decade has witnessed a growing shortage of individuals who want to step into the school principal position. The decreasing number of individuals applying for school principal positions has led some school districts to implement new methods to recruit and develop future school principals. One method being used by some large, urban school districts is the creation and implementation of leadership academies; however, few studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of this tool in aiding the recruitment and development of aspiring school principals.

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the effectiveness of a leadership academy implemented in an urban school district to increase the recruitment of school leaders. Participants were assessed on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the leadership academy, in one urban school district, to prepare them for the school principal role. A qualitative, embedded case study approach was used to describe these perceptions. The perceptions were analyzed using an interpretist paradigm. The study participants consisted of 12 individuals who were working as principals or assistant principals in the district after their participation in the leadership academy. The data was based on participants' responses from 25 semi-structured interview questions derived by the researcher, non-participant observations of leadership academy meetings, and document analysis of materials used in the leadership academy. These multiple sources of evidence supported data triangulation aimed at corroborating the same observable facts

and events about the leadership academy that is, producing or not producing desired results for recruiting and developing school leaders.

The data revealed four assertions that included 1) the leadership academy provides an avenue for the district to identify individuals interested in the principal position and get to know the leadership styles of each individual; 2) participants believe the leadership academy aided in their preparation for a principal position in the district; 3) the application and selection process enables the district to identify individuals interested in the school principal position; and 4) the leadership academy has been an indirect tool for recruitment. The findings showed that all study participants felt the leadership academy was a valuable experience and did aid them in their journey to becoming a school principal. Each participant experienced the leadership academy in a slightly different manner and each had suggestions for improving the leadership academy. The suggestion shared most often by participants was the need for more shadowing experiences or a paid internship experience lasting at least one semester. The findings from this study support the use of a leadership academy as a tool to develop aspiring school principals; however, further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of the leadership academy in recruiting future school leaders.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation presents an embedded case study of a leadership academy used as a tool for recruiting and training school leaders. The relationship of the academy design and leadership to selective educational leadership theories is also discussed. This embedded case study was designed to determine the effectiveness of a leadership academy as an intervention for large, urban schools experiencing difficulty recruiting and training school leaders. The intervention is a system of support for professional development with targeted resources used to train, place, and support promising future school leaders (Knapp, 2004). To conduct the study, a series of semi-structured interviews of academy participants in a Southwest school district were administered. Chapter 1 presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions. It concludes with the limitations of the study and definitions of leadership theories and professional development terms pertinent to the evaluation of leadership academies.

#### Statement of the Problem

Effective and consistent school leadership directly impacts student achievement and are critical components of successful schools (Democracy at Risk, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Ylimaki, 2007). Over the last several decades, high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders has been highly valued and supported as critical to teacher, student, and school success

(Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Yet, the link between professional development and recruitment of school leaders is unclear from a research base.

Since the 1980s researchers have noticed a constant shortage of individuals willing to fill the teacher role in classrooms. In the last 15 years, this trend has grown to include a shortage of qualified and willing school leader candidates to fill the many open positions. Schools have tried to be creative in dealing with this particular shortage by having principals oversee two schools or not hiring an assistant principal for a school; however, the problem continues to grow (Eckman, 2006; Roza, 2003). As the shortage of principals grows, policy makers and school administrators seek expedient professional development initiatives as instruments to recruit principals. These initiatives often lack conceptual clarity and empirically based insights (Knapp, 2004). One intervention being used by districts is leadership academies designed to recruit and train leaders from within the district. Without proper and continued financial support, principal academies have the potential to be solely an expedient professional development initiative rather than a longlasting one; however, one of the qualities each of the earlier described academies or programs possessed was a plan to create a lasting initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

A leadership academy is a professional development instrument used in some districts to recruit and train individuals from within the district to establish a pool of candidates to fill school principal roles as vacancies arise. These academies have a variety of formal names, but each is designed with a single purpose: to provide professional development to potential school principals.

### Statement of the Purpose

There is a dearth of research to indicate the effectiveness or value of academies for the professional development of principals in relationship to contemporary reform demands. In an effort to understand the structure and effectiveness of academies, this study examined one leadership academy. The purpose was to better understand how the academy served as an instrument and possible solution for the recruitment and professional development of the next generation of principals. The importance of consistency in a school program at both the elementary and secondary levels as well as the known impact school leaders have on student achievement reinforces the need for more support for school leaders (Democracy at Risk, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Ylimaki, 2007). Furthermore, understanding participants' perceptions of principal leadership academies could serve to address two challenges faced by districts: improved student achievement and a higher retention rate for school leaders.

Current education literature seems focused on ways the profession attracts and retains teachers as well as the impact of various leadership styles on the school environment with little literature researching interventions to better recruit, prepare, and retain school leaders. The research that has been conducted on methods to recruit, prepare, and retain school leaders focused primarily on the development of a program of professional development (Hart, Ponisciak, Spote, & Stevens, 2006; Houston A+ Challenge [Houston], 2008; Tracey & Weaver, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Wallace, 2008) rather than investigating the actual impact of the intervention being

described. To add to that literature base, the studies sought to gather knowledge about the perceived impact on participants of leadership academies as an instrument of professional development to aid in the recruitment and professional development of school leaders. This issue needs to be investigated in more indepth for understanding how to curtail the growing shortage of school leaders and increase school leadership stability in schools particularly at the level of principal.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a leadership academy as an instrument for the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, urban school district. This research was significant for the following reasons:

1. It described and analyzed one leadership academy as an instrument of professional development to aid in the recruitment and development of school principals.
2. It advanced knowledge important for urban school districts to utilize when creating and implementing leadership academies.
3. It provided information regarding the effectiveness of current practices in one urban leadership academy as an instrument to recruit and develop school principals.

## Research Questions

The following overarching research question and three sub-questions were examined in this study:

How does participation in a leadership academy, as a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district?

### *Sub-questions*

1. How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?
2. How does the application and selection process associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?
3. In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals’ positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

### Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions are made with regard to this of the study:

1. The study participants responded truthfully to all interview questions.
2. The study participants accurately communicated their perceptions of the impact of the leadership academy.
3. All study participants had a similar foundational knowledge base regarding the leadership academy and its purpose.
4. The study participants were honest and reflective in the individual interviews.
5. Depending on the role of the individual with the leadership academy, leader, participant, or mentor, the view of the effectiveness of the academy varied.
6. The results of this study will be useful to other districts wishing to implement a leadership academy.

### Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations of the study:

1. The study was limited by the difference of the academy design from one year to the next.
2. Document review and non-participant observation field notes reflected the design of the 2008-2009 leadership academy.
3. Memory of study participants over time may have blended together multiple professional developments.
4. This study was not generalizable because it provided a contextual understanding of one leadership academy.

5. The small sample size of this study may not have provided a complete picture of this leadership academy.

#### Definition of Key Terms

*Principal.* Principal was defined as the head or director of a school according to dictionary.com (2008), the unabridged version. No Child Left Behind (2002) defined principal as including an assistant principal. The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English (*Principal*, 2008) defined a principal (noun) as “the person with the highest authority or most important position in an organization, institution, or group.” One of the examples listed under this definition was the head of a college or school. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2008) did not list a specific definition for school principal; however, the definition used for individual membership was the implied definition of a school principal. This definition was “all individuals engaged in the practice or supervision” and this organization specifically narrowed the group of individuals to middle level and/or high school administration, as the focus of the organization. For the purposes of this dissertation, a combination of the mentioned definitions was used; therefore, principal was defined as the head or director of a school and assistant principals were also grouped within this definition.

*Professional development.* Professional development (2008) referred to the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, especially through continued education. One way that No Child Left Behind (2002) defined professional development was as something that provided “teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet

challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards.”

*Academy.* A school or college for special instruction or training in a subject was how dictionary.com (Academy, 2008) defined the term *academy*. For the purposes of this dissertation, the specific type of academy being referred to was one type of professional development tool used by school districts to enhance the skills of individuals who aspired to become school principals.

*Academy effectiveness.* Academy effectiveness referred to the measurement of the extent to which program objectives were achieved (Family Health International, 2008).

*Participants.* For this study, participants referred to teachers who participated in the leadership academy and current school principals serving as academy mentors.

*Educational leadership theory.* Educational leadership theory referred to selected theories from the literature describing “best practices” with regard to recruitment and professional development. It also referred to best practices for schools to lead individuals within the organization into school principal positions through support and professional development. For the purposes of this study, culture/change, motivational, and professional development theory were used.

*Attrition.* The Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2009) defined *attrition* as a “reduction in numbers usually as a result of resignation, retirement, or death.” For this dissertation, *attrition* referred to the to shortage of school principals due to resignation from the role or retirement.

*Retention.* Two definitions for retain were provided in the Merriam-Webster

online dictionary (2009). The first was “to keep in possession or use” and the second was “to keep in one's pay or service.” *Retention* was defined as the act of retaining. For the purpose of this dissertation, *retention* referred to the act of keeping school principals in the district and in a school principal position.

*Recruitment.* “The process of adding new individuals to a population or subpopulation” was how the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2009) defined *recruitment*.

### Organization of Study

The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and study limitations were included in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 begins with research regarding current practices in the development of leadership academies and concludes with the application of selected education leadership theories to leadership academies. The research design is addressed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 depicts and analyzes the data, and Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings, implications, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The first section of this chapter reviews literature and research on factors that influence school leadership attrition, recruitment, and policy. The second section applies selected educational leadership theories to principal academies. The next section of the chapter reviews current implementation practices of districts with leadership academies and the relationship of these academies to school leader recruitment, retention, and attrition (Anthes & Long, 2005; Harper, 2008; Hart et al., 2006; Houston, 2008; Tracy & Weaver, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2008). Section four reviews the literature on the culture/change leadership, motivational leadership, and professional development theories that provide a framework applicable to studying leadership academies. The last section applies relevant elements of theories and research on principals, professional development, and leadership as they pertain to leadership academies into a conceptual framework for this study.

#### Factors Influencing School Leader Attrition

In developing and implementing leadership academies as an intervention to school leader attrition, an investigation into factors that contributed to the attrition rate of school leaders was necessary. Three main categories of factors have contributed to the attrition of school administrators: increased risk, insufficient personal/professional gain, and personal needs (Hancock, Black, & Bird, 2006). In addition, burnout has also been a contributing factor to the attrition of school principals.

### *Increased Risk*

Increased risk refers to legislation, administrative duties, community pressures, and removal from the teaching staff. Poor working conditions such as an extended school year with less time off, increased paperwork, and pressure from standardized tests, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) requirements are a few of the pressures faced by present school leaders (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Shen, Cooley, & Ruhl-Smith, 1999). Many pieces of legislation, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) have altered the role of the school administrator. A few key areas within No Child Left Behind that have caused additional stress on administrators include high-stakes testing, school labeling, adequate yearly progress, and ensuring that teachers are highly qualified. Parent/community-related pressures to ensure that students receive an exemplary education, perform well on standardized tests, and make adequate yearly progress are also pressures placed on school administrators (Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001). Student-related problems such as discipline and staffing for children with special needs created another role for administrators to fill (Hancock et al., 2006). School principals today must be able to handle the pressure to perform as well as juggle political agendas in a “glass house.” With the constant collection of data through No Child Left Behind efforts, it appears that administrators and schools are constantly being watched to see if they perform which may cause some administrators anxiety and fear of failing. With so many items in the air at once, principals may feel overwhelmed and unsure of how to get everything accomplished leading to feelings of isolation and removal from the teaching staff could

lead to increased feelings of loneliness. Thus, principals are unsure of where to turn for support or how to ask for help.

### *Insufficient Personal and Professional Gain*

Insufficient personal/professional gain refers to salary, increased commitments, lack of autonomy, lack of job security, and bureaucracy. Compensation cannot compete with the pressures and duties of the administrative position, causing administrators to leave schools or keeping teachers from entering into administration (Hancock et al., 2006; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001). As the duties and pressures of the job increase, the salary has not increased enough to sufficiently entice individuals into the position. When a teacher moves into the role of administration, increased time commitments as well as less time off contribute to the factors causing administrators to leave the position (Hancock et al., 2006). Some administrators may feel unable to fulfill the personal goals set when moving into administration causing these individuals to feel a lack of autonomy because others drive the agenda.

### *Personal Needs*

Emotional aspects, personal safety, and family pressures create the final category, personal needs. With acts of school violence occurring at both the K-12 and higher education levels, many school administrators fear for their personal safety as well as the safety of those individuals on their school campus. The long hours and increased responsibilities discourage the pursuit of a principal position for some individuals. The current principal works 50-hour weeks plus an additional 8 hours on weekends or late evenings (Pierce, 2000). Emotional aspects such as boredom, stress, isolation, fear of

failure, or frustration (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 1995) may lead to burnout in school administrators.

### *Burnout*

Burnout can be defined as a state of mind resulting from prolonged exposure to intense emotional stress and involving three major components: physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion (Harden, 1999). The burnout cycle consists of five stages (Hamann & Gordon, 2000): honeymoon, fuel shortage, chronic symptoms, crisis stage, and hitting the wall. The cycle reflects the various stages professionals go through during their careers with each stage increasing in severity, and if intervention does not occur by Stage 4, the profession loses these individuals.

*Principal Burnout: Implications for Professional Development* (Whitaker, 1995) examined predictors of burnout in school principals and provided methods for decreasing the burnout rate through professional development. Maslach (as cited in Whitaker, 1995) defined burnout as, “feelings of low personal accomplishment, and strong feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization” (p. 287). Whitaker conducted a study of 280 school principals using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (1995) to determine the primary causes of burnout in one state. The inventory measured feelings of personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization and related these items to the level of burnout being experienced by the individual. From the total sample, 107 principals responded, and Whitaker found that only 19.6% of the sample scored high in emotional exhaustion, and 13.1% scored high in depersonalization. She also found that 77% experienced high personal accomplishment thus eliminating this as a factor

contributing to burnout for the majority of those surveyed. This quantitative study also found that principals in the 35-44 age group scored significantly higher in both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than those in other age groups.

From the 107 principals, 13 who scored high in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were selected for interviews to further understand the factors contributing to the two areas. Of those 13, 9 were actually interviewed, and the following themes were identified in their responses: increasing demands of the principalship, lack of role clarity, lack of recognition, and decreasing autonomy (Whitaker, 1995). Whitaker provided several recommendations for professional development to combat the themes discovered through the interviews.

First, districts must recognize the increased demands on the principal by providing mentors for first and second-year principals. Working with a mentor provides new principals with an opportunity to collaborate with peers and have assistance in solving difficult situations (Whitaker, 1995). More experienced principals also benefit from being a mentor because it provides them with the opportunity to collaborate with an individual who has a fresh perspective and allows the more experienced principal to share his/her professional knowledge. Training specifically designed for school principals should be established to aid new principals in understanding their role. Professional development should be designed to cultivate skills in technology, collaborative decision-making, political realities, and understanding stakeholders (Whitaker, 1995). Finally, enhanced opportunities for professional growth should be provided to enable principals to become more autonomous and designed with recognition of the challenges faced by

school principals since the inception of No Child Left Behind (2002). In addition to the traditional training sessions provided, principals need assistance in developing personal and professional development plans to meet their goals as well as those of the district or school. Some districts and states are handling this aspect of principal professional development through the creation of principal centers, which provide professional growth opportunities (Whitaker, 1995).

Developers of leadership academies should not only consider factors that contribute to school leader attrition but also those that contribute to the recruitment of school principals. Understanding factors contributing to attrition and strategies for recruitment are important when developing leadership academies because the academy should seek to alleviate some of the attrition factors and capitalize on some of the recruitment strategies.

#### Factors Influencing School Leader Recruitment

After reviewing the factors that contribute to the attrition of school principals, it is important to consider the recruitment process itself. The method by which a district recruits individuals for school leader positions has the potential to impact the ability of the district to retain or lose school principals.

*Principal Role Changes and Influence on Principal Recruitment and Selection*, written by Kathryn Whitaker (2003), discussed the retention and recruitment of administrators. This article analyzed the role of the principal in several countries and identified role responsibilities that impacted the recruitment and retention of principals. Whitaker found five predominant categories in which role changes occurred. “These

include site-based or collaborative decision making, increasing pressures related to high stakes testing and accountability, the increased role of management, altered relationships with community, and dilemmas related to school choice” (p. 37). The countries examined were the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Although this article acknowledged that other factors affected the recruitment of principals, Whitaker also noted that many of the causes were linked to the change in the role of the principal.

One way some schools cultivated future leaders was through the support and training of teacher leaders. Defining the school leader role, providing support through a network and stress-coping strategies, providing more leadership experiences through specific tasks, and protecting autonomy are just a few ways administrators can protect teacher leaders while cultivating them for future leadership roles (Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007). This structure also helps prevent teacher burnout of these teacher leaders who offer to take on many roles within the school.

As a solution to the recruitment dilemma, several studies reviewed how business and school leaders could cultivate leadership within the company (Briggs, Bush, & Middlewood, 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios, Theodorakis, & Gargalinos, 2003; Roepke, Agarwal, & Ferratt, 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003). The goal of each of these studies was to pinpoint primary areas of focus to help decrease the school or business leader attrition rate while improving recruitment strategies. According to Howley et al. (2005), a district should “identify and then groom a cadre of new leaders (p. 772)” as a recruitment and retention tool rather than waiting for individuals to seek out the role.

According to Welber (2003), major league baseball provided an excellent example of creating future leaders. Their process revolved around finding, developing, and promoting newcomers by creating relationships and nurturing skills the individuals already possessed. By creating these relationships with newcomers, team managers helped the players learn where they fit in the baseball culture. This same process has been used in businesses and should be explored further for the recruitment of school principals. The key to this process is to identify, support, and enable individuals to visualize themselves in the school principal role and as a necessary part of the school family.

A business strategy utilized in some North American companies is the development of succession plans, which enable a company to select and develop future company leaders. These succession plans are considered a “proven practice in the West, pipeline [succession] strategies have two essential components: selection and development” (Tan & Wellins, 2006, p. 22). By selecting potential leaders, a company is able to provide these individuals with training and experiences to cultivate effective leadership for future openings. This selection process also enables the company and individual to understand how the individual fits into the culture of the company. “Employees who fit the company’s culture and associate with its vision and goals are far more likely to stay, regardless of compensation” (Tan & Wellins, 2006, p. 22). This same thought process could be valuable for school districts.

In education, “succession planning is a systematic approach to leadership recruitment and development” (National College for School Leadership [NCSL], n.d., p. 5). This systematic approach encourages the identification of potential school principals

and provides these individuals with the opportunity to practice leadership skills at earlier stages in their career to get a taste of the reality of the school principal position.

Establishing a succession also enables senior staff members to serve as mentors to new or potential school leaders. A potential to widen the talent pool may include encouraging more minorities and women to pursue school principal roles and providing opportunities for on-the-job training. “Effective succession means having a plan and making plans to create positive and coordinated flows of leadership, across many years and numerous people” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005, p. 92). This type of planning creates the opportunity for schools to provide consistent leadership and increase the quantity of quality school principal candidates to fulfill the growing shortage.

Leadership academies are used not only as recruitment tools but also as a principal preparation program (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) developed by districts through a university partnership. To better understand these partnerships, it is necessary to review current beliefs about successful principal preparation programs and federal policies related to principal professional development.

### Policy

The recruitment strategies previously discussed inform policy and contribute to possible policy implementation strategies to increase the supply and quality of educational leaders, particularly principals (Knapp, 2004). It is the belief of some educational leaders and members of Congress that to increase the supply of “excellent” teachers or administrators federal policy must be passed. These policies have the ability to help or hinder the recruitment and development efforts of the nation’s schools.

In a report released by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy entitled *Leading, Learning, and Leadership Support* (Knapp, Copland, Plecki, & Portin, 2006), several suggestions for state and local activities that would offer support to the improvement of school leadership were provided. One of the suggestions was to develop activities that would promote “homegrown” leadership through the identification and nurturing of future school leaders. One suggested way of accomplishing this task was through learning-focused roles within the district through professional development opportunities.

In a report by The Forum for Education and Democracy, forum members created a road map for the legislature as the reauthorization debate continued (*Democracy at Risk*, 2008). Two of the key recommendations suggested by forum members are addressed by several of the proposed policies discussed in this section. One area each of the pieces of legislation discussed below have in common is a discussion about implementing better professional development for school principals, and several pieces specifically mention the use of academies as an instrument for the recruitment and development of school principals.

The No Child Left Behind (2002) legislation was designed to update federal policy as part of the standards based education reform movement. Title II is a section of the No Child Left Behind Act. The purpose of this section was to “increase academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality” (NCLB, 2002).

*NCLB: Title II Part A*

No Child Left Behind (2002) mentioned the need to improve the quality of teacher and principal preparation programs in an effort to improve student achievement as Part A of Title II; however, the design of these programs or a definition for programs was not included. The section only mentioned principals in name with all of the associated details focusing on teacher quality and the definition of a highly qualified teacher or paraprofessional.

Section 2101 focused on the availability of grants to state and local education agencies, state higher education institutions, and additional eligible entities to increase student achievement (NCLB, 2002). These agencies may focus on improving the number of highly qualified teachers, principals, and assistant principals in schools and maintaining a specified level of accountability on the ability of local education agencies to improve student achievement (NCLB, 2002). Section 2113.2 focused on the use of funds to implement programs that would provide support to teachers or principals including those new to the profession. This section is further divided to suggest programs that offered the intended support such as mentoring, team teaching, intensive professional development, a reduced class schedule, or training on the use of standards and assessments to improve student academic achievement on standardized tests. Section 2113.13 specifically mentioned the development and implementation of professional development programs with principals as the primary audience in an effort to improve student achievement. This section specifically identified “the development and support of school leadership academies to help exceptionally talented aspiring or current principals

and superintendents become outstanding managers and educational leaders” (NCLB, 2002).

### *Proposed Legislation*

The 110<sup>th</sup> session of the U.S. Congress has witnessed an increase in the number of proposed bills addressing the lack of definition provided by Title II of No Child Left Behind with regard to principal professional development. Each of these proposed bills is described below with a focus placed on the Teacher Excellence for All Children Act of 2007 because this bill has the most sponsors of all the proposed bills in both houses of Congress.

Investment in Quality School Leadership Act was designed to provide grants for professional development to practicing and prospective principals and superintendents with a focus on those serving high-poverty, low-performing schools or districts (Investment, 2007). The act was also written to provide grants to improve the capacity of practicing or prospective principals and superintendents to be effective leaders and implement standards-based reform successfully, to encourage the recruitment and retention of school leaders through professional development opportunities, and to recognize and support the importance of the role principals and superintendents have in student achievement (Investment, 2007). The Investment in Quality School Leadership Act (2007) stipulated that the U.S. Secretary of Education shall work with institutes of higher education as well as state and local education agencies to “conduct a study to evaluate and report to Congress regarding existing professional development programs that recruit, prepare, and train district- and school-level administrators to serve as

effective leaders and successfully implement standards-based reform.”

The purpose of the Instructional Leadership Act was to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize competitive grants to train school principals in instructional leadership skills and to promote the incorporation of standards of instructional leadership into state-level principal certification or licensure (Instructional, 2007). The bill also defined the term *highly qualified principal* and sought to develop the term with instructional leader being the emphasis. According to this policy, instructional leadership skills were defined as skills relating to instructional practices; development of a school vision; alignment of the school culture to student and adult learning; monitoring of the alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment; purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers to improve instruction; assessing integration of daily assessments into instruction; using data to improve instruction; provide sustained, focused, and research-based professional development; and involving all stakeholders in shared responsibility for student and school success (Instructional, 2007).

The Improving the Leadership and Effectiveness of Administrators for Districts Act, or the I LEAD Act was designed to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by establishing a program to award competitive school leader partnerships with grants (Improving, 2007). The I LEAD Act sought to improve school leadership through amending ESEA to develop school leaders committed to and successful in increasing student achievement as well as to ensure that underperforming schools were led by qualified school leaders (Improving, 2007). The proposed act also enabled the U.S. Secretary of Education to establish a national principal recruitment program designed to

aid high-need local education agencies in the recruitment and training of school principals.

The Teacher Excellence for All Children Act or TEACH Act of 2007 contained proposed amendments to ESEA, the Higher Education Act (HEA), and the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) for the sole purpose of improving the “recruitment, preparation, distribution, and retention of public elementary and secondary school teachers and principals” (“Teacher Excellence for All Children” [TEACH], 2007). The TEACH Act of 2007 had four primary areas of focus: to recruit outstanding new teachers, ensure children are taught by highly qualified teachers, reward teachers using 21<sup>st</sup> century techniques, and retain teachers and principals through incentives and recognition (TEACH, 2007). For the purposes of the TEACH Act (2007), high-need academic areas were defined as math, science, foreign languages, special education, and ELL teachers, and high-need locations were areas of high poverty (HR 2204, 2007).

#### Culture/Change Leadership in Schools

Establishing a strong, positive school culture that thrives in an environment riddled with change is a constant challenge for every school administrator. To help guide administrators through this sometimes-overwhelming task, several individuals (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Guskey, 1995; Knowles, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; McClelland, 1961; Senge, 1990) have derived theories to be used as a guide for school leaders. A handful of these theories, which could be applied to principal professional development and recruitment are described in the following

sections. The purpose of this section is to increase understanding of the types of leadership styles beneficial to implementing change to the culture of a school.

*Four Frames: Bolman and Deal*

Bolman and Deal (2003) created four frames for organization leaders to view possible problematic situations. The frames were symbolic, human resources, political, and structural. These frames were to be utilized as lenses through which to view various situations within an organization.

*Human resource frame.* The Bolman and Deal (2003) human resource lens viewed people as the heart of an organization and emphasized support and empowerment. The leader who utilized this frame empowered people through participation and gained the resources people needed to do a good job. This frame was especially powerful when there was a high or low level of morale among employees. The human resource frame operated on the assumption that people desired meaningful and satisfying work. When the basic needs of the individuals within an organization were met, the members were more effective workers.

The education profession relies strictly on the individual stakeholders involved in the system. The needs of each individual must be considered and fulfilled for the organization as a whole to be successful. If individual educators feel they are an integral and valued part of the organization, the desire for advancement is more likely. As the demands on educators continue to rise, so must the level of compensation provided by the organization. The human resource frame requires school leaders to investigate the best practices for aiding educators in dealing with the various levels of stress. With the high

level of accountability in education, each stakeholder must feel a part of the celebrations and setbacks along the way. By utilizing the human resources frame, school leaders are able to put the needs of the individuals of the organization first knowing the results will have a positive impact on the goals of the organization itself.

*Structural frame.* The structural frame, as designed by Bolman and Deal (2003), is appropriate when a leader is attempting to design and implement an intervention to a specified problem. To accomplish this task, the leader must first clarify organizational goals; manage the external environment; develop a clear structure appropriate to the tasks; clarify authority; and maintain the focus on the task, facts, and logic as opposed to personality or emotions. This approach is useful when there is little conflict or uncertainty but a high level of understanding of the goals and cause-effect relationships.

Finally, Michael Fullan (2001) developed a model with a focus solely on the change process. His framework was comprised of five dimensions to aid a leader in the change process.

*Leading Change: Michael Fullan*

Michael Fullan (2001) was the recognized authority on educational reform and had conducted many studies on the leaders of effective reforms in the education and business worlds. Fullan conveyed his thoughts on how to lead effectively in the chaotic environment created by constant innovation. He also believed cultivating leadership in others, thereby making the leader dispensable, was one of the most important legacies a true leader left behind. Fullan identified five key dimensions in his leadership framework on which he believed leaders focused to improve leadership effectively. His book fully

explored all aspects of these dimensions for effectively creating and leading change: moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge building, and coherence making. Each of these dimensions is surrounded by the enthusiasm-energy-hopefulness constellation that aids successful leaders.

According to Fullan (2001), moral purpose refers to “acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole” (p. 3). This dimension covered the full circle of change because it referred to both the end results and how those results were achieved. An effective leader will have followers if the end goal is clear, concise, and makes a positive difference in the lives of others. As society changes, successful companies change with it, but they do not compromise their core ideals in the process. An effective leader is able to guide this change process successfully by having a strong understanding of its inner workings.

“Leaders who combine a commitment to moral purpose with a healthy respect for the complexities of the change process not only will be more successful but also will unearth deeper moral purpose” (Fullan, 2001, p. 5). Effective leaders allow change to happen and understand it is not something that can be controlled. When implementing change, leaders must prepare for and appreciate the “implementation dip” that occurs during the process. This dip was described as “a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings” (Fullan, 2001, p. 40). The culture a leader has set up greatly affects the success of the change process. Every change has resisters, and effective leaders respect those individuals because they often see things in a different way, allowing new ideas to present

themselves. Building relationships within the organization is the single most important factor common to successful change initiatives (Fullan, 2001).

Organization members should feel they are important to an organization and that their opinions will be respected, thereby contributing to a larger purpose. A relationship among the people, initiatives, and purpose of the organization must exist for change to be successful. Leaders should resist focusing on short-term gains and focus on the gains that remain steady and allow for deeper reform. By building successful relationships within the organization, learning communities that allow for sharing of knowledge from one group to another are created (Fullan, 2001).

According to Fullan (2001), effective leaders were those who “commit themselves to constantly generating and increasing knowledge inside and outside of the organization” (p. 6). The focus of these leaders should be on the use of the information shared rather than the actual information itself. To encourage knowledge sharing, a leader must create an environment that allows members to feel safe and to explore unknown territories. Activating knowledge is enabling others to create knowledge and not controlling the creation of the knowledge. Fullan shared some of the ideas he had discovered in his research to cultivate knowledge building within a school district: intervisitation within a district, peer networks, support groups, learning communities, mentors, and using out-of-district consultants for ideas. Successful leaders accept the value of generating fragmentation to cause change and understand that persistent coherence is a negative thing.

Effective leaders develop coherence within change; however, the coherence is not persistent because the leaders recognize the most innovative ideas derive from the edge of chaos. A productive disturbance is likely to occur when guided by moral purpose and when the process channels new tensions while working on complex problems within the organization. Although the change process appears to be disorderly, there is hidden coherence making features embedded within the chaos (Fullan, 2001). In order to guide an organization to achieve a common goal, effective leaders are energetic, enthusiastic, and convey hope throughout the entire change process.

These types of leaders “‘cause’ greater moral purpose in themselves, bury themselves in change, naturally build relationships and knowledge, and seek coherence to consolidate moral purpose” (Fullan, 2001, p. 7). These leaders enable the members of their organization to believe difficult problems can be tackled productively. They convey a sense of optimism and an attitude of never giving up in the pursuit of highly valued goals. The enthusiasm and confidence these leaders of change possess infect those around them provided they incorporate all five of Fullan’s leadership dimensions in their everyday behavior.

The educational system of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is riddled with constant change and innovation to keep up with the growth of technology. Parents, students, and businesses are constantly challenging the traditional educational setting by changing the world schools are preparing students to enter. The two current trends are data-driven schools and an increase in the utilization of technology to teach the required curriculum. Data-

driven schools are being produced as a result of the No Child Left Behind (2002) legislation and the demands being placed on students to perform on standardized tests.

One group greatly affected by the change in demands are school principals. School principals are often forgotten in the change process in the sense that they are expected to lead the change and are not always provided effective mentors to guide them through the changes. Whitaker (2003) suggested this was one of the contributing factors to the shortage of qualified administrators.

Each of the models of change is invaluable to a school leader and which method to utilize is determined by characteristics of the leader and the situation itself.

### Motivational Leadership

Another important set of theories to consider when creating opportunities for professional development are those revolving around the motivation of individuals. In order to determine what interventions may work to reduce the recruitment and development issues for principals, one must consider the motivation of individuals in general. What issues impact a person's decision to do or not do something?

#### *Motivation-Hygiene Theory: Frederick Herzberg*

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg conducted a study that led to the Motivation-Hygiene Theory. He was one of the pioneers in the motivation field, and his theory is still widely used. The Hygiene-Motivation Theory explored which factors affected employee satisfaction and which factors led to higher employee motivation. He found the two were not directly related, but an employee could not be motivated if he/she were dissatisfied with his/her position. To further distinguish the two areas, Herzberg stated (as cited in

Chapman, 2001), "We can expand . . . by stating that the job satisfiers deal with the factors involved in doing the job, whereas the job dissatisfiers deal with the factors which define the job context."

Hygiene factors are those basic needs that must be fulfilled to keep employees from becoming dissatisfied in their position. These factors include working conditions, supervision, salary, status, security, policies, and interpersonal relations. Many of the factors, such as salary or job security, that influence teachers to move into the principal role or which prevent them from moving into the principal role fall into the list of hygiene factors provided by Herzberg (1959). Items such as salary, security, and working conditions are extremely important to individuals investigating the principal role.

Motivation factors include feelings of achievement, recognition of that achievement, responsibility, interest in the job, advancement, and growth (Chapman, 2001). The leadership academy as a recruitment and development tool focuses more on these motivation factors. Several programs ask current school leaders, principals or superintendents to identify teachers within the district they believe would make strong school leaders. This nomination process provides recognition to teachers for their achievements and works to advance these individuals in the profession. The academy itself is designed as a professional development tool, which allows professional growth for individual participants.

When combined, motivation and hygiene lead to four outcomes: satisfied and unmotivated, satisfied and motivated, unsatisfied and motivated, and unsatisfied and unmotivated (Herzberg, 1959). The ideal situation would be to have highly satisfied

employees who were motivated into higher job performance. Sustaining that level of satisfaction and motivation is not likely to occur; however, it is also not necessary for all activities. Some situations are designed in a manner that may encourage motivation as well as dissatisfaction. An example would be getting your boss paperwork when requested. One would be motivated to keep his/her boss happy however; the act of getting the paperwork would likely be unsatisfying.

Recent studies have found that more individuals obtain principal certification than those who end up entering school leader roles (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Howley et al., 2005), suggesting the interest in school leader roles is high but motivation to actually enter the position is low. This supports the idea that the majority of those in the education profession are highly motivated individuals with low job satisfaction as demands increase. Employers should strive to find methods that support this end goal, and the principal academy is one strategy school districts could use to the needs of aspiring principals.

David McClelland (1961) expanded upon Herzberg's (1959) motivation theories by focusing on three specific areas that apply in the work place. Although these theories have similarities, each one seems to get slightly more specific in nature to guide the leader in understanding motivation.

*Motivational Needs Theory: David McClelland*

David McClelland developed the motivational needs theory in 1961 by defining three categories of need that are found in varying degrees in all individuals: the need for achievement, the need for authority and power, and the need for affiliation. These needs

characterize the behavior of individuals with regard to their personal motivation as well as the ability to motivate others.

The need for achievement describes individuals who are motivated through accomplishing goals set forth and job advancement (McClelland, 1961). These individuals desire a reasonable amount of challenge and feel a sense of accomplishment when overcoming or meeting the challenge to fulfill their need for achievement. For individuals developing the principal academy, the design of the program should include a means for job advancement, the challenge of learning concepts which will enable these leaders to overcome the challenges of the schools in which they work, and the need to recognize individuals for their achievements during the process. Designing the selection process for the academy with succession plans in mind by allowing current school administration to recommend individuals for the academy is one way to fulfill the need for achievement.

The need for affiliation is fulfilled through opportunities to work with others and develop relationships through personal interactions (Miner, 2006). These individuals are often referred to as team players because they are driven by a desire to be well liked and motivated through the ability to work with others. This is another motivation need, which should be balanced by other characteristics when selecting individuals to participate in the leadership academy, because the desire to be well liked could make these individuals ineffective school leaders. However, the ability to work with others and build relationships are two characteristics necessary to be successful school leaders and are necessary qualities to look for when selecting academy participants. It is also important

for the developers of the academy to include opportunities for participants to collaborate and build relationships with each other to satisfy this need.

An individual's desire to be influential and effective and to make an impact refers to the need for authority and power (Miner, 2006). Individuals with authority and power as their primary motivation source seek to lead and share ideas, which are then utilized within the organization. The need for authority and power should be carefully reviewed to ensure individuals chosen for participation in the academy have the desire to lead and make an impact but not such an overwhelming desire for power that it trumps the ability to be an effective leader. This is a need that should be balanced with other traits to create an effective school leader who is able to collaborate and work with others. Academy developers should be sure to include opportunities for participants to lead various sessions to appeal to and satisfy the need of individuals motivated through authority and power.

After reviewing change and motivation theory, the final theories or models to explore are those related to professional development because academies are instruments of professional development.

#### Professional Development

The following models or theories could be used when developing professional development opportunities for principals. Each of these models and theories has unique aspects as well as similarities for leaders to consider when designing professional development opportunities.

*Adult Learning Theory: Malcolm Knowles*

Malcolm Knowles (1978) was best known for developing many of the concepts that described adult learning. He believed there was a difference in how children and adults approached learning. Knowles referred to adult learning as andragogy since how children learned was referred to as pedagogy.

Andragogy assumes that the point at which an individual achieves a self-concept of essential self-direction is the point at which he psychologically becomes adult. A very critical thing happens when this occurs: the individual develops a deep psychological need to be perceived by others as being self-directing. Thus, when he finds himself in a situation in which he is not allowed to be self-directing, he experiences a tension between that situation and his self-concept. His reaction is bound to be tainted with resentment and resistance (p. 56).

Knowles (1990) developed five assumptions to accompany andragogy: adult learning should be self-directed, life experiences should be used as a learning resources, adult learners are ready to learn, adult learners need to have an orientation to the learning, and adults have an internal motivation to learn.

Adults prefer learning that is self-directed to meet their needs. Adults need to know the purpose of the learning and why it is important to learn the material being presented (Adams, n.d.). Adults must see value in what is being presented to them and how it will benefit their life in some way. It is important for adults to have input into the planning and evaluation of the instruction they receive. Adults need to be allowed to be responsible for their own decisions and treated as capable of making those decisions. Adults usually know what they need to learn more about or what it would benefit them to learn more about, and they must be trusted to make these decisions (Adams, n.d.). Individuals conducting professional development for adult learners must recognize that

these learners come with a variety of life experiences that shape their experience with learning (Adams, n.d.). Most adults learn through experience, either their own or that of others, and it is important to include this aspect when developing instruction geared toward adult learners. Adult learners are usually ready and willing to learn things they feel are necessary to cope with life. It is preferable to focus on learning that could be applied immediately to an aspect of their life than to learn about something in general. Adult learners are motivated to learn based on the impact they perceive the learning will have on their ability to complete tasks in their life. When determining what learning is needed, adults are oriented to learn in an effort to solve a specific problem (Adams, n.d.). The learning needs to be centered more around finding a solution to a specific problem than the content-oriented learning provided to students.

Successful adult learning programs tend to create environments where individual needs and uniqueness are recognized and life achievements are acknowledged and respected (Adams, n.d.). It is a combination of these items that creates a safe and supportive environment for adults. It is also important to treat these individuals as peers, foster intellectual freedom, and encourage experimentation. Adults crave intellectual challenges based on their current abilities to keep them actively engaged in the learning process.

Moving away from individual learning and returning to the structure of an organization, Peter Senge (1990) developed a model containing five disciplines possessed by organizations designed with organizational learning as a primary focus.

### *5 Disciplines of Learning Organizations: Peter Senge*

Peter Senge (1990) described five basic disciplines that true learning organizations possessed in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*. The five disciplines were categorized as systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning.

Systems thinking has been referred to as the cornerstone of the five disciplines because it is the component that fuses the other four together (Smith, 2001b). It is the process of viewing the “whole picture” as opposed to seeing only the various parts, which often occurs. An organization typically looks for parts that may be quickly altered to improve performance but in the long term are not sustainable, thus costing the organization in time and money (Smith, 2001a). An organization that follows systems thinking is able to step back and view the big picture which enables changes that will be sustainable and improve in the long term to take place. It is this type of thinking that has led to the creation of principal academies in many districts. Districts, states, and other organizations are looking ahead at the future of education and realizing the need to change the way principals are recruited and trained.

Personal mastery is an individual discipline, which requires an individual to have a vision and continually seek out learning to work toward this vision (Smith, 2001a). The vision is never completely attained, because there is always something new for the individual to learn. Personal mastery is a process individuals go through in their quest for knowledge. “Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning

does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs” (Senge, 1990, p. 139).

Mental models are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (Senge, 1990, p. 8). This refers to self-reflection by the individual to determine beliefs and values before reviewing how actions reflect these beliefs and values. It requires individuals to step back and review the situation from a different angle before determining if there was another way to handle it.

Building shared vision should be the driving force of any organization because it provides a road map for individuals to the future of the organization. It is this shared vision that enables individuals within the company to know what direction the company is working toward and create solutions to challenges that arise along the way.

When there is a genuine vision (as opposed to the all-to-familiar “vision statement”), people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to. But many leaders have personal visions that never get translated into shared visions that galvanize an organization. What has been lacking is a discipline for translating vision into shared vision not a “cookbook” but a set of principles and guiding practices. (Senge, 1990, p. 9)

This quest for knowledge and continually working toward an end vision are selection characteristic several districts mentioned in the criteria for being accepted into a principal academy. These districts are looking for individuals who share that vision to participate in the training program designed to help achieve that vision.

The U.S. Department of Education (2004) discovered another shared component of model leadership academies was the clear guiding vision each had for the academy as well as how that fit into the bigger picture vision for schools. The academy is a tool to

recruit and develop strong school leaders along the path toward the ultimate vision of student achievement.

Team learning is a necessary component of organizations if the shared vision is to be achieved. Such learning is viewed as “the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire” (Senge, 1990, p. 236). To sustain the team learning, individuals must continually get together to discuss and reflect on current practices (Smith, 2001b).

This time working together enabled individuals to step back and view the situation from a different lens allowed more rapid learning as individuals discussed what was working and what was not. The majority of the principal academies were designed using a cohort model, which enabled the group to go through the same learning process together, develop relationships, and enter the work force together.

Finally, Thomas Guskey (1995) focused solely on what schools could do as an organization to facilitate professional learning that prepares individuals for the demands of a position within the education field.

*Professional Development Optimal Mix: Thomas Guskey*

Thomas Guskey (1995) believed that schools should focus less on the shortcomings of preparation programs and more on determining how to better prepare individuals through district trainings. These guidelines were not a guarantee of success but useful tools when developing new professional development programs. Although Guskey focused primarily on teacher professional development, the list of components

for successful professional development can be applied to leadership academies as a type of professional development.

First, the individuals designing the professional development should consciously recognize that change is both an individual and organizational process (Guskey, 1995). The curriculum of professional development must meet the needs of individuals participating in the program, yet the professional development opportunities and curriculum must also be related to the goals and processes of the organization. “The key [to success] is to find the optimal mix of individual *and* organizational processes that will contribute to success [of professional development] in a particular context” (p. 119).

When designing the curriculum for leadership academies, designers must account for the needs of individuals participating in the academy. These needs must be met for participants to view the academy as a successful tool for professional development and to buy into the changes taught through the academy curriculum. The curriculum must relate to the goals and processes of the organization. A successful principal academy is driven by a vision that enhances the vision and mission of the entire organization.

The second procedural guideline for individuals organizing professional development is to “think big but start small” (Guskey, 1995, p. 119) when developing the guidelines and outcomes of the curriculum. A gradual implementation timeline should be created when implementing a large change effort. The greatest success when implementing change is likely to occur when the change is not so large participants must seek a coping strategy thus distorting the change but large enough to require noticeable,

sustained effort to implement (Guskey, 1995). Each professional development design should include both long-term and short-term goals based on a shared vision.

To successfully implement change through professional development, individuals should work in teams to prevent feelings of isolation and maintain support for the implementation of the change (Guskey, 1995). Follow-up feedback should also be included in the curriculum to allow individuals to share thoughts and concerns about the program implementation. All stakeholders affected by the professional development topic should be consulted during the development and implementation phases. Overworking individuals during the development phase could also lead to burnout prior to the implementation phase; therefore a balance must exist.

Teamwork involving all stakeholders is another important component of optimal mix professional development. This suggests that during the development of a principal academy, districts should include a representative from all stakeholder groups to share the knowledge and skills they believe a successful school leader should possess.

After a new program has been implemented, it is imperative that feedback from participants on the perceived impact of the program be collected. Procedures to collect and evaluate feedback should be included in the development of the program. To sustain the changes implemented with the creation of the professional development, participants must be aware of the positive results from the implementation of the change (Guskey, 1995).

For leadership academies, the feedback component implies the need to track participants after completing the academy to determine how many had obtained a leadership position, how prepared the individuals felt for the position, and the retention rate of academy participants in leadership positions.

To successfully implement a change, individuals not only need training but also continued follow up, support, and pressure to actually implement the change, especially in the early stages (Guskey, 1995). Continued support and follow-up are often missing from professional development designed to implement change, thus creating the idea that professional development is an event rather than a process. A certain amount of pressure to actually implement the changes is also necessary to encourage individuals to make the transition. This applies to principal academies because the design of the academy is to identify potential school leaders, provide them with training, and then help place these individuals into leadership positions. This is a different model of succession for education than is typically utilized and one that will likely take some encouragement by school leaders to implement. Once individuals who participated in the academy are placed into leadership positions, continued support is required to retain these individuals. This continued support could come from mentors, group meetings, or both during the course of the first few years on the job.

To create successful professional development, new programs should be integrated into old and future programs to show individuals how the puzzle pieces fit together (Guskey, 1995) to achieve a previously disclosed vision. The goals for the

implementation of the programs, both short-term and long-term, as well as the intended results of the program should be disclosed to individuals participating in the professional development from the beginning of the process. The actual program results should be discussed with participants during the process to allow these individuals to share in the results of their implementation efforts.

Developers of leadership academies must help program stakeholders understand how the academy will work with current district programs, improve current practice, and relate to the goals and vision of the district. Effective communication enables academy designers to provide continued follow-up, support, and pressure to implement changes from the academy during and after participation.

#### Current Practices

A university often conducts programs that prepare school leaders; however, over the last eight years, district principal preparation programs have increased in popularity. In 2004, the United States Department of Education through the Office of Innovation and Improvement conducted a study entitled *Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership*. This study selected six programs believed to be excellent, innovative examples of new ways to recruit and prepare school leaders. Using a set of standards, the initial list of 60 programs was narrowed to the 6 reviewed for the U.S. Department of Education (2004) study. These six programs were designed as a “strategic response to one underlying crisis: the pervasive need to identify, recruit, prepare, and place high-quality principals in our nation’s schools” (U.S. Department of Education,

2004, p. 29). Each of these programs had an initial base of support, a commitment of three to five years for program development, research-based vision, focused design based on vision, a candidate selection process based on vision, a participant cohort groupings, an authentic learning experience, frequent opportunities to participate in a variety of ways, and structured program monitoring.

Some of these programs chose to work in collaboration with a university program; however, each of these programs had a “homegrown” approach to selecting school leaders. According to Betty Hale (as cited in Anthes & Long, 2005), this homegrown approach not only sent positive signals about employee worth but also enabled a district to retain employees by promoting from within. These programs were similar to recruitment and training strategies utilized in the business environment for decades.

Each of the programs described in the follow section, were implemented in large, urban school districts throughout the United States. To provide a better understanding of the context surrounding these programs, it is important to understand some of the common characteristics associated with these schools.

#### *Common Characteristics*

According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (Garofano, Sable, & Hoffman, 2008), the largest school districts in the United States had an average regular school size of over 1,000 students and a higher median pupil/teacher ratio than an average size school. Each of these large schools had a staff of whom 50% or more was comprised of teachers, and 99 out of 100 of these schools had Title I eligible schools or

programs in the 2005-06 school year. The 100 largest school districts in the U.S. served 37% of the public school student population who considered themselves to be of the other than White, non-Hispanic ethnic population. These schools also contained 51% of the free and reduced price lunch student population, and 13% were receiving special education services through individualized education programs. Thirteen percent of the student population within the 100 largest U.S. schools was considered migrant or English language learners (Garofano et al., 2008).

#### *Evaluation Studies*

The few studies described in this section were conducted to evaluate a leadership academy as a tool for school principal recruitment and as a possible solution for the principal shortage facing today's schools.

*Aspiring leaders academy: Ohio.* Tracy and Weaver (2000) conducted a study of an aspiring leader's academy and the effectiveness of this academy as a tool to address the growing principal shortage. This academy lasted for one year and was designed around four core components: a rigorous selection process, multiple learning events, ongoing mentoring, and collaborative study among participants. At the end of the one-year course, comprised of a varied curriculum and five goals, participants decided whether they wanted to enroll in a masters program at the local university or become teacher-leaders at their school. A current administrator or principal in the district sponsored each participant.

During the first year of implementation, 20 teacher participants worked to develop a leadership portfolio, shadow a school leader, and work with a mentor. The evaluation of the program consisted of two phases in which pre-and post-participation feedback were collected (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). Participants, mentors, and sponsors completed a pre-program survey, which consisted of nine items using a Likert scale to measure and seven open-ended questions. The post-program survey consisted of eight of the original nine items and seven open-ended questions. The researchers discovered that the averages for the majority of the Likert scale questions increased in value from the pre-to the post-survey (Tracy & Weaver, 2000). The survey findings also indicated that the majority of participants intended to pursue leadership positions and enroll in a university program to obtain certification.

Of the 20 mentor principals surveyed, 11 indicated a positive experience associated with their academy involvement. Nine of 18 sponsors of the Aspiring Leaders Academy responded to the survey, which was intended to gather information about the perceptions of the effectiveness of the academy in meeting the goals set forth. Overall, the academy was a positive experience for the majority of those involved, and based on the conducted research, it was decided the academy would continue to be a tool used to recruit future school leaders (Tracy & Weaver, 2000).

What was not clear in the descriptions of the surveys and results was whether the pre-and post-surveys were compared individually before being compared as a group. Were the evaluators able to determine if Person A had different responses to the pre-and

post-surveys that were consistent with the overall results? In addition, the survey results were not quantified in any manner to determine if there was any significance in the results. The results were solely determined using the average of the Likert scale ratings provided by participants. No assertions were declared or supported from the open-ended portion of the survey to clarify results. A strength of this study was the intent to evaluate participant perceptions at the beginning and end of the program as well as to gather feedback from the mentors and participant sponsors for the program. However, this strength was overshadowed by the lack of data to support any clear, significant findings from the data collected (Tracy & Weaver, 2000).

*LAUNCH program: Chicago, Illinois.* The Leadership Academy and Urban Network or LAUNCH, which was designed and implemented in Chicago schools in 1998 (Hart et al., 2006). The program was designed to recruit, identify, prepare, and support individuals who aspire to become principals in Chicago public schools. LAUNCH candidates were nominated by current school principals and administrators before participating in a screening process to select the candidates with the most leadership potential. To be nominated, candidates have demonstrated leadership potential, a master's degree in education, at least six years of teaching experience, Illinois Type 75 administrative certificates in supervision and administration, as well as some prior leadership experience (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This program did not certify candidates but sought to better prepare candidates who were already certified. The program lasted for 12 months and included a 4-week summer institute as well as 10-day

workshops, 2 retreats, and 5 case study days during the year. Participation in the program was designed as a 12-month paid internship in a Chicago public school and included a four-year commitment to Chicago public schools after participation (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In an evaluation report entitled, *Principal and Teacher Leadership in Chicago Continuing Analysis of Three Initiatives* (Hart et al., 2006), 62 LAUNCH participants serving as school principals were surveyed to determine future plans, teacher recruitment efforts, professional development, roadblocks, and background information for each participant. Of these 62 principals, 47 completed and returned the survey. This study found the majority of elementary principals who participated in LAUNCH planned to remain at their current school for another seven years, reported the greatest satisfaction with their preparation program as compared to the local university programs, and expressed greater confidence in their ability to perform specific tasks. What this study did not determine was the significance of the results from survey responses. Lacking was the total number of LAUNCH participants since the inception of the program and what percentage of that number created the sample size. Another key piece of missing information was a description of how the sample of 62 participants was selected for the study. The study was written to compare the LAUNCH program with the New Leaders for New Schools program rather than an evaluation of LAUNCH itself (Hart et al. 2006). Because this evaluation was based solely on quantitative information to compare the two programs, LAUNCH participants did not have the opportunity to provide insight into the

interactions among the key stakeholders involved in the LAUNCH program. In addition participants were not able to provide insight into their perceptions of the effect participating in the LAUNCH program had on their ability to fulfill the role of school principal. This study did provide some insight into the program, yet there was little depth of understanding because there was no qualitative portion.

There is a shortage of evaluative studies about principal academies as instruments of professional development, but other studies described the programs currently implemented in the United States.

#### *Descriptive Studies*

The following studies sought to describe the design of current principal academies to enable other districts to design their own program or academy. Each of the studies sought only to provide a description of the program, selection of participants, and the purpose of the program. Lacking in each of these studies were a description of the culture needed to implement a leadership academy, the type of individuals or leadership skills needed to implement a leadership academy, and a description of the actual design of the individual sessions. These descriptive studies seemed to ignore the impact of the district culture or leadership styles that helped the implementation of a successful leadership academy. In addition, none of these studies provided any sort of evaluation of the leadership academies described to determine if these programs were successful in attaining the goals set forth. Without any information about program effectiveness, these studies provided only a description of ideas that some districts had when implementing a

leadership academy and the opinion of those describing the program implementation as successful.

*First Ring Leadership Academy: Cleveland, Ohio.* In 1997, many of the challenges faced by the inner-city schools in Cleveland had begun to shift to the suburbs directly outside of the city. In an effort to address these challenges, the superintendents of these school districts were encouraged to form a consortium, which became known as the First Ring Consortium in 2000 (Anthes & Long, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The main priority of this consortium was to discuss ways to support the children in their schools and combat some of the challenges the schools faced. The group decided the most effective approach would be to develop and retain highly skilled school leaders. This led to a partnership with Cleveland State University and the creation of the First Ring Leadership Academy that was established in 2003 (Anthes & Long, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The academy was designed to combat five major challenges to learning: student mobility and school achievement, poverty, diversity and the achievement gap, increased accountability, and principal shortage (Anthes & Long, 2005). In an effort to support schools in overcoming these challenges, the academy mission was to “recruit, train, and retain school leaders capable of meeting challenges unique to First Ring school districts to increase the region’s capacity for educational leadership and school reform” (Anthes & Long, 2005, p. 3). Candidates for the program were nominated by the district superintendents, and potential participants did not currently hold principal licenses. Unlike the LAUNCH program (Hart et al., 2006), the

First Ring Leadership Academy certified individuals as administrators. These candidates were teacher leaders or assistant principals who had expressed a desire to become a school leader. After the superintendents nominated candidates, a formal application required candidates to express their personal action theory in relation to school leadership. If selected by the acceptance committee, these individuals were provided with release time, financial support, and administrative support to complete the eleven training modules during a 15-month period. Each cohort consists of 26 individuals, 2 or 3 from each First Ring district. Preliminary findings from an in-progress long-term study of the First Ring Leadership Academy suggested that “principals coming out of this program feel less isolated and more prepared for their job” (p. 5). The unique partnerships between these school districts as well as the university enabled the costs of the program to be distributed throughout each district, and collaboration throughout area school districts contribute to the success of the program.

*New York City Leadership Academy.* In 2002, New York City elected a new mayor, Michael Bloomberg, who pledged to improve the city public schools (Wallace Foundation, 2008). Key to his pledge was an effort to “attract and train a new generation of leaders prepared to lead lasting change in hundreds of the city’s schools (p. 1)”. Thus the New York City Leadership Academy was established in 2003 (Wallace Foundation, 2008). The Wallace Foundation, New York City area businesses, and the Broad Foundation sponsored this academy. The goal of this academy was to prepare school leaders to transform schools, initiate change, and recruit others to sustain changes. The

program consisted of a theory-based summer session, two internships at two different schools in the city, and a final summer of preparation over a 15-month period before graduates were assigned to schools in need throughout the city, not just in the district where they were employed prior to participation (Wallace Foundation, 2008). Although a formal study has not yet been released at this time, preliminary evidence showed renewed direction and energy in schools led by academy graduates.

According to the website for the New York City Leadership Academy (<http://www.nyleadershipacademy.org>), to be eligible for the program participants must have had a minimum 3.0 GPA in undergraduate or graduate degrees and a minimum of five years work experience with at least three years in teaching. Applicants were not required to have administrator certification, but if the applicant was not certified prior to participation in the program, he or she would be by the end of the program through a partnership with Baruch College. During the program, the salaries of the participants was paid for by the New York Department of Education, and participants agreed to work in New York City schools for a minimum of five years after program completion.

Each of the programs described above shared several common elements. First, each program recruited future leaders from within the district by identifying those with the greatest potential and training these individuals to handle situations specific to the district. Second, each of these programs existed in large urban or rural areas considered difficult to staff. Finally, each program had the full support of the district and community

to build successful school leaders for the district. The programs invested in creating the human capital necessary to run schools and do what was best for children in the district.

*Regional Principal Leadership Academy: Houston, Texas.*

Unfortunately, an estimated 160 principal vacancies need to be filled annually across the Houston region, and more than one-fourth of all principal positions turn over each year in some districts—often at the most challenging urban middle and high schools (Houston, 2008).

In an effort to combat this challenge and provide the best education possible for Houston children, the Regional Principal Leadership Academy was developed. This academy was designed to help districts recruit, retain, and develop a succession model for school leadership (Houston, 2008). After a competitive selection process, 30 candidates were chosen to participate in the six-week summer institute followed by a residency in a Houston-area public school for one year with a full salary paid by the host district. To apply, candidates must have had at least two years of teaching experience, the ability to work in the United States, and a track record of “success with students and adults, a passion for social justice” (Houston A+ website), and the conviction to turn around low-performing schools in the Houston area. According to the Houston A+ Challenge website, successful candidates possessed the following qualities: effective communicator, reflective, knowledgeable, a leader, and passionate. This new program, implemented in June 2008, and geared toward current school principals, was meant to complement the current program offered in Houston Independent School District.

*New Leaders for New Schools: USA.* New Leaders for New Schools was a nonprofit program established to aid schools nationally in creating programs to help with

the recruitment and development of leaders in urban schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This program was unique in that it was not affiliated with one particular area, district, or school as with other programs. This program was operating in Baltimore, San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Memphis, Milwaukee, New Orleans, New York City, and Washington, DC. Applicants to this program must have met the requirements for the New Leaders program as well as specific city requirements for the area in which they were applying. The New Leaders program had four research-based areas divided into nine selection criteria used to screen and select candidates. These nine criteria are described in detail on the New Leaders website (<http://www.nlms.org>), to enable candidates to evaluate their preparedness for the program. This program included five years of support after an applicant was selected to participate. It began with a six-week summer program followed by a one-year residency program with a mentor, participation in four 5-day seminars, completion of three years of residency projects, and two years of support upon taking a principal position. The residency was a paid position and participants committed to a minimum of three years of work in the district upon completion of the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

*Leadership Academy: Southwest.* The researcher conducted a pilot study that examined the Leadership Academy in a Southwest urban school district (Harper, 2008). The researcher collected information about the effectiveness of the Leadership Academy as described by the individuals guiding its implementation.

The setting chosen for the pilot study was a large, urban school district in the Southwest. This school district had similar demographics to the academies reviewed by

the U.S. Department of Education in 2004. The four members of the Leadership Academy leadership team participated in semi-structured interviews focused on determining the impact of participation in the Leadership Academy on retention, preparation, and recruitment of school leaders. These interviews were then transcribed and reviewed to identify common themes. The analysis of the data and discussion of key findings in the areas of retention, preparation, and recruitment provided insight about the expected outcomes of participation in the Academy from the leadership team implementing the academy curriculum. The pilot study addressed, to a certain degree, all of the research questions in the study.

This pilot study informed the larger study described in Chapter 3 by providing the framework for the design of the Academy and the expected outcomes of the academy leadership team. The leadership team expected academy participants to become more adept in the principal role due to the experiences provided within the academy. The leadership team also expected leadership academy participants to be more prepared to take on the principal role in the district and that this preparation impacted the retention of individuals within the district. The results of this pilot study (Harper, 2008) were compared with the results from the study of Academy participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the Academy (academy effectiveness referred to the measurement of the extent to which program objectives were achieved). The results from the pilot study were compared to the results of the dissertation study to determine if the expected outcomes of the leadership team were the same as the perceived outcomes of Academy participants.

How well the expected outcomes of the leadership team matched the perceived outcomes of the participants determined the effectiveness of the Leadership Academy.

### Research Implications

As the need for qualified and effective school leaders continues to grow, interventions to recruit and develop school leaders need to be put in place. School leader recruitment and development have become areas of concern for educational leaders over the last decade and the concern continues to grow as few individuals choose to enter the role of school principal. One of the suggested interventions to recruit and develop effective school principals was to implement a Leadership Academy as a professional development tool.

Few studies (Anthes & Long, 2005; Harper, 2008; Hart et al., 2006; Houston, 2008; Tracy & Weaver, 2000; US Department of Education, 2004; Wallace, 2008) regarding the components of a leadership academy have been conducted; and the focus has remained on design of the program rather than studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. Of the eight studies reviewed in this dissertation, only two were evaluative in nature (Hart et al., 2006; Tracy & Weaver, 2000), and the other six were descriptive. Each of the descriptive and evaluative studies described in the preceding sections informed the leadership academy study conducted for this dissertation by providing clear examples of missing pieces within the current literature base. These studies demonstrated the need for an evaluative study on a leadership academy to be conducted to determine if a leadership academy was meeting the goals set forth in the design of the program. For this dissertation, a qualitative study sought to understand the perceived impact one

leadership academy had on the participants and their ability to fulfill the duties of a school principal.

Several proposed policies (Improving, 2007; Instructional, 2007; Investment, 2007; TEACH, 2007) in Congress have been designed to create principal academies designed to train, recruit, and retain principals. Each of these policies also contained an evaluative component, because evaluations have not been routinely conducted to determine the actual effectiveness of academies or similar programs.

From this brief overview of several studies conducted on leadership academies as instruments of professional development, the need for further research to evaluate the effectiveness of the program becomes increasingly evident. In an effort to add to this literature base, the researcher conducted an evaluative case study on the effectiveness of a leadership academy in one urban school district to determine whether the leadership academy is a viable option to increase the recruitment and development of school leaders.

### Conceptual Framework

Research has indicated that as a result of the increase in duties of K-12 school administrators, especially in large, urban school districts (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Whitaker, 2001), there has been a growing shortage of qualified individuals to fill administrative positions. To combat this growing issue, some districts implemented professional development practices which enabled them to “grow their own” school administrators and prepare these individuals for the duties of the position, a practice utilized in the business world often referred to as a succession plan (Anthes &

Long, 2005; Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003). A number of school districts and education organizations created a professional development tool referred to as an academy or leadership academy (Anthes & Long, 2005; Hart et al., 2006; Houston, 2008; Tracy & Weaver, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Wallace, 2008).

The leadership academy as a principal professional development instrument should consider the factors that lead to the recruitment and attrition of school principals in the design of the academy. The key attrition factors that should be considered are ways to combat the increased risk, insufficient personal or professional gain, and the personal needs of the individuals in the principal position (Hancock et al., 2006). The leadership academy should be designed to address the factors leading to the attrition of school leaders and provide support to overcome these obstacles. In addition, a system should be created to promote personal or professional gain, altruism, professional challenge, and the ability to influence the school community must be created to help retain school leaders (Bass, 2006; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Newton, Giesen, Freeman, Bishop, & Zeitoun, 2003; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001). The key to recruiting school leaders is the ability of a district to provide support for current leaders as well as identifying and training future school leaders (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003).

There is also growing support for the implementation of principal professional development designed as an academy through proposed federal legislation (Improving, 2007; Instructional, 2007; Investment, 2007; NCLB, 2002; TEACH, 2007). A recent report, *Democracy at Risk: The Need for a New Federal Policy in Education (2008)*, stated that the quality of a school principal was the second most important factor in student success and the most important factor in teaching quality or teacher retention. The report also stated that even though there was a growing knowledge of what characteristics made a successful school principal, little was being done to identify and recruit teachers with the potential to qualify for the principal position. *Democracy at risk*, called for the federal government to implement policies to support the identification, recruitment, and training of potential school leaders through the creation of a “top-flight school leadership academy (p. iii)” to find leaders who were able to turn around failing schools.

Several leadership academies have been implemented throughout the U.S., and in an effort to better understand the effectiveness of the academy as an instrument of professional development designed to combat the attrition, recruitment, and development of school leaders, an investigation of one academy through interviews with the leaders, participants, and graduates involved with the academy was conducted.

The majority of the research on school principals has focused on factors leading to the attrition or retention of individuals with a growing number of articles reviewing the recruitment of school principals. Recently, a small number of studies have discussed the design of academies as a professional development tool; however, this research provided little in terms of the effectiveness of leadership academies as a tool to reduce attrition and

improve the retention of school leaders. For that reason, it is important for research to be conducted on the perceived effectiveness of the leadership academy as a tool for districts to improve the recruitment and retention of school leaders. Figure 1 depicts the model to be utilized for this study.

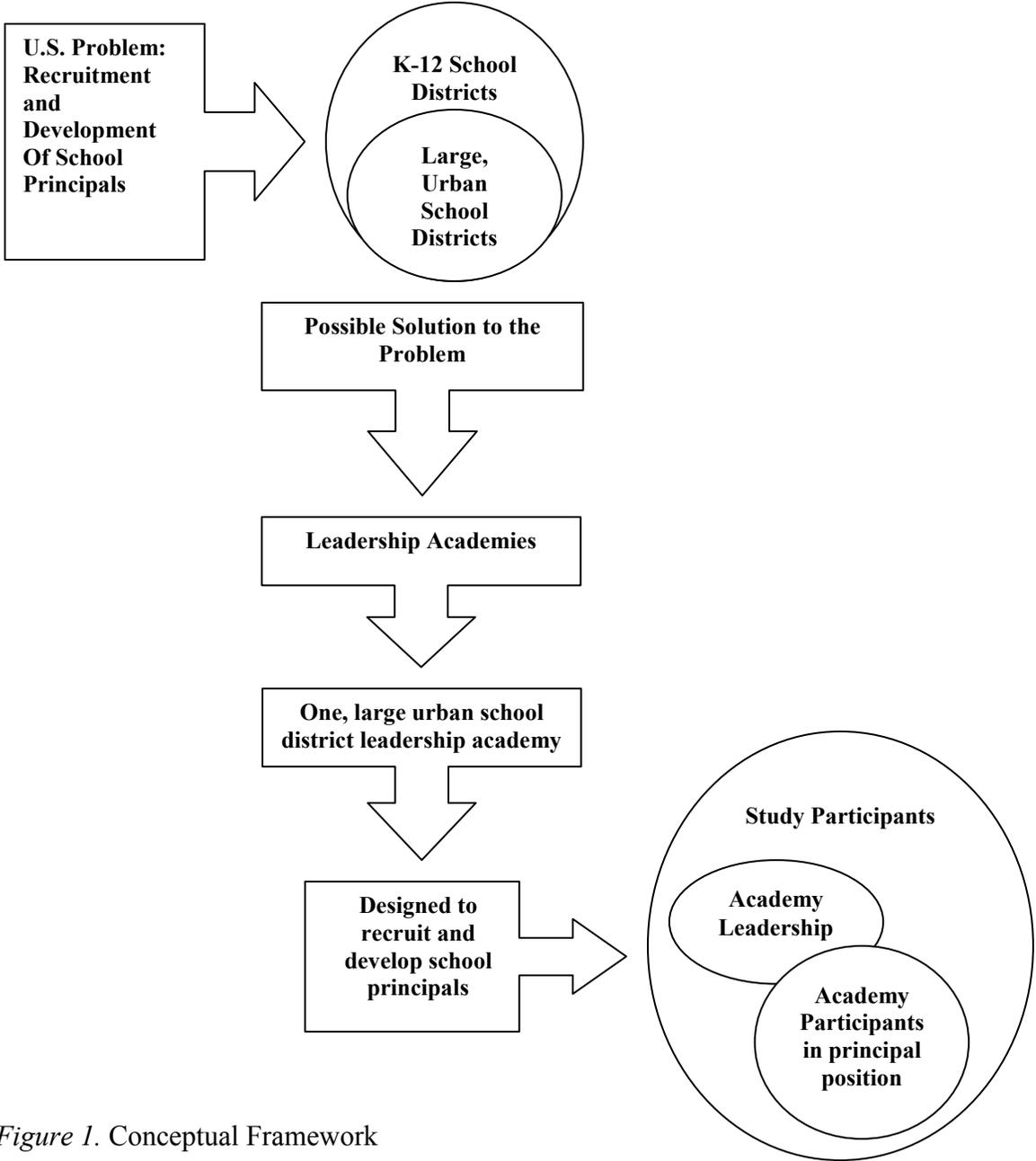


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## CHAPTER 3

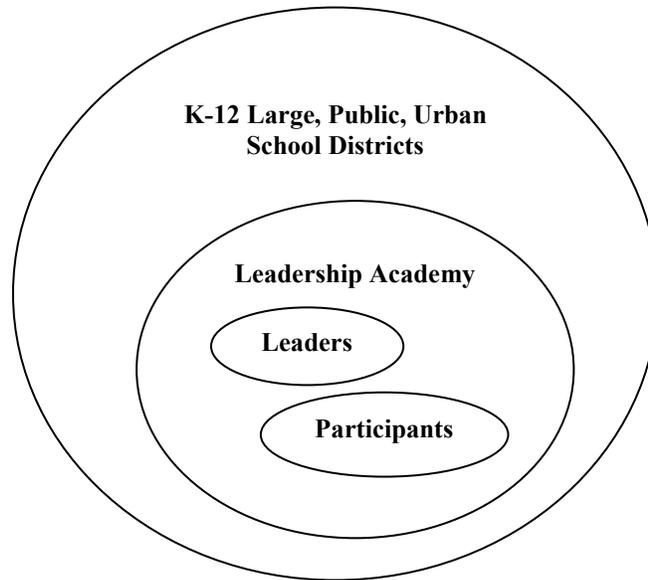
### METHODS

The purpose of this embedded case study was to investigate the design and effectiveness of a leadership academy as an instrument of professional development used to recruit and train school leaders in an urban school district. This chapter outlines the process and procedures for the research. The first section provides an outline of the research design and is followed by a description of the study participants. This chapter ends with a discussion of the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

#### Research Design

This embedded case study sought to understand the perceived effectiveness of the leadership academy at a Southwest urban school district on the recruitment and development of school leaders from the view of the academy leadership and participants.

According to Yin (2003), an embedded case study was a case study containing more than one sub-unit of analysis, which enabled a more detailed level of inquiry. The goal of an embedded case study was to describe the features, context, and process of a phenomenon (Yin, 2003). The primary unit of analysis for this study was the organizational structure of the leadership academy within a large, urban school district. The two subunits studied were the academy leadership team and participants of the academy. The academy leadership team was studied during a pilot study (Harper, 2008) conducted by the researcher and described in Chapter 2. The other subunit, the actual participants, are described in this section. Figure 2 depicts the relationship between the primary unit of analysis and the subunits.



*Figure 2.* Relationships between the Units of Analysis

The interview questions used in the pilot study (Harper, 2008) and in the dissertation study were developed from research conducted on the recruitment and professional development of school leaders. A panel of four experts as well as the school district's research and accountability office also reviewed the interview questions. All suggested alterations were made prior to the interviews. The study was conducted by the primary researcher who had completed human subjects training, and the study was approved by the University of Arizona's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before participants were contacted. Authorization to conduct this study was obtained from the district's office of accountability and research.

The following overarching research question and three sub-questions were examined in this study:

How does participation in a leadership academy, as a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district?

*Sub-questions*

1. How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?
2. How does the application and selection process associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?
3. In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals’ positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

Study Site

The principal investigator conducted this research in a large, urban school district located in the Southwest. This school district had similar demographics to the academies reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education in 2004. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Garofano et al., 2008), during the 2005–2006 school year, this

district had 124 schools, 60,557 students, and a total full-time employee staff of 6,363. Of the total full-time staff, 180 were listed as district or school administrators, 338 as administrative support, and about 10 as instructional coordinators/supervisors. The student population consists of 33.1% White, 6.8% Black, 53.3% Hispanic, and 6.8% American Indian/Alaska Native or Asian/Pacific Islander (Garofano et al., 2008). Because of its diverse ethnic population, the Southwest district developed several initiatives to create a more culturally diverse staff and strived to be a culturally sensitive district. Fifty-six percent of the student population was reportedly eligible for free or reduced lunch. The district was located in the center of the city and was the 64<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the United States (Garofano et al., 2008).

The leadership academy in this district had been a professional development tool used for eight years to aid the district in “growing their own” administrators and to help prepare administrators for the duties of the position. Each year approximately 30 individuals were selected from all nominated individuals to participate in the 45-hour academy program (Harper, 2008).

#### Procedure for Selecting Participants

This study was conducted by randomly selecting 15 individuals from the list of individuals who had participated in the leadership academy since its inception and were currently working as principals or assistant principals in the district. The individuals interviewed were randomly selected from a list of names provided by the district’s professional development office. Those 15 individuals were then contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. If an individual did not wish to participate, another

individual from the list was randomly selected and contacted until all individuals on the list have been contacted or 15 individuals have agreed to participate in the study. It is important to note that these individuals were teachers at the time of their academy participation, but they now held administrative positions within the district.

### Instrumentation

The interview protocol was derived from the literature review conducted on principal recruitment, attrition, and professional development. This instrument was reviewed by a panel of four experts in the field of school administration and professional development practices before being used in a pilot study and then in the dissertation study. In order to gain permission to complete the study, the district research and accountability office review committee approved the protocol. The protocol consisted of 25 questions that were asked of all participants. Each section of questions was also subdivided into questions about the academy design, recruitment, and development. These subsections were guided by the overarching research question and the sub-questions guiding the study. The document analysis and observation protocols were researcher developed. The document analysis protocol consisted of seven categories for analysis. The categories were goals and objectives, items included in the module, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards covered (CCSSO, 1996), relation to the principal role, presentation of material, information provided, and the design of the documents. The non-participant observation protocol contained eleven categories. First, the date, time, module number, location, meeting number, and breakdown of attendants were recorded. Next, the primary researcher observed the

meeting looking for the eleven categories presenter provided overview, relation to prior presentations, ISLLC standards, access of prior knowledge, relation to principal role, presentation of material, behavior of presenter, behavior of participants, interactions among individuals present, materials used, and feedback provided. All three protocols were approved by the University of Arizona's IRB prior to use.

### Data Collection

The multiple sources of evidence used in this study included data collected through semi-structured interviews, a document analysis of materials used during the leadership academy, and non-participant observations. A letter explaining the purpose of the interviews and a request for participation was provided to each selected participant. Prior to their participation, participants were presented with a letter of consent, which detailed the process and the confidentiality of their participation. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was provided with a random color name by which they were referred throughout the research process and in all reporting.

The individual semi-structured, 60-minute interviews were conducted with academy participants who still worked in the district. All participants were contacted via e-mail to verify their participation in the leadership academy and ask if they would be interested in participating in the study. This e-mail informed them of the purpose of the study, asked the individuals to participate, and informed them that their participation in the study would be confidential and voluntary. Permission to tape record the interviews was requested by the researcher, and participants had the opportunity to review the transcript from their interview for accuracy. Participants were told the purpose of the

study was to determine the effectiveness of the leadership academy in the ability to help the district recruit and develop school leaders.

Validity and reliability of the study were addressed through participant review of transcripts to ensure the accuracy of interview responses, and triangulation occurred through non-participant observations and document analysis (Creswell, 2007). The triangulation through non-participant observations and document analysis took place throughout the duration of the study. To further address validity and reliability, the principal investigator continually reflected on her own bias and assumptions to be constantly aware of how her predispositions altered her perception of the data.

#### Data Analysis

Each individual interview was transcribed and reviewed by the researcher for analysis. QSR Nvivo 7 was utilized to analyze all data using a categorical aggregation approach (Creswell, 2007) to identify common themes from the interviews. The researcher also analyzed field notes from the non-participant observations and document analysis utilizing QSR Nvivo 7 to identify themes from these data and gain a better understanding of the interview data and support the findings from the interview data. Together, all forms of data provided support for the study findings and recommendations. Multiple sources of evidence contributed to the development of a converging line of inquiry, a process of triangulation (Yin, 2003). The interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis served as evidence triangulating around a single set of research questions to increase the validity of the study.

The results from subunit one, the pilot study (Harper, 2008), allowed for a comparison of the perceived effectiveness of the academy between those who participated in it and those who led it. This perspective contributed to understanding the true effectiveness of the academy because it allowed for a comparison of the expected outcomes, views of the leadership team, the actual outcomes, and views of the participants.

#### Researcher's Identity and Reflexivity

The researcher had a bachelor's degree in elementary education, a master's degree in educational administration, principal certification, and had taught for eight years in public schools. The researcher recognized that she was a stakeholder in the education profession and her own beliefs about professional development, educational practices, and the principal position may have colored her perceptions of the interviews conducted for this study. However, the researcher had no connection to this particular school district and had not participated in the professional development program being studied. The researcher had no personal stake in the outcome of this study and recognized that her beliefs about education, professional development, and the principal position could influence her perceptions. Throughout the study, the researcher was aware of her ability to slip back into her educator role from the researcher role and made a conscience effort to remain in the objective researcher role throughout the study and during the analysis of the results.

Results from the study were analyzed using the interpretist perspective approach (Capper, 1993). The interpretist perspective relies on the belief "that organizations are

socially constructed and exist only in the perceptions of people” (Capper, 1993, p. 11). When using this paradigm to interpret information, a researcher attempts to determine how individuals experience the organization and identify common perceptions held by individuals within the organization. The researcher also attempts to identify how perceptions are different for individuals in an effort to determine what is actually occurring within the organization. The interpretist perspective is a subjective paradigm that follows the belief that multiple truths exist through individual perceptions and attempts to understand the context of an organization through the multiple truths or perceptions held by individuals within the organization.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a leadership academy as an instrument for the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, urban school district. The findings for this qualitative, embedded case study (Yin, 2003) were based on 12 semi-structured interviews with participants of the leadership academy in one southwest school district. This chapter is organized in terms of the three sub-questions, the overarching question, and the findings for each.

#### *Sub-questions*

1. How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?
2. How does the application and selection process associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?
3. In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals’ positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

### *Overarching Question*

How does participation in a leadership academy, as a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district?

The chapter concludes with results disaggregated by school level, non-participant observation findings, and the findings from the document analysis.

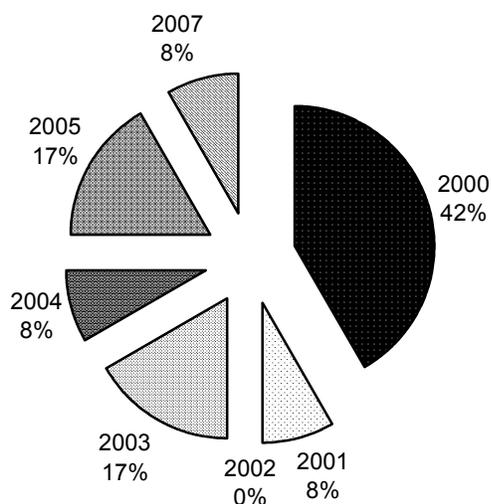
### Sample Description

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the southwest district's research and accountability office of the district and approved through the University of Arizona's Institutional Review Board.

The participants were selected from a random sample of individuals who participated in the leadership academy in 2000 (N = 5), 2001 (N = 1), 2003 (N = 2) 2004 (N = 1), 2005 (N = 2), and 2007 (N = 1). Upon completing the leadership academy, study participants were appointed into the role of school principal or assistant principal in the Southwest school district. Most of the study participants were still in the school principal or assistant principal position at the time of the study. The exception, one study participant, has moved into the role of chief academic officer, a district-level position, after working as a school principal. Twenty-seven interview requests were sent out with the intent of securing 15 interviews; however, only 12 individuals agreed to participate in the study. Participation of all individuals was completely voluntary.

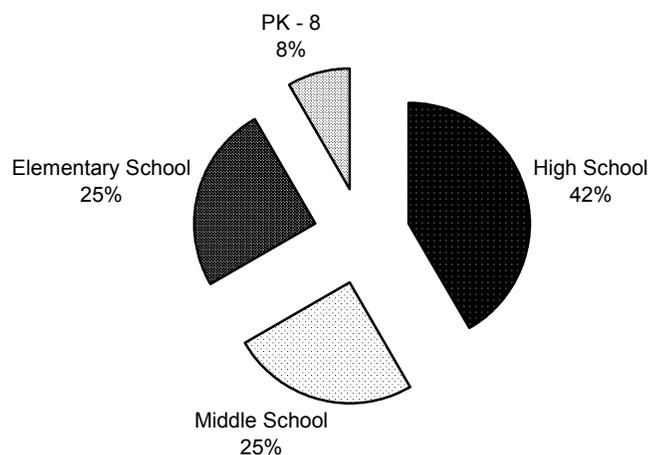
Of those 12 individuals, 42% were high school assistant principals, 25% middle school principals, 25% were elementary school principals, and 8% were principals of a

pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade campus. Fifty-eight percent of the principals who participated in the study were male, and 42% were female. The ethnicity of participants varied. All participants held a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. In addition, 17% held a second master's degree, and 25% were working on a doctorate in education. Of the 12 participants, 42% were mentors for the academy, and 8% had been a mentor/facilitator in the past. Figure 3 depicts the breakdown of study participants by the year of participation in the leadership academy.



*Figure 3.* Study participants by the year of participation in the leadership academy.

Figure 4 is a breakdown of study participants by school level: high school, middle school, or elementary school (one study participant worked at a pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade campus so she is in her own category for Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Breakdown of study participants by the school level that they served as principal or assistant principal.

### Findings

As discussed in Chapter 3, the findings from this study were analyzed using the interpretist perspective (Capper, 1993) and were based on the perceptions of the individuals interviewed. Following qualitative methods, the data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Each interview transcript was e-mailed to the corresponding study participant and checked for accuracy of information. Direct quotations from the interviews conducted by the primary investigator are included with the findings below. All study participants were identified by a code name and year of participation in the academy (e.g., Denim, 2003; Fuchsia, 2001); see Table 1, to protect confidentiality. The code names do not reflect the gender of the participant.

Table 1  
*Participant Perspective on Impact of Leadership Academy on Decision to become a School Principal.*

<b>Participant aliases</b>	<b>Years in district</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Academy year</b>	<b>Expectations upon completion of academy</b>	<b>Impact on knowledge of increased demands and risks</b>	<b>Impact on knowledge of “new demands”</b>
Maroon	13	HS assistant	2003	Be prepared to enter the AP pool	Increase in awareness	Data-driven decisions and school choice
Jade	5	HS assistant	2004	Knowledge; enter principal pool	Not really at all—a little bit discussion	Data-driven decisions, Accountability
Ruby	12	HS assistant	2000	Be more prepared	Increased awareness	Reviewed current research and district expectations
Fuchsia	8	HS assistant	2001	Increase knowledge	Increased awareness through discussion	Provided information; data-driven decisions
Cyan	20	Elementary principal	2000	Be hired as principal or assistant	Provided broad overview through discussion	District expectations and resources
Tangerine	12	HS assistant	2007	Gain knowledge; become AP	Briefly discussed	Focus on data-driven decision making
Cobalt	9	Elementary principal	2000	Gain further knowledge	A little in shadowing and discussion	None at the time except a little data
Scarlet	13	Elementary principal	2000	Obtain AP position	Touched on briefly - too narrow	Data-driven decisions
Denim	13	MS principal	2003	Obtain AP position	Not discussed	Touched on but no depth
Rose	14	Elementary /MS principal	2005	Knowledge	Briefly through mentor conversations	Data-driven decisions
Wisteria	17	MS principal	2000	Considered for positions	None	Data-driven decisions
Yellow	10	MS principal	2005	Knowledge	Not discussed	Glossed Over

The primary researcher also conducted two non-participant observations of leadership academy meetings. The protocol used for these observations is located in Appendix A and the data can be found in Appendix B. In addition, documents used during the leadership academy were analyzed using a protocol found in Appendix C. The data from the document analysis is located in Appendix D. Field notes from the document analysis and non-participant observations were analyzed for comparison with the interview data. After analyzing and coding all data, the findings resulted in assertions defined below by the research question to which it pertains.

*Research Sub-Question 1*

How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?

*Academy enhanced certification program.* All study participants felt the leadership academy enhanced their administrator certification program by providing an insight into the actual “nuts and bolts” of the district. Participants used the term “nuts and bolts” when referring to the policies, procedures, and expectations of the district. When asked to describe the differences between the leadership academy and the university principal certification program, 75% of study participants felt the two programs were compatible but different. The university program was often described as broad, abstract, or general because it was providing an overview of educational leadership to individuals from several different districts. The leadership academy was able to be more specific to the policies, procedures, and expectations of the district.

Study participants felt the leadership academy enhanced the university program because even though some of the same concepts were covered, the focus was narrowed to the district level. Denim (2003) described the correlation between the certification program and the leadership academy in this way,

It's a really effective program, and it prepares future leaders somewhat for the job. It kind of gives them things that the internship doesn't. So, it, you kind of put those two together, and then you have somebody who could actually be an administrator.

Denim felt the relationship between his university program and the leadership academy was a complementing one. He would recommend both programs to anyone interested in becoming a school principal. Fuchsia (2001) described the differences in this way,

I'd have to say that the University was more universal. It was more, in general, about the state of education, about pedagogy and otherwise instructional practices in a much more universal arena. The Leadership Academy was much more specific towards the District. So, was kind of like a funnel. I had all the experience from the University and now it's coming down to the experience of taking some of that and adding onto it, but basically being much more specific.

He reiterated what several of the academy participants felt about the leadership academy being a more specific way for the district to train aspiring school principals on the policies, procedures, and expectations of the district. When describing his university principal certification program, Cobalt (2000) stated, "We reviewed bits and pieces of what you would do as a principal. We didn't really get into the details because when we were in classes we'd have students from 6 or 7 different school districts." When describing the leadership academy, Cobalt spoke about learning the exact procedures to follow within the district and learning the "nuts and bolts" of what to expect on a day-to-day basis. This was a consistent distinction made by the study participants when

describing the differences between the university certification program and the leadership academy.

In addition, academy participants had the opportunity to learn about policies, procedures, and expectations, the “nuts and bolts,” of the district. Individuals who participated in the leadership academy in 2000 (N = 5), 2003 (N = 2), 2004 (N = 1), 2005 (N = 2), and 2007 (N = 1) were provided with opportunities to then apply those procedures within the academy setting; whereas participants in the 2001 (N = 1) academy had a more theoretical focus. For example, Rose (2005) and Tangerine (2007) both shared that they were given data from a theoretical school and in collaboration with their peers instructed to create a school improvement plan. This exercise is something all school principals in the district must be prepared to do and provided the opportunity for academy participants to practice. Ruby (2000) described how he learned about district politics in this way,

All about politics. We were always really nice and chummy and I'd be brutally honest, but be smart about who you're talking to, and then rumor mill. Once you started getting to know the upper people in the District, you listen to how they're interrelated or their relationships with each other, and then I learned very quickly not to bring up names who people just didn't like themselves. And they were already making choices based on us, who we associated by, which I still think is a very poor thing, but that's politics.

Another example of a practical experience, shared by Maroon (2003), was when a current school principal led a discussion about how to lead a school through a traumatic event.

The principal who led this discussion had recently had a traumatic event at his high school and shared the approach he used to lead during that time. He also answered questions from leadership academy participants that facilitated thoughtful conversation

about the situation. Ruby (2000) recalled having to complete projects with a group and that they were given scenarios to present to the whole group. The scenarios were practical ones that might be encountered as a school principal, and the presentations were designed to practice presenting information to different groups of stakeholders.

A few participants, such as Rose (2005), were given assignments to interview different principals for specified information. She described the assignments in this way,

And then there were some written pieces, you know, we did a portfolio and we were assigned—it was similar to doing my internship, ‘cause I was then, again, assigned to go and, you know, shadow a couple of principals and shadow the assistant superintendent or something, and go and interview a principal about their school accountability plan and go and interview a different principal that was in an underperforming school and get the information on their—on like their school improvement plan.

Ruby (2000) also recalled having to meet with different individuals within the district,

We had to go meet 13 different people in the District from their departments, and we had to go to a school board meeting. And I took off personal planning time and actually interviewed all of them. Yeah, you can take five or six, but I interviewed all of them, and you just number one, it got me first to meet them.

Forty-two percent of the study participants stated that the leadership academy provided them with at least one day to shadow individuals who were currently school principals. The purpose of the shadow day was to see what a day was like for a current principal. After the shadow day, participants shared and reflected on their experience during an academy meeting. The participants acknowledged this was similar to the internship required for their principal certification program; however, the experience had a different impact because of the material being discussed in the leadership academy.

*Prepare for school principal role.* All leadership academy participants felt participation in the academy aided in their preparation for a principal position within the

district. Table 1 showed a breakdown of participants, their perception of the impact the academy had on their knowledge of the increased risks and demands, and of the “new demands” associated with the school principal position. In addition to those two areas, participants also felt the leadership academy prepared them for the specific expectations, procedures, and policies of the Southwest school district. When asked what was taught during the leadership academy, Maroon (2003) recalled,

Issues. I remember being taught about issues with student discipline, effective instruction, or effective observation of classrooms. Quite a bit of theory about how teachers teach, and how you can observe what is going on in the classroom. A lot of it is instructional leadership.

Cyan (2000) stated that individuals from the district human resources department, the Title 1 office, and other district departments came to speak to leadership academy participants. These speakers addressed the different expectations each department had for school principals. Yellow (2005) described what she took from the academy in this way,

So I think what I took away from the readings, from the Leadership Academy, from the people that would come out and talk to us was really it's okay to do things a little differently as long as you know that you're doing what's right for your students, because what's right for my students here at [school A] might not be what's right for students at [school B] or any other middle school; but it's okay.

Cobalt (2000) remembered he felt a little more prepared with what to expect once in the school principal position and supported because he had been introduced to individuals within the district. Fuchsia (2001) stated,

It was informative in the sense that it gave me the expectations of the District and what they were looking for in an administrator. I recall that one of the things that I learned that there used to be eight themes. So, of the eight themes were human resources, community involvement, diversity appreciation—and there were eight of them, and I did not know of those eight themes that the District was working with at that time. So, I became, that helped me become familiar with it, because

that was the movement at that time. Of course, districts move from one theme to another.

All study participants stated they found value in their participation and that the material reviewed during the leadership academy added to their knowledge base. Study participants were asked specifically about how they felt the leadership academy prepared them for the increased demands and risks associated with the school principal position.

*Increased demands and risks.* A few of the increased demands and risks linked to the school principal position were a lack of job security, increased time commitments, and community pressures associated with adequate yearly progress or the pressure to perform. As discussed in Table 1, 25% of participants felt the academy increased their awareness of the demands and risks associated with the principal position, 42% stated it was glossed over, 8% received a broad overview, and 25% stated they were not even mentioned.

Denim (2003) stated that he did not recall the academy preparing him for the increased demands and risks associated with the school principal position. He felt that aspect of the position was sometimes neglected but should be addressed. He stated,

Well, I mean, it should just be a part of the curriculum and agenda is to talk about the stress related with the job and the demands of the job, and here, for instance. Normally I'm one of the first ones here in the morning and normally one of the last ones to leave. And every time a bell rings for kids, I'm out in the hallway. I greet them in the morning when they're there, anytime a bell rings, I'm out during their passing periods. So, a lot of visibility, so, I mean, and it's a good job for a healthy person too. You need to really stay physically fit just for the demand.

Jade (2004) agreed with Denim (2003) that this is something that should be covered during the leadership academy in a transparent yet sensitive manner. He stated,

I don't think that, no, that, I don't think that the lack of job security, I don't think is really ever emphasized, because that would probably empty out the Academy if they sat down and said, "You could be gone in a flash," your increased risks.

Fuchsia (2001) recalled being told, "Yeah, you make more money, but you make less money per hour. Your hourly wage will go down." The increase on your time was the only aspect of the increased risks and demands he remembered being discussed, yet not emphasized, during the leadership academy. Jade (2004) also recalled his mentor discussing with the group how to determine where to spend your time as an administrator and that it was a juggling game. However, aside from his mentor discussing this balancing act, Jade did not recall the academy curriculum addressing this matter.

*Knowledge of "new demands."* Since No Child Left Behind (2002), many additional responsibilities have been added to the school principal role. Items such as accountability, the use of data to make decisions, school choice, and hiring highly qualified teachers are a few. Data-driven decision making was the topic most covered in association with the "new demands" of the principal position. Seventy-five percent of participants felt data were covered very sufficiently throughout the leadership academy. Eight percent mentioned school choice, 8% accountability, 8% district expectations, and 8% stated the topics were generally touched on during the leadership academy. Table 1 displayed what participants recalled being taught during the leadership academy in the area of "new demands." Cyan (2000) believed the leadership academy addressed this area by bringing in the various district department heads to discuss expectations. Denim (2003) felt this was a shortfall of the leadership academy because at the time he participated, the district was training individuals to be managers as opposed to

instructional leaders. However, as a principal now, he was expected to be more of an instructional leader and that was an area he had to learn about on his own. Fuchsia (2001) stated,

It prepared us by going ahead and giving us the information that we would be looking at and how to go ahead and look at it, and again, the different perspectives. When one person looks at data or information, you can get one perspective, but then listening to the perspective of another person gives you the open mindedness of being able to go ahead and accept other perspectives.

Fuchsia continued by stating that his participation in the leadership academy provided him with the ability to appreciate and learn from the perspective of others. Although, that was something of which he was aware, the leadership academy brought it to the forefront of his mind. Yellow (2005) shared,

I would have to say that it prepared me very little in terms of the No Child Left Behind stipulations. The learning that we did was based on—every school has children that are falling far below—every school does; I mean, that’s just a given. The Leadership Academy I think did a good job in giving us a tidbit of information of what we can do based on interventions and maybe differentiating instruction. But in terms of how you qualified, status, and understanding the label that came with—or that come with NCLB and all that, they didn’t really address that, and I feel that they should have a little bit more because that was a lot of things that I did my first year as principal is just that, “Hey, well, what does this mean?”

Wisteria (2000) focused on learning how to interpret and use data to make decisions about what was best for his school. When discussing whether the leadership academy addressed the hiring of highly qualified teachers, he stated, “I guess I get a little bit of an attitude about that. I’m not so sure they’re highly qualified.” He went on to discuss his belief that judging a potential teacher by a transcript did not, in his eyes, mean the teacher was highly qualified and would be successful when working with students. This was not an area the academy addressed for him.

*District information.* Jade (2004), Tangerine (2007), and Maroon (2003) shared that the leadership academy facilitated a discussion about the district's blue book, which was used for disciplining students. They stated that actual scenarios (without specific names) from the district were given to academy participants to allow them to think about how they would handle that situation. Tangerine (2007) recalled,

We did a brief overview in the academy about discipline and looked at our blue book. They call it our bible because it really is an administrator's bible with all our rules and responsibilities. So if a student had an infraction, these are the consequences. So we reviewed this one night.

Rose (2005) shared that during her leadership academy, each participant had to design an action research project to present to the group at the end of the academy. She recalled her project,

Because as a part of the Leadership Academy we had to do a study of some type, so you had to come up with like a question that you wanted to answer, and like for mine, I did a survey, and I surveyed administrators. And because it was the first year for the instructional coaches, and obviously I was doing that and I had real firsthand knowledge of that, I created a survey for administrators that was given at like, I think it was like the February administrator meeting or whatever. And then I pulled all the data together that I gathered from them.

The purpose of this project was to further establish how to use data to answer a question and to practice presenting information to a group of stakeholders just as a principal would do at a staff or school board meeting. One area all participants felt they gained from their participation in the leadership academy was knowledge of the resources available to them within the district. It was also shared that meeting someone from the various district-level departments aided in their comfort level at reaching out to the district resources. Cobalt (2000) stated,

You know at that time it seemed to really get—it seemed to be to introduce us to the district itself. District philosophies. To help you understand some of the things that you're gonna be doing as a principal.

Yellow (2005) stated that she learned she needed to be well versed in the policies and procedures of the district as well as understand the stipulations of the consensus agreement that governed the Southwest staff. She provided this example,

When I'm talking to a teacher about anything, I have to really know that I'm not crossing any kind of line. And even if it's just a, "Hey, can you come and meet with me on Friday?" you know. Well, Friday is grading day. Well, consensus says that I can't really meet with anyone on Friday because it's their time to do grades. So things as minute as that, which really—it's not their—it's not small because it could be big for someone who really knows that consensus. So—ah—you know.

The phrase that was repeated throughout most of the interviews was that the leadership academy introduced participants to the "nuts and bolts" of the district. The main purpose of the leadership academy was to prepare individuals to take on the school principal position in the district. In addition, the academy was designed to provide participants with a knowledge base of the responsibilities and expectations associated with the position.

*Mentors and facilitators add value.* The years the leadership academy provided mentors to share experiences with academy participants added a valuable dimension for participants to learn about the role. Mentors, who were current school principals or assistant principals in the district, helped facilitate lessons, shared his/her experiences, and led small group discussions during the academy. Tangerine (2007) felt the mentors for her academy were very well chosen and added to the leadership academy experience. Wisteria (2000) did not recall having a formal mentor; however, he did state that his

principal was his mentor and guided him through the process of being prepared and applying for principal positions. In an effort to help participants understand the demands of the principal position, academy mentors in the 2005 and 2007 academies also led discussions about the differences between leading at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Mentors in all academies shared time commitments, stress-level information, and time-management suggestions to help the aspiring principals better understand how to balance the demands of professional and personal life.

Jade (2004) described his mentor, a high school principal at the time, as extremely beneficial to his development as an aspiring school principal because she was a model of effectiveness for him. He specifically described one of her feedbacks in this way,

Yes, I did, and actually I got them from my mentor, which was really, really good. One of the pieces, I think it was to develop a vision. We were developing a vision for a School, and I had gone through and I'd spent a lot of time on it, on developing what I felt was a good vision for X High School. And she always took the time, our mentor, who was this principal, always took the time to carefully read our papers and she provided comments. And one of the things that she provided me with was very important, was, "How are you going to get the faculty to buy into this vision that you put together?" Which was very eye opening for me, because in a beast like [Southwest], it's extremely difficult to get buy-in into a vision of the district.

Maroon (2003) described his mentor as an individual who provided a lot of guidance for him during the academy by providing feedback on his reflection papers and during group discussions. He stated,

It was actually a very collegial atmosphere. It was a very good experience for me. My mentor was [Pineapple]. She's a principal at an elementary over on the east side of [Southwest]. [Pineapple] as your mentor was very instrumental, and they would read all the papers that you turned in for example, and they would provide a lot of the guidance for you for the Academy.

*Enables networking.* The academy provided an opportunity for teachers in the district, aspiring administrators, to network with each other as well as current school principals and district office personnel. All study participants felt this was a valuable practice because many of them were still in communication with the individuals they went through the academy with or met during the academy. Networking added another person for them to collaborate with about various situations. Cobalt (2000) shared that during his leadership academy, he was introduced to district-level personnel and other school principals, and was provided with a list of individuals he could contact when various situations arose. Cobalt (2000) felt the leadership academy “definitely helped” his networking ability because everyone he had gone to and asked for help has always been willing to help. Yellow (2005) stated,

I would have to say that it did enhance it. It helps when you can say, “Hi, I’m So-and-so, and I met you at—during the Leadership Academy. You spoke at the Leadership Academy,” and just having that connection, even if they spoke for a half-an-hour, it opens up a door in a sense, and not a big door where you’re going to get great things. It’s just it opens up a conversation, and I feel that it does help with the networking piece if you like that—if you see it like that.

Denim (2003) felt that the ability to network with others in the district was one of the most beneficial things he took from his participation in the leadership academy. He stated, “I got to collaborate, and I met teachers from all over the district, some that I’m still friends with today. I would say a good number of our class went into administration.” Fuchsia (2001) described how his networking ability was enhanced by his participation in the leadership academy,

It's very important that we, as assistant principals, especially get to know each other and get to go ahead and communicate with each other and know who we can go to for different reasons. In one capacity, if I need to know about security

or I need help with something, I may go to one assistant principal, and if it's athletics, I may go to another.

Maroon (2003) shared that he felt the leadership academy was a “very collegial atmosphere. You got to know a lot of people from different schools, and different trains of thought.” He went on to state that he still communicated with a lot of those same people, and they were a resource for him when he was problem solving.

### *Research Sub-Question 2*

How did the application and selection processes associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?

*Reason applied to academy.* Academy participants chose to apply to the academy to become a school principal or assistant principal within the district. When asked why they decided to participate in the leadership academy, many of those interviewed expressed their desire to become a school principal and that participation in the academy was a right of passage on the road to becoming a school principal in the district. Cyan (2000), Ruby (2000), and Fuchsia (2001) recalled participation in the leadership academy as being a requirement for individuals within the district who wanted to interview for a school principal position. Jade (2003) stated,

It wasn't official part of the, it wasn't an official part of any interview process or anything like that, but basically, the word on the street was if you didn't go through [Southwest] Leadership Academy, you had a pretty difficult time getting into an administrative position.

Fucshia (2001) also recalled that participation in the leadership academy was a requirement for anyone who desired a principal position within the district. He described it as one of the “stepping-stones that I had to complete in order to be considered for a position within the district” as his ultimate reason for participation in the academy. However, he also expressed that he found it to be beneficial and believed he would have participated in the leadership academy even if it had not been required. Jade (2004) knew he wanted to enter administration in the Southwest school district and expected

To have a better handle on what it was like to run a school. Of course, I expected that it was gonna make me more competitive if I decided to get into the administrative pool. And those pieces were in there.

*Application and selection processes.* According to the leadership team overseeing the leadership academy, the application and selection processes were designed to find participants with leadership skills who were committed to becoming school leaders (Harper, 2008). However, none of the participants was aware of the criteria being utilized to determine which individuals were selected to participate in the leadership academy. All study participants remembered completing an application and submitting a writing sample and letters of recommendation. All study participants also voiced the assumption that some set of criteria was utilized to review the items submitted and determine who would be allowed to participate in the academy. Most assumed the decision relied on the essay and letters of recommendation.

A few study participants, Maroon (2003), Cyan (2000), and Scarlet (2000) also recalled having to participate in an interview with the superintendent of the district before being selected as an academy participant. Maroon (2003) stated,

It was a personal interview with [the superintendent]. That was just one of the scariest interviews I had in my entire life. I had never met a superintendent, and here I am just a little teacher and I had to interview with [the superintendent]. I just remember just sweating profusely before I walked into this meeting. You just kind of went in, and there were questions they were asking of everybody. It was an interview, and there were approximately, from what I understood at the time, 80 to 85 people that applied to the Leadership Academy, and 30 people were selected.

Individuals also assumed that one thing the leadership academy selection committee was screening for was a demonstration of leadership ability of potential academy participants. One requirement of participation in the leadership academy was that participants held principal certification at the time of participation or would complete their certificate during their participation in the leadership academy.

*“Grooming” of future leaders.* Individuals who participated in the leadership academy were being groomed for a principal position within the district; however, not all academy participants decided to apply for a position or made it into the principal pool. Some individuals were unsure if they wanted the role of school principal when they applied to the academy. These individuals decided if the principal role was one they wanted to enter based on their participation in the leadership academy. So, although study participants believed the goal of the leadership academy was to prepare participants for the role of school principal, based on interview data, the academy also helped individual participants determine if the school principal position was one they wanted to pursue.

Denim (2003) stated,

Well, my goal was to go from the classroom into administration. Other people had different goals. There were some of them who were looking for the places outside of the classroom to other administrative type jobs that weren't necessarily the school administrators. So, it wasn't just teachers. They were actually even

some maintenance personnel that may have wanted to be the head of their departments. So, there were different goals for different participants.

Jade (2004) believed the leadership academy was “definitely geared towards folks that were gonna, wanted to be aspiring, and were aspiring administrators.” This supported the idea that the leadership academy was designed as a tool to recruit individuals aspiring to become school principals as stated by the academy leadership team (Harper, 2008). The curriculum of the leadership academy also helped groom future school leaders because the “nuts and bolts” of the district were reviewed. When participants referred to the “nuts and bolts” of the district, they were referring to learning how the district worked, as well as policies, procedures, and expectations of the district at the time. Although this was not a result of the application and selection process, it was a way the district groomed future leaders after identifying those individuals.

Over several years, 2000, 2003, and 2008 (as discovered in the pilot study conducted by the primary researcher; (Harper, 2008), not all participants were seeking a school principal or assistant principal position. Cobalt (2000) stated he had already received an assistant principal position and was told to go through the leadership academy during his first year because he was coming from out of the district. Jade (2004), a mentor for the 2008 leadership academy, shared this with the interviewer about individuals in the 2008 academy,

There must be—we have—it's 40 attendants in the Academy, and more than half of them are instructional coaches that have no desire to even be an administrator. So, when you start having those discussions, because we break out in small groups occasionally. When we have those discussions, some folks are—there's just disengaged. Now, we have people dropping out of the Academy, just not showing up. They're just tired of it because the other thing is that the—how do I want to put this?

In addition, Denim (2003) recalled that there were several members of his academy who had not become school principals within the district; however, he was not sure whether they decided they did not want a principal position or because they had not been offered one.

### *Research Sub-Question 3*

In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals' positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

*Networking as a tool.* All study participants stated the main benefit of the academy was the networking that occurred during participation. Being able to meet current school principals and district-level administrators during the academy helped some participants, Tangerine (2007), Jade (2004), Fuchsia (2001), and Ruby (2000), felt more comfortable when they applied to be in the principal pool. In this district, principal applicants participated in a two-step process, application screening by human resources and an interview with a chief academic officer, before becoming a candidate for the principal or assistant principal pool. After being selected for the principal or assistant principal pool, schools within the district looking for an administrator selected individuals to interview from the pool.

Denim (2003) described the impact his participation in the leadership academy had on his ability to obtain a principal position within the district in this way,

One thing that I'd say about the Leadership Academy, probably the best thing that the Leadership Academy does for a person versus this administrative one is it's networking is really important. I had already had my administrative certificate

when I went to Leadership Academy, and the year prior, while I was a teacher, I applied for 25 positions in the District that there were openings for principals and assistant principals. I did not get one interview at all. And so, I had to find a way to promote myself, and the Leadership Academy was a way of introducing myself to the people and the District. I met the superintendent, all of the deputy superintendents. Anybody that was anybody in the District came through the Leadership Academy at one time or other.

Immediately after his participation in the leadership academy, Denim (2003) received an administrative position within the district.

*Preparation for interview process.* The application process for the principal or assistant principal pool consisted of a writing sample which participants were prepared for during their leadership academy experience. Applicants who passed the initial application screening were given a scenario involving the use of data to make decisions about school X and prepared a school improvement presentation. After they passed this step a chief academic officer for the district interviewed them.

According to Rose (2005), Yellow (2003), Tangerine (2007), and Denim (2003), participation in the leadership academy was useful in the interview process because academy participants were more familiar with district philosophies and procedures than individuals who did not participate in the leadership academy. Tangerine (2007) stated,

I think it also helped because some of the people in the Academy were some of the people that interviewed me through the screen process. So not that I had an up because I knew them, but I was more comfortable with them.

Denim (2003) shared, “You already knew the deputy superintendent and the superintendent at that time. So, you already, so, you weren’t going in cold. You had the main supervisors that you know, and you’d been to board meetings.” In the 2000 leadership academy, the principal pool had not yet been officially established, so the

leadership academy was the principal pool. Individuals within the academy that the academy facilitators felt met the district qualifications to be school principals were sent on interviews at schools handpicked for the participant. Wisteria (2000) shared,

The district has been pretty strong in data since I've been going into administration. I think that's actually one of the things that's helped me 'cause I was comfortable with data and there's interviews that, you know, I probably knew more about how to access and analyze data than many of the principals I was interviewing with, so I think that helped me then.

Jade (2003) described the district's process to become a school principal or assistant principal when he applied for his position as having to analyze data, design a presentation, present, and then if the presentation were passed, an interview. The academy prepared him for this process because many opportunities to analyze data were provided as well as discussion opportunities to learn how others interpreted the same data, which allowed him to better understand the perspectives of others.

#### *Overarching Research Question*

How does participation in a leadership academy, a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district?

*Impact of participation on desire for school principal position.* The majority of study participants stated that participation in the leadership academy did not have any direct impact on their decision to pursue a school principal position. Seventeen percent of the study participants did state that their participation in the leadership academy solidified that it was the position for them and raised their confidence that they were pursuing the right path. Scarlet (2000) believed the leadership academy gave him more incentive to

work towards the goal of becoming a school principal because it provided a deeper look into the school principal position. Tangerine (2007) stated that her participation in the leadership academy gave her the confidence that she was the type of leader who could fulfill the duties of the position. Fuchsia (2001) shared,

I would say the effect that it had on me, on my desire to wanting to become an assistant principal enhanced it, because, again, that gives me another taste of being in that position. I'd always felt that when I was a teacher, I had an effect on 150 students that I had throughout that they—that I had in my class rosters. And I wanted to be able to affect the 1,000s of students that are now at the school.

Jade (2004) believed his participation in the leadership academy did impact his desire to become a school principal.

Oh, I think it had, my Academy, it had a big impact, I think because what the message, the message that I still walk away with from that Academy is that we need to make a difference in our schools, and that our school are in trouble, and they gave us some tools, or they gave us some ideas on how to identify what those problems were. And then maybe some possible solutions. So, they put, they gave, they put in me, anyway that there was a real need for change and it was very urgent. And then they showed us, they gave us some strategies on how to go down that road.

In addition, Scarlet (2000), Jade (2004), Maroon (2003), and Cobalt (2000) observed that participation in the leadership academy led some individuals to decide not to move into a principal position. These four study participants felt that was valuable because it was better for those individuals to decide they did not want to be school principals or assistant principals before stepping into the role.

*Academy as a recruitment tool.* During the interviews, the primary researcher found most of the study participants focused on the curriculum as a tool to develop school principals and that they did not really view it directly as a recruitment tool. However, all study participants felt that participation in the leadership academy was a

prerequisite to obtaining a school principal position within the district. Scarlet (2000) stated that the goal of the leadership academy at the time was to prepare teachers for the principal role. He also shared that he participated in the leadership academy because someone at the district office decided he should attend. This supported the idea that the academy provided the opportunity for current leaders to encourage individuals in whom they saw leadership skills to move in the direction of school principal.

Participants Rose (2005) and Tangerine (2007) both stated that the academy was also used as an opportunity for district office personnel and current school principals to get to know the individuals who were participating in the academy and determine their leadership skills. Neither participant viewed this as a negative but felt it should be out in the open rather than just beneath the surface. Rose (2005) felt it would be a good opportunity for the district to recruit leaders from within the district. She also felt that academy participants who were identified as individuals the district wanted in the principal role in the future should be provided with additional support to nurture those skills after the academy. She shared,

I felt watched. I felt like the people that were there from the district, the other administrators and supervisors and principal coaches, I felt like they were there to assess. I mean you were being assessed. You know, you didn't get a grade for this class, but you were truly being assessed in my opinion as to how you, you know, for probably lots of the—probably all those leadership qualities that they were teaching us about, I think you were being assessed on all of those as to whether or not you were a good fit, whether or not you had potentially—whether or not you had, you know, the, you know, the right philosophy or the right belief system, the right attitudes, whatever, the right work ethic.

Scarlet (2000) agreed because during his academy, he felt people were able to get to know him as a leader through his work, and he was even approached during the leadership academy and encouraged to apply for a principal position that year. He stated,

I think people there were able to see through my work, or at least the people at the time who were running the academy were able to see a little bit more about who I was as a leader and through the reflective process formulate opinions about people in the academy and their ability to potentially lead a school.

Wisteria (2000) stated that he felt academy participants were “on the cusp” because the reason individuals were in the academy was because they were being considered for the principal role, and the academy was another way the district measured your readiness for the position. Cobalt (2000) observed,

But it's, ultimately it's, you know, you can start to see people rise and fall in the academy. It's like are they up for the challenge? It is a big-time commitment this academy they're doing but administration is a big commitment too. So it's kind of nice to see those who take leadership roles in the academy and those who I guess they're not just telling people what to do but they are really just rising and listening and participating and trying to become a whole leader.

*Ability to market oneself.* All study participants seemed to emphasize that the ability to network with individuals from the district level and learn more about the policies and procedures of the district were the valuable lessons taken away from the experience. When asked if this would be a professional development they would recommend to aspiring administrators in the district, 100% of study participants emphasized the value they found in their participation and that they would recommend participation to others. Cyan (2000) stated that the leadership academy provided her with the opportunity to “meet different people to market yourself.” Denim (2003) credited his participation in the leadership academy with his ability to garner a school principal

position within the district. Prior to his participation in the leadership academy, he had applied for 25 positions within the district and did not even get one interview. He felt part of the reason was because he had only worked within one school and that being loyal to that school prevented others in the district from getting to know him. This made him less competitive when trying to obtain a school principal position. His participation in the academy provided the opportunity for him to market himself through the various individuals he met.

*Academy as a development tool.* All participants felt that participation in the leadership academy added additional tools for them to use in the principal position and was effective in their professional development for the principal role. Participation in the leadership academy introduced them to the policies, procedures, and expectations of the district as well as how to use various documents within the district. Tangerine (2007) described the experience,

I don't care how much you give me, you're never gonna prepare me to sit in that seat, and so you never prepared me to walk in the classroom. You gave me my swimsuit. You told me the water was gonna be cold. You taught me how to dive. But until I jump in that water, you couldn't prepare me for what that was gonna bring into my life.

Several study participants stated that there was no way the leadership academy could have fully prepared them for the position; however, there were a few additional items many would have liked to help further prepare them for the role.

*Suggestions for improvement.* Each study participant was asked what suggestions they would make to improve the ability of the academy to prepare individuals for a school principal position. Table 2 displays the suggestions provided.

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Table 2

*Frequencies (N = 12) of Suggestions to Improve Academy Experience*

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Response	Frequency	Percentage
Additional shadowing time	4	33.33%
Paid year or semester long internship	3	25.00%
Case study approach with out-of-district presenters	2	16.70%
Additional support after the academy	2	16.70%
More school management information and Information about adult psychology	2	16.70%
Politics associated with position	1	8.30%
More instructional leader training	1	8.30%
More transparency about role	2	16.70%
None	1	8.30%

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Twenty-five percent of study participants felt it would have been extremely beneficial if the leadership academy participants had more opportunities for shadowing or a year-long paid internship to allow them to really get a feel for the principal role.

Fuchsia (2001) expressed the following in his suggestion,

And you know, again, anytime that you have a classroom or you have seminar or a conference or otherwise, it, again, it gives you a very general idea of some of the things that happen. Nothing compared to the experience on a day-to-day basis. I think one of the advantages, one of the things that could have been done was maybe giving some release time—To shadow an assistant principal at various times, maybe once every nine weeks, four times a year or however long the Academy is. They go to a different school, because what they're doing is they're putting tools in your toolbox and not every tool is gonna work in every school, and it's not gonna work in every situation.

Several study participants spoke about the leadership academy or any training not being able to fully prepare individuals for the role of school principal because it is a role one must experience to really learn all aspects of the position. However, a little extra practice before taking on the role would help individuals be more prepared for the challenges associated with the position. Maroon (2003) shared that he shadowed a principal for one day as an academy requirement; but, more opportunities for shadowing would have increased the effectiveness of the opportunity and possibly allowed academy participants to participate more during the shadow day. Cobalt (2000) agreed that additional shadowing time would be extremely beneficial to academy participants. He suggested,

I'd like to see more of a practical piece where people have to go through almost like a—you have to go through your internship as a principal I know when you're doing that but I think it'd be nice if there was a paid type of internship where they had to go through even a year at some type of training school where they would actually get put in the seat of being an administrator. And then you would have somebody evaluate you, that helps you, that trains you. And really gets you ready to become an administrator. And I mean you wouldn't be on an administrator's salary. More of a teacher's salary. Whatever it would be that you were currently on before that and then something that would say either you know—there would be an evaluation that would say something like yes, you're ready to move on or no you're not. You may need some more practical experience or this is what I'd do.

Another suggestion was to focus more on some of the school management issues that may arise. Items such as hiring, navigating the politics of the district, and working with staff topped the list in this area. Jade (2004) stated,

Those are just some of the things that we talked about. We didn't, we did talk a little bit about some of the staff issues that you may come across, but we just kind of skimmed through. It wasn't something that we really focused on. And when you get your, when you step out into the fire of the principalship or an assistant principalship, you find that that is a big part of your job is motivating staff and getting them all on the same page and dealing with some of the things that you have to deal with, with a first time management.

Ruby (2000) expressed some of the same sentiments by stating he wished there was a piece on adult psychology and how to better work with adults. Both participants agreed this is something difficult to teach, yet raising the awareness level in these areas would have been helpful.

Two study participants suggested that having out-of-district presenters would be beneficial because it would provide a new perspective and would help the district remain progressive. Jade (2004) and Scarlet (2000) both spoke about the need to continue to learn from other districts to see what had worked or not worked in those districts. Jade (2004) put it this way,

And you bring in folks that are a product of this system, and they don't see things from a different perspective. It's just the same old stuff. And so, it's like we're really not—I don't know if I want to say we're not learning anything new, but we're not thinking outside the box on what we can do to improve student achievement, what we can do to help our faculty be better at what we do.

One study participant, Scarlet (2000), felt the academy approach should include more of a case study approach to allow for thoughtful reflection of how to handle various situations that arise as a school principal. Rose (2005) and Denim (2003) believed

that additional support for individuals after participation in the leadership academy would be beneficial. Rose (2005) believed that for participants unable to obtain principal positions but who district leaders believed would make good school principals should receive additional training. Denim (2003) and Wisteria (2000) felt the leadership academy did such a good job of preparing individuals to take on the school principal role, the district should provide continued professional development for individuals already in assistant principal or principal positions. The continued professional development would help current assistant principals and principals remain at an equal knowledge level with new administrators.

Denim (2003) also felt that the academy did not focus on instructional leadership, and because this was an important skill in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the academy should include it in the future. Adding to that sentiment, Denim (2003), Jade (2004), Yellow (2005), and Tangerine (2007) all felt data-driven decision making was the only aspect of No Child Left Behind (2002) that the leadership academy really delved into; however, additional information about school choice, accountability labels, and highly qualified teachers would have been beneficial.

Jade (2004) and Yellow (2005) felt the leadership academy should better address the increased risks and demands associated with the principal position by being more transparent about the job itself.

*Responses Coded by School Level*

The interview data were disaggregated by school level to determine if any patterns existed based on whether the individual worked at the high school, middle school, or elementary school level. No pattern appeared in the data.

For Question 1, how does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position, all study participants stated the academy was useful by discussing the “nuts and bolts” of the district. Participants used the term “nuts and bolts” to refer to the policies and procedures used by the district. The high school assistant principals stated that because their duties varied by position, e.g., there is an assistant principal of instruction, activities, curriculum, etc., the leadership academy covered the basics but did not cover all of the specifics associated with their position. Maroon (2003) and Fuchsia (2001), two high school assistant principals, were initially placed in charge of athletics, but this was an area not covered at all in the leadership academy.

Specifically, Maroon (2003) stated,

In the area of just school administration, I think it helped a lot. In the area of athletics and activities, not at all because we didn't touch on it. So when I got here, I had no idea about—I was never a coach, so I had no idea about the Arizona Scholastic Association, their rules or bylaws, or how much trouble you can get into if you violate them.

The middle school and elementary principals felt that the academy effectively covered the basics of all duties associated with their positions.

For Question 2, regarding the application and selection process enabling the district to identify and groom future leaders, none of the study participants had knowledge of the criteria used to select them as participants. One elementary school

principal, Cyan (2000), stated she was encouraged to enter administration by a colleague and that she applied to the leadership academy because it was a pre-requisite to entering the district's principal pool.

With regard to the ability of the leadership academy to aid participants in finding school principal positions, Question 3, all study participants expressed the same beliefs regardless of school level. All believed the experiences of the academy, the networking, and learning the "nuts and bolts" of the district, aided them as they went through the principal or assistant principal applicant process.

#### *Document Analysis*

All participants in the leadership academy were provided with a notebook and expected to add to the notebook as additional handouts were provided during meetings. In addition, participants were expected to maintain a portfolio, which included assignments from the leadership academy, three reflection papers, and a completed administrative hiring packet. The primary researcher reviewed the handouts for three of the four modules of the leadership academy. Module 3 was not reviewed because no handouts were provided to the primary researcher from this module.

The documents were analyzed using a researcher-created document analysis protocol developed from information received during the pilot study (Harper, 2008) and from the literature review. Specifically, the researcher reviewed the documents in each module to find evidence of the goals/objectives for the module, what items were included with each section, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards being covered, whether the documents clearly related to the principal role, organization

of the materials, ability to understand the materials on their own, information provided in the documents, and the purpose of the documents.

The front portion of the notebook included the vision, mission, values, and objective of the leadership academy. This was followed by a brief review of the ISLLC standards, an explanation of each module with objectives and a brief agenda for each meeting during the module, as well as the expectations of academy participants with portfolio information. The ISLLC standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1996) in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership. Table 3 describes the ISLLC standards as defined by the Southwest school district's leadership academy. Each standard was further broken down into three categories: knowledge required for the standard, the dispositions or attitudes manifested by the accomplishment of the standard, and performances that could be observed by an administrator who was accomplished in the standard (CCSSO, 1996).

Table 3

*The ISLLC Standards*

ISLLC Standard	Description
Standard 1	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.
Standard 2	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
Standard 4	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Standard 5	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6	An educational leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Table 4 indicates which ISLLC standards were covered within each module. The final documents in the introduction section of the notebook were a list of working definitions and acronyms important for academy participants to understand. The

notebook was divided into five sections: agendas, Module 1, Module 2, Module 3, and Module 4.

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Table 4

*Frequencies of ISLLC Standards Covered in Each Module*

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ISLLC standard	Modules	Percent
Standard 1	1	25%
Standard 2	1, 2	50%
Standard 3	4	25%
Standard 4	1, 3, 4	75%
Standard 5	3	25%
Standard 6	1	25%

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The agenda section was added to at each meeting of the leadership academy and provided more detailed information about each meeting. The agendas included the activities, a time guide, presenters, topics, and materials used as well as the objective for the day. The agendas were sent to mentors two days before the academy meeting and provided to participants at the beginning of the meeting.

Module 1 handouts covered the leadership section of the leadership academy and an overview of the concepts for this module was provided on page 3 at the beginning of the notebook. The ISLLC Standards covered by this module were 1, 2, 4, and 6. The primary handout for this section was an explanation of the ISLLC standards in more

detail than what was provided in the beginning section of the notebook. This handout was intended to be informational only, understandable on its own, and clearly related to the principal role. From reviewing the agendas for the meetings under this module, more handouts were provided to participants, but the researcher was not provided with those handouts to review. There were six academy meetings centered on this module.

Teaching and Assessing for Learning was the title for Module 2, and four meetings were dedicated to the material for this module. The goals of this section were outlined on page 4 of the notebook, which provided an overview of the module. The agendas for this section provided more detailed information. This module covered ISLLC Standard 2. This section included handouts about professional learning communities, an article on educational leadership, an example of the “quad” instructional focus, lesson plan template, a printout of the relationships PowerPoint presented, explanation of the staff evaluations with an example of the instrument, and related definitions. Each of these items were clearly related to the duties of the school principal, and all except the “quad” instructional focus handouts were easily understood by the researcher. These were documents that would be utilized by school principals throughout the district on a yearly basis. These handouts were used to provide information as well as to allow an individual to record information.

Module 3 pertained to equity within a school, and the only handout provided to the researcher for this module was the overview on page 5 of the notebook. This module covered ISLLC Standards 4 and 5, had four meetings dedicated to the material, and included one assignment for participants to complete.

Educational support services encompassed the curriculum of the final module of the leadership academy and were covered in four meetings. The overview was provided on page 6 of the notebook, and this section covered ISLLC Standards 3 and 4. There was a project due at the end of this module, and the only other assignment was an employee letter of direction. In this section of the notebook, there was information about the accountability system with a comparison of the Arizona and federal accountability systems. This was followed by an explanation blogging requirements and suggested books for further reading. These documents were clearly related to the principal role because accountability and school ratings were items all school administrators had to understand because it was how the school was rated. These documents were designed to provide information and were fairly easy to understand; however, they would be better understood if an explanation of the documents were provided to participants.

#### *Non-Participant Observations*

The primary researcher conducted two non-participant observations of academy meetings. The observations were conducted on February 4 and 11, 2009 during Module 4 of the leadership academy. Module 4 was dedicated to covering educational support services associated with being a principal, the managerial portion of the academy. The purpose of these observations was to gather further information about the presentation of information and engagement of leadership academy participants; however, none of the study participants described the academy being observed as the academy in which they participated. Therefore, there may be a slight disconnect between the previous data as described and the data from the observations, but a relationship exists between the

curricula of the various academy years. A few of the study participants were involved with the leadership academy being observed because they served as mentors for academy participants. The researcher also observed that the participants of the academy, the mentors, academy leadership team, and presenters were ethnically and gender diverse.

On February 4, approximately 45 individuals were present; 12 were male and 33 were female. The group consisted of 7 mentors, 4 facilitators, 3 presenters, and about 31 academy participants. The presentation covered employee agreements, legal and classified, and hiring and discipline of employees. This meeting included four presenters plus the breakout group discussion with mentors. At the beginning of the meeting, one of the leadership team members of the academy reviewed the agenda for the day and introduced the first guest speaker. No discussion of how the presentation related to prior presentations or the ISLLC standards was presented. The three district presenters discussed their topic as it related to the school principal role, and each provided examples of scenarios they had experienced over the years. The closing portion of this meeting involved a discussion about how to write a letter of direction for the provided scenario. This discussion was conducted between the mentors and academy participants, and the entire two-hour meeting was observed.

The second observation, February 11, 2009, was more of a participant-oriented lesson for individuals in the academy. There were approximately 42 individuals at this meeting, 14 male and 27 female. Several individuals arrived 15-20 minutes late to this session. Of the 42 individuals, 1 was the presenter, 4 were facilitators, about 7 were mentors, and 30 were participants. This meeting focused on student equity and the district

guidelines for student rights and responsibilities. There was one main speaker, who reviewed the objective and ISLLC standards for the meeting, with discussions led by mentors throughout the 2-hour observation. First, participants were given a section of the student rights and responsibilities manual to read and answer questions about. Then each group presented their section to the rest of the academy participants. The presentation was conducted jigsaw style, so each group had a different section of the code to present and at the end of the presentations, all sections of the code were shared with participants. Each group receiving a different discipline scenario and brainstorming how they would handle it followed the student rights and responsibilities jigsaw activity. These scenarios with possible solutions were then shared with the entire group. The mentors added feedback throughout the evening to enhance the discussion.

### Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of selective narrative data from interviews with academy participants, document analysis, and non-participant observations. The information was organized and analyzed by research question and further categorized into themes such as networking, preparation, impact of academy, and the application process. These categories illuminated key statements from individuals and in collective voices. The next chapter presents a discussion of findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5  
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS,  
IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study presents research on the participant-perceived effectiveness of a leadership academy as an instrument for the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, urban school district. It associates results to selective educational leadership theories linked with and applicable to recruitment and development practices with school leaders. This final chapter restates the research problem and reviews the methodology used. It continues with a summarization of results from the study and their implications on the use of leadership academies as a tool for the recruitment and development of school principals.

Overview of the Study

About 47 percent of the nation's teachers have master's degrees, many in school administration (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). However, it appears many shy away from administration jobs. Research has indicated that "limited mobility, inequitable salaries, escalating responsibilities, and little to no job security" (Shen, Cooley, & Ruhl-Smith, 1999, p. 353) were among factors that contributed to an administrator shortage. In addition, a study conducted by Hancock et al. (2006) of individuals seeking a principal certificate found that there were three primary inhibitors which kept individuals from moving into a school principal position: increased risk, personal needs, and insufficient

gain and/or personal benefit. Whitaker (1995) also conducted a study with regard to the contributing factors for principal burnout.

Research conducted by the Educational Research Service (ERS) on behalf of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in 1998 noted that some of the issues keeping individuals from stepping into the role of administrator were a lack of proper preparation and no systematic recruitment system. A leadership academy has been one method suggested to help school districts provide aspiring principals with the tools to handle the growing responsibilities of the position. In addition, the leadership academy provided participants with a network of support to help the individuals deal with the stress of the position. A leadership academy could also be a tool to aid school districts in the identification and development of potential school principals. This idea of “homegrown” leadership (Knapp et al., 2006) has been utilized in the business sector for decades (Tan & Wellins, 2006) to provide consistency and continuity of leadership. In addition, research conducted by Johnson and Donaldson (2007) found that delegating administrative duties to teacher leaders developed these individuals into potential future school principals. In addition, providing these individuals with the ability to perform certain administrative duties helped ease the pressure on the school principal by providing additional support for him/her.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceived effectiveness of a leadership academy designed as an instrument of professional development and recruitment for aspiring school principals in one urban school district. This study’s

findings were based on the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 leadership academy participants working as principals in a Southwest school district. Due to the limited research on the effectiveness of leadership academies as a tool for the development and recruitment of school principals, the researcher assembled from the literature theories and research that supported a conceptual framework for this study. Through the conceptual framework, research questions were developed to guide the study.

### Research Questions

The following overarching research question and three sub-questions were examined in this study:

How does participation in a leadership academy, as a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district?

#### *Sub-questions*

1. How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?
2. How does the application and selection process associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?

3. In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals' positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2005; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

#### Summary of Findings

For the purpose of this study, themes that emerged from the data were developed into assertions to reflect the commonalities of the findings as they pertained to the research questions and literature.

1. The leadership academy provides an avenue for the district to identify individuals interested in the principal position and get to know the leadership styles of each individual.
2. Participants believe the leadership academy aided in their preparation for a principal position in the district.
3. The application and selection process enables the district to identify individuals interested in the school principal position.
4. The leadership academy has been an indirect tool for recruitment.

A summary of each assertion is described below as a response to the overarching question guiding the study: How does participation in a leadership academy, a professional development instrument, impact the recruitment and development of school principals in a large, public, urban school district? This question sought insight into the overall perceived impact of the leadership academy on participants.

*Enables District to Get to Know Individuals*

All participants felt their participation in the leadership academy enabled district leaders to learn about them as well as provided the opportunity for them to get know leaders from within the district. During the 2000 and 2001 academy, participants expressed the belief that the academy assignments were part of the interview process, and individuals were selected to interview at certain schools based on the assignments they submitted. The perception of these individuals was that each assignment was designed to provide the district with information about the leadership style of the individual and an insight into their personality. For example, individuals in the leadership academy were sent to interview at specific schools based on the beliefs and leadership traits shared during academy assignments. Several of the assignments given to participants of the leadership academy provided the opportunity for them to reflect on how they would handle certain situations and on themselves as a leader. The mentors or facilitators of the academy then read through written reflections or led discussions on the topic, providing the opportunity for the facilitators to get to know the type of leader each academy participant would be as a school principal.

A few participants expressed the feeling of being a “small fish in a big pond” as a teacher, thus making it difficult to get to know individuals outside of their specific school. Through their participation in the leadership academy, these individuals had the opportunity to network with individuals outside of their school site and get to know district-level personnel. For instance, a few participants described the leadership academy as an opportunity for them to market themselves at the district level and get

outside of their comfort zone. In addition, a few participants shared that meeting some of the district personnel who would be on the interview committee for principal positions aided in their comfort level with the interview process.

This leadership academy was designed as a tool for the recruitment and development of school principals. As the conceptual framework indicated, in order to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of a leadership academy, two groups must be consulted: the leadership team directing the academy and the participants of the academy. The directors of this academy believed participants would benefit from the network of support created through the leadership academy (Harper, 2008). Based on the interviews, study participants felt the network created through their participation was one of the most beneficial aspects of the leadership academy.

#### *Aids Preparation for Principal Position in District*

Most participants felt the leadership academy provided the opportunity for them to learn about the politics, procedures, and policies of the district, thus further preparing them for a principal position in the district. The curriculum of the leadership academy focused on district expectations of school principals. For example, many participants stated the use of data to make decisions and write school improvement plans was a large part of their academy experience. The participants were given directions on how to access data, provided data of a school, and told to work to create a school improvement plan based on the data. Academy participants then had to present their school improvement plan at the next academy meeting. This activity incorporated procedures regulated by the state as well as skills the district expected a principal to possess. Another example was

the review of the district blue book used for disciplining a student. Many academy members recalled reviewing this document and how to use it when in a principal position. One study participant shared an activity in which participants were given a discipline scenario and had to determine how to resolve it using the blue book.

A few participants discussed learning some of the politics of the district through the leadership academy because the superintendent led it at the time. By the superintendent leading the academy, the values and vision for the district became clear to academy participants who then had to determine where they fit in that vision and if their values matched with those of other in the district.

The directors of the leadership academy believed individuals who participated in the academy would be more prepared for the school principal role (Harper, 2008). As depicted in the conceptual framework, the leadership academy was designed as a tool to combat the educational problem of school leader recruitment and development. Based on the interviews with study participants, the leadership academy helped participants feel more prepared for the role; however, improvements should be made to help the academy be more effective in developing future school principals.

#### *Identify Future Principals from Within District*

None of the participants recalled what criteria were utilized to select them for participation in the leadership academy after the applications were submitted; however, Jade recalled his supervisor at the time telling him she wanted him to participate because she had plans for him to take over her position as a leader in the district. Some participants stated they self identified their interest in becoming a school principal to their

supervisor at the time and were then sponsored for participation in the leadership academy by the supervisor. A few stated their supervisor encouraged them to participate in the leadership academy. The application and selection process led to the identification of individuals interested in being future school leaders, and for those selected to participate, it provided the district an opportunity to groom those individuals for a school principal position.

The application and selection process was designed to identify potential future school principals from within the district (Harper, 2008). As illustrated in the conceptual framework, the leadership academy in this district was designed to help recruit school principals, and by identifying potential candidates, the leadership academy was able to help the district recruit school principals.

#### *Recruitment Tool*

The leadership academy was a recruitment tool for the district because it enabled individuals within the district to identify themselves as potential candidates for school principal. In 2000 and 2001, leadership academy participants who were viable candidates for school principal positions within the district were sent on interviews based on their participation in the academy. At that time, individuals who wanted to become school principals within the district had to participate in the leadership academy. Since that time, participation has not been a requirement but a recommendation for individuals seeking a principal position. All participants stated that participation in the leadership academy did not guarantee a position or that the individual would be selected for the assistant principal or principal pool. So although the leadership academy provided an opportunity to learn

which individuals within the district were interested in a principal position, it was not the only method of recruitment used in the district.

The leadership academy was designed to aid this large, urban school district in recruiting school principals. The conceptual framework outlined the relationship of the leadership academy to the educational problem of principal recruitment and identified how this study added to the base of knowledge surrounding the use of the leadership academy as an instrument of recruitment. In addition, there were a few years, when participants in the academy were not seeking school principal positions but wanted to improve their leadership skills or become a leader in their division, e.g. maintenance. By allowing these individuals to participate, the district removed some of the prestige of being selected as an academy participant and stepped away from being a tool to recruit school principals. A few participants expressed disappointment that these additional individuals were allowed to participate because it changed the dynamic of the academy and took some of the shared opportunities away because the goals of the individuals varied.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings presented are related to each research question. Each question is restated along with the key findings, connections to the literature review, and implications for district leaders.

*Research Sub-Question 1*

How does the leadership academy prepare participants for the school principal position (Bass, 2006; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Knowles, 1978; McClelland, 1961; Pierce, 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Whitaker, 2001)?

The first research question focused on the perception study participants had of the ability of the leadership academy to prepare them for the school principal position. Based on responses to the interview questions, it was evident that all study participants felt that the leadership academy aided their preparation for the school principal position; however, the leadership academy alone would not have fully prepared them for the role. This aligned with Thomas Guskey's (1995) belief that districts should focus on designing professional development that filled in the gaps left from preparation programs. The optimal mix model for professional development focuses on designing professional development to meet the joint needs of individuals and districts. Based on feedback from the leadership academy participants, that appears to be what the district tried to accomplish through the leadership academy. Wisteria (2000) stated,

I did not have the skill set needed and I think—I mean, very humbly I say that. I feel like it built on my skill set. You know, obviously it didn't—just from going through that it did not turn and make me into an incredible assistant principal. I still had to be assistant principal and continue to learn and work on that even afterwards.

The district needed qualified individuals to be school principals, and the potential candidates needed a little more development before they were prepared to take on the duties of the position. Based on the suggestions stated of a few of the academy participants, one thing that seemed to be missing from Guskey's (1995) model was the

follow up and support component. Rose (2005) and Denim (2003) both stated that additional professional development once in a principal role or for aspiring principals after academy participation would be beneficial. In addition, Yellow (2005) commented that based on conversations she had with her peers, the focus and direction of the leadership academy seemed to vary slightly depending on who was leading the academy. Another piece of Guskey's (1995) model was to integrate old and new programs to allow professional development to evolve over time. This was important for the leadership academy to allow for consistency of the training over time and to help individuals who participated feel they were receiving the same benefits as previous participants.

When the leadership academy provided mentors to share experiences with academy participants, it added a valuable dimension for participants to learn about the role. The use of mentors in the leadership academy was similar to the succession practice used in the business sector, although it is not identical. The idea of succession planning was to identify potential leaders within the company for a specific leadership position and have them work with the current person in the position to prepare them to take over that role when the current person left (Tan & Wellins, 2006). The individual currently working in the leadership position served as a mentor to the aspiring leader being groomed to take over the role. Mentors and participants in the leadership academy did not share those exact roles but they were similar in that the mentors were current school principals providing guidance and sharing expertise with aspiring principals. According to an article by the National College for School Leadership (n.d.), succession planning in education could be a valuable systematic approach for the recruitment and development

of school leaders. This type of planning was also identified by Senge (1990) as valuable when developing professional development because it was part of “systems thinking,” which required individuals to view the larger picture to develop professional development that was sustainable over time. If developed with the big picture in mind, the leadership academy could be a long-term instrument of professional development to recruit and develop future school principals within a district and help large districts recruit from within the district. Individuals who feel more acclimated to the school principal role and understand the different aspects of the position are more likely to seek out the position and remain in the position (National College for School Leadership, n.d.). The leadership academy in this district provided opportunities for participants to try out some aspects of the position and attempted to familiarize participants with the role in an effort to help participants understand the expectations associated with the position. In addition, being a mentor helped decrease burnout among the current school principals because it provided an opportunity for them to collaborate with someone who may have a fresh perspective and provided the current principal with the opportunity to teach the aspiring principal (Whitaker, 1995).

#### *Research Sub-Question 2*

How does the application and selection process associated with the leadership academy enable the district to “identify and groom” future school principals (Briggs et al., 2006; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Roepke et al., 2000; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003)?

The second research question addressed the impact of the application and selection process on the ability of the district to identify and groom future school principals. In the framework of this question, a few additional determinations were made. The application process enabled current district principals to identify potential future principals as well as for individuals interested in the school principal position to self-identify to the district. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2004), being selective when choosing individuals to participate in a leadership academy was an advantage to the district because it allowed districts to choose individuals ready to take on the principal position. The programs selected individuals with a record of leadership experience within the district whose participation in the leadership academy would further develop them into a successful school principal. Several of the programs described also used the application as a tool to identify individuals who did not meet the criteria for participation in the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In this study, the participants were unaware of the criteria used to select them after their application was submitted. This selection process concurred with Bolman and Deals' (2003) structural frame of leadership. In the structural frame, as described in Chapter 3, the structure of the identification and selection process was a blueprint for expectations and exchanges among individuals within the district. This structure provided an avenue for aspiring school principals to identify themselves to the district and to apply to receive further development of their leadership skills.

Academy participants chose to apply to the academy to become a school principal or assistant principal within the district for one of three reasons. Forty-two percent

believed it was required to enter the principal pool, 33% believed it was highly recommended for individuals who wanted to become a principal in the district, and 25% were encouraged by a supervisor to participate to gain further insight into the principal position. These motivations aligned with David McClelland's (1961) motivational need for achievement, described in Chapter 3. The study participants had set goals for themselves and viewed the leadership academy as a tool to help them achieve their goals. For example, Denim (2003) expected to get a position as a school assistant principal when he completed his academy participation. Cyan (2000) shared the same expectation, that she would acquire a school principal or assistant principal position. Maroon (2004) and Wisteria (2000) expected to make it into the principal pool and be considered for positions based on their participation in the leadership academy. Each of these individuals had their own goals in mind when deciding to participate in the leadership academy because they believed participation would help them achieve their goal.

One requirement for participation in the leadership academy had been that participants held principal certification at the time of participation or would complete their certificate during their participation in the leadership academy. This was similar to the LAUNCH program implemented in the Chicago school district that sought to provide further development for individuals in the district already in possession of principal certification (Hart et al., 2006). The LAUNCH program and the Southwest leadership academy did not certify individuals for the principal position but focused on identifying individuals with an expressed interest in the position within the district and helped further prepare them for that position within the district.

Individuals who participated in the leadership academy were being groomed for a principal position within the district. The curriculum of the leadership academy included review of policies, procedures, and expectations of the district. For example, Cyan (2000) stated that the academy was getting the participants “ready for becoming a principal” in the district. Ruby (2000) shared,

And so, they would come and speak to us, and then we had professional development people who would come and train us on some aspects of either rights and responsibilities, curriculum and instruction, operations, activities that we’d have guest speakers to just kind of give us a little umbrella highlight of the operation of the district and who we could contact.

The document analysis and non-participant observations also supported the notion that individuals were being groomed for a position in the district because the lesson plan template, how to conduct personnel evaluations, employee discipline procedures, and a review of the district’s discipline procedures were among the components taught. This approach to professional development was correlated to Senge’s (1990) systems thinking approach. District leaders were thinking ahead by using the leadership academy as a tool to recruit and develop future school principals. Rather than developing a tool to solve an immediate problem, district officials stepped back to view the system as a whole and developed a professional development tool to aid in the long term as well as the short term. In addition, this approach complemented Guskey’s (1995) teamwork approach to professional development.

*Research Sub-Question 3*

In what way does participation in the leadership academy aid participants in finding school principals' positions within the district (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; McClelland, 1961; National College for School Leadership, n.d)?

Question 3 illuminated leadership academy participants' perceptions of the influence participation in the leadership academy had on their ability to garner a school principal position within the district. In the structure of this question, certain conclusions were drawn. All study participants stated the main benefit of the academy was the networking that occurred during participation. The academy provided an opportunity for teachers in the district, aspiring administrators, to become familiar with district personnel and resources. According to Leak et al. (1997), one of the core leadership domains is communication. The ability to communicate effectively with others throughout the district and community impacted whether an individual would be viewed as a successful school principal (Leak et al., 1997). Ruby (2000) illustrated the value of networking and communicating effectively with this example:

A lawyer came in and said to use before we were administrators and said, "If you ever have a decision that you're going to make whether it's policy or legal, call us. Talk to someone about it." And these are big decisions that we're making. Case and example, had an irate parent who—I'll give you an example. This is a true story. An irate parent called and said, "I heard that kids are being raped at your school and there's no letter being sent out. I'm going to the, I'm gonna call my lawyer and I'm gonna call the media, and I'm gonna call the district, and I want a response in an hour." So, I called a lawyer, and talking with a lawyer, the case was not about a student being raped or anything like that. And he said, "Just what I'm telling you. Tell her this, that everything is okay. You have been given this information, and, based on FERPA, I cannot talk about this case, because it's not your child. Your child is safe and good at school, doing well at school, and they are more than willing to call the District's office and speak to a lawyer if they want to." And it gave me the out.

By providing the opportunity for aspiring leaders to practice communicating with district leaders, the leadership academy was providing time for participants to learn how to best communicate in different situations. This also created a network of support for the academy participants who received a school principal position. Having the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and a network of support to reach out to when trying to solve difficult problems helped decrease burnout among school principals (Whitaker, 1995). This coincided with the human resource frame of leadership, described in Chapter 3, because the focus was on employee professional development (Bolman and Deal, 2003). The human resource frame focuses on support, empowerment, staff development, and responsiveness to employee needs. The leadership academy sought to meet the needs of participants by providing them with a better understanding of district expectations and structures. Networking also fulfilled the motivational need for affiliation (McClelland, 1961). Networking provided the opportunity for individuals to develop personal relationships through interactions with one another, and the ability to work with others satisfied this motivational need. Tangerine (2007), a high school assistant principal, provided this example,

Because of the people that I met there: my mentors, the presenters, the participants. Oh, absolutely. It was huge. Like I didn't know [Apple] before, and wouldn't have really known it the way I know now, and I wouldn't have experienced what she has to offer without being in the Academy. I mean our presenter—it was mostly like [Apple and Orange] were our two main people, though the mentors also presented like here and there. Yeah, one of our mentors presented evaluations. Oh, in fact, one of the mentors is a high school AP, and it's really important that I knew her from the Academy because now I have that connection with her, whereas I wouldn't have had that with her otherwise.

In addition, the leadership academy prepared participants for entrance into the district's principal and assistant principal pools. This aligned with Malcolm Knowles' (1978) adult learning theory. Adult learners are ready and willing to learn if they perceive the knowledge as benefiting their future goals. By preparing leadership academy participants to enter the principal and assistant principal pool, the participants were more willing to go through the learning process because they believed it would benefit their future goal of becoming a school principal.

#### Implications for Practice

From this research, several implications for districts with a leadership academy or developing a leadership academy are evident:

1. The academy application and selection process should be designed to enable the district to identify and groom future school principals. This process should be transparent so applicants are aware of the selection criteria being used.
2. Providing many varied opportunities for academy participants to shadow school principals or a paid internship would be extremely valuable. This would allow for actual experience prior to moving into the role and provide additional support for current school principals who may be on the verge of burnout.
3. Using current school principals and assistant principals as mentors within the leadership academy adds a valuable dimension to the experience.
4. Providing the opportunity for academy participants to meet individuals from throughout the district is an important piece in supporting the future school principals and assistant principals.

5. Providing follow-up professional development opportunities for individuals still trying to get a school principal or assistant principal position as well as those who do get a position is important.

### Conclusion

There is little research on the impact a leadership academy has as an instrument of professional development designed to recruit and develop future school principals. Researchers have commonly focused on the reasons individuals chose to enter or leave the school principal position rather than on ways to better develop and recruit them. Although this research has laid a foundation in determining what additional support school principals may need to keep them in the school principal position, the findings from this study provided an avenue in which researchers can begin to approach the school principal shortages from a different standpoint, a recruitment and development standpoint when discussing aspiring school principals.

Instead of continuing with the retention and attrition perspective, this study was approached using a recruitment and development standpoint to highlight one district's approach to the principal shortage. This study and the findings demonstrated a concentrated effort to acknowledge the 'homegrown' approach to school principal recruitment and development being used in one large urban school district. The findings highlighted the perceptions of individuals who went through the leadership academy prior to becoming a school principal and the impact of the program on them. These perceptions offered insight into a different approach to the school principal shortage often overlooked by researchers, educational leaders, and educational institutions.

Furthermore, the findings revealed suggestions for additional support to better prepare future school principals for the school principal positions within the district.

When discussing the school principal shortage, instead of focusing on the attrition factors, districts need to focus on recruitment and development strategies to encourage individuals to move into the school principal position. The way in which districts recruit and develop potential school principals needs to come to the forefront rather than remaining as an afterthought to combating the school principal shortage. This needs to take priority over the attrition and retention focus currently utilized by researchers and districts. Rather than focusing on those who leave or stay, focus needs to be placed on recruitment and how to use the research on attrition and retention to better support school principals.

School principals are still a group that will receive continued attention from researchers and scholars regarding their attrition, recruitment, and development. The magnitude of the impact school principals have on student achievement and the success of a school has been a focus of research and will continue to be a focus (Democracy at Risk, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Ylimaki, 2007). Researching what factors impact principal attrition and recruitment will also continue to receive attention (Bass, 2006; Briggs et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fennell & Miller, 2007; Hancock et al., 2006; Hoppe, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2007; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Laios et al., 2003; Pierce, 2000; Roepke et al., 2000; Shen et al., 1999; Tan & Wellins, 2006; Welber, 2003; Whitaker, 2003; Whitaker, 2001). The challenge for school districts and educational leaders is to integrate the research on

principal attrition and recruitment into principal professional development in an effort to decrease the principal shortage is essential. District-led professional development geared toward aspiring school principals within a district is needed. This research study provided a step in the direction of understanding the impact professional development geared toward aspiring principals could have on the recruitment of school principals.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The findings in this study suggested the following recommendations for further research.

1. Networking was a key finding in this study. Additional insight might be gained by conducting focus groups to include academy participants, mentors, and district administrators not directly involved with the academy. Through these focus groups, districts could gain more knowledge about the real impact of the leadership academy on the ability of the participants to effectively network with other individuals.
2. In this study, the sample included individuals from an eight-year time span. Districts could gain a better understanding of the true impact of the leadership academy by focusing on one group of participants from the same year to gain perceptions only about that particular year. This would be especially helpful because the academy director may change over time.
3. Conducting a longitudinal study following participants from before the academy begins, through the academy, and through one year after completion of the academy would also be beneficial. This longer study would enhance the

understanding of the effectiveness of the academy in achieving the goals set forth and through the perception of the individuals who participated.

4. The sample size for this study was small in proportion to the number of leadership academy participants over the eight-year period. Districts could gain better insight into the impact of the leadership academy through a larger sample size.
5. No data on the number of academy participants obtaining a school principal or assistant principal position after participation in the leadership academy were available. To better determine the impact of the leadership academy as a tool for recruitment, these data should be collected.
6. This research study was limited to one district. For future studies, a broader sample across several districts would be recommended.
7. Future research should also examine the impact a leadership academy has or does not have on the retention and attrition of school principals. Is there a difference in the retention rate for individuals who participate in the leadership academy versus those who do not? Attrition refers to the number of individuals leaving the principal position and retention refers to the number of those who stay in the principal position.
8. Research to investigate how leadership academies maintain the fidelity of the mission and to what extent the ability to maintain the fidelity impact the perceptions of the leadership academy would be beneficial.
9. Research to determine the impact of changes in district leadership on the sustainability of the leadership academy.

10. In a district that values cultural diversity and sensitivity, how does a leadership academy encourage cultural diversity in participants and how does the approach to this type of professional development aid in the advancement of culturally diverse individuals?
11. Research on the impact of leadership academies who partner with university programs and those who do not partner with university programs would also be beneficial. This research could help further the understanding of the impact universities could have on principal professional development within a district.

APPENDIX A: NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA COLLECTION  
PROTOCOL

1. The date, time, module, location, meeting number, and number of individuals will be recorded first.
2. The Principal Investigator will then observe the leadership academy presentation for a 30–45 minute period. The PI will use the observation sheet to record her observations with regard to participant interactions, structure of the presentation, objectives of the presentation, and participant involvement in the presentation. The PI will also look for the presenter to specify what leadership skills for the principal role are the foci for the day and make note of what materials are being used in the presentation.

**Non-Participant Observation Data Collection Protocol**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Module:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Participants:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Presenters:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Male:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Female:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of Mentors:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>a. Provides Overview</b> Did the presenter provide an agenda of what is going to be presented today?</p>	
<p><b>b. Related Presentation to Prior Presentations</b> Did presenter relate today's agenda with previous presentations?</p>	
<p><b>c. ISLLC Standard Presented</b> Did presenter provide the standards which will be covered by today's presentation?</p>	

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>d. Assess Prior Knowledge</b> Did presenter ask participants what they already know and understand about the presentation for today?</p>	
<p><b>e. Relate to Principal Role</b> Did the presenter discuss how today's presentation is related to the principal role and why this information is important?</p>	
<p><b>f. Material Presentation</b> How was material presented today – whole group, small group, pairs, individual, etc.?</p>	
<p><b>g. Presenter Behavior</b> Explanatory, directions oriented, discussion leader, teacher/student oriented, etc.</p>	
<p><b>h. Participant Behavior</b> Were participants engaged or passive? Were they on task and focused? Did they provide feedback and ask questions?</p>	
<p><b>i. Interactions</b> What interactions occurred between presenter/participants? Participant/participant? Presenter/mentor? Mentor/participant?</p>	
<p><b>j. Materials Used</b> What materials were used for today's presentation?</p>	
<p><b>k. Feedback</b> How did the presenter provide feedback to participants? How did participants provide feedback to presenter?</p>	

## APPENDIX B: NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION DATA

1. The date, time, module, location, meeting number, and number of individuals will be recorded first.

2. The Principal Investigator will then observe the leadership academy presentation for a 30–45 minute period. The PI will use the observation sheet to record her observations with regard to participant interactions, structure of the presentation, objectives of the presentation, and participant involvement in the presentation. The PI will also look for the presenter to specify what leadership skills for the principal role are the foci for the day and make note of what materials are being used in the presentation.

### Non-Participant Observation Data Collection Protocol

**Date:** February 11, 2009

**Time:** 4:00 pm – 6:00pm

**Meeting Number:** 16

**Module:** Four

**Number of Participants:** ~37

**Number of Presenters:** 1 plus mentors

**Male:** 13      **Female:** 24

**Number of Mentors:** 9 (2 absent today)

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>a. Provides Overview</b> Did the presenter provide an agenda of what is going to be presented today?	All participants received agenda handout Presenter reviewed agenda for the day and objectives.
<b>b. Related Presentation to Prior Presentations</b> Did presenter relate today's agenda with previous presentations?	Spoke briefly about main topics from previous meetings building up to this one.
<b>c. ISLLC Standard Presented</b> Did presenter provide the standards which will be covered by today's presentation?	None mentioned but did tie the material into state regulations

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>d. Assess Prior Knowledge</b> Did presenter ask participants what they already know and understand about the presentation for today?</p>	No prior knowledge reviewed and no assessment conducted.
<p><b>e. Relate to Principal Role</b> Did the presenter discuss how today's presentation is related to the principal role and why this information is important?</p>	<p>Dealing with discipline issues Student rights and responsibilities District/state policy Scenarios from real district situations</p>
<p><b>f. Material Presentation</b> How was material presented today – whole group, small group, pairs, individual, etc.?</p>	<p>Whole group – power point Small group activities – think/pair/share; collaboration</p>
<p><b>g. Presenter Behavior</b> Explanatory, directions oriented, discussion leader, teacher/student oriented, etc.</p>	<p>Explanatory at the beginning – objective, materials, activity directions Moved into directions oriented and then discussion leader Very clear and concise in language</p>
<p><b>h. Participant Behavior</b> Were participants engaged or passive? Were they on task and focused? Did they provide feedback and ask questions?</p>	<p>Ready to go and focused Worked cooperatively together – some read alone and then discussed while other groups divided the activity up and each completed one portion On task/topic conversation, respectful and thoughtful A few groups finished reading quickly allowing more time for discussion Asked questions during group time</p>
<p><b>i. Interactions</b> What interactions occurred between presenter/participants? Participant/participant? Presenter/mentor? Mentor/participant?</p>	<p>Mentor/Mentor – learned from each other during scenarios Mentor/Participant – discussions before meeting started, mentors helped guide discussion and answer questions, when sharing out mentors added their experience to discussion, 'devil's advocate' approach when looking at discipline scenarios Presenter/Participant - walked around to monitor groups and answer questions Participant/Participant – interactive discussion, respectful behavior</p>

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>j. Materials Used</b> What materials were used for today's presentation?	Handouts, booklets, scenarios, readings – presented altogether in one packet Power point
<b>k. Feedback</b> How did the presenter provide feedback to participants? How did participants provide feedback to presenter?	As presenter monitored & answered questions she would confirm “good questions” or “thank you” Provided additional information and clarifications as needed Presenter, mentors, and participants provided feedback during share out discussions

Other Observations: The facilitators/presenters work with a flexible schedule rather than a strict one to allow for group needs to guide the session; Agendas handed out are very specific and easy to follow/use as a guide

### **Non-Participant Observation Data Collection Protocol**

**Date:** February 04, 2009

**Time:** 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

**Meeting Number:** 15

**Module:** Four

**Number of Participants:** ~37

**Number of Presenters:** 4

**Male:** 10      **Female:** 27

**Number of Mentors:** 11

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>a. Provides Overview</b> Did the presenter provide an agenda of what is going to be presented today?	Reviewed agenda first 10 minutes or so: reviewed materials needed, the plan for this meeting and next meeting
<b>b. Related Presentation to Prior Presentations</b> Did presenter relate today's agenda with previous presentations?	Answered questions from previous session No – did not review anything from previous sessions in relation to today's presentation
<b>c. ISLLC Standard Presented</b> Did presenter provide the standards which will be covered by today's presentation?	Standards not discussed but listed in binder

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>d. Assess Prior Knowledge</b> Did presenter ask participants what they already know and understand about the presentation for today?</p>	No – all presenters seemed to assume that participants knew little to nothing about the discipline and hiring of employees.
<p><b>e. Relate to Principal Role</b> Did the presenter discuss how today's presentation is related to the principal role and why this information is important?</p>	<p>HR presenters related to problems they have been approached with by individuals who are new leaders and how they recommend discipline being handled with individuals you supervise; provided examples to illustrate what was being presented; The first HR presenter also kept relating her discussion back to the academy assignment for the day – letter of direction</p> <p>ELI presenter related slightly to principal benefits and how they have helped with those</p>
<p><b>f. Material Presentation</b> How was material presented today – whole group, small group, pairs, individual, etc.?</p>	<p>Whole Group – Lecture only (80 min)</p> <p>Small Group – mentor/mentee time (25 min)</p>
<p><b>g. Presenter Behavior</b> Explanatory, directions oriented, discussion leader, teacher/student oriented, etc.</p>	<p>HR – explanatory only with some examples; answered questions from participants</p> <p>ELI – explanatory only; answered questions from participants</p>
<p><b>h. Participant Behavior</b> Were participants engaged or passive? Were they on task and focused? Did they provide feedback and ask questions?</p>	<p>Focused and appeared mostly engaged (2 individuals seemed a little off task but polite)</p> <p>During HR presentation asked thoughtful question and ELI asked very few questions.</p>
<p><b>i. Interactions</b> What interactions occurred between presenter/participants? Participant/participant? Presenter/mentor? Mentor/participant?</p>	<p>Mentor/Participant: shared experience related to today's topics and added to examples shared by presenters; mentor led breakout session at the end by facilitating discussion and answering questions.</p> <p>Presenter/Participant: mostly passive, sit and get with little interaction</p> <p>Participant/Participant: before meeting started lots of chatter and interaction; during break out session at the end also a lot of interaction and discussion</p>
<p><b>j. Materials Used</b> What materials were used for today's presentation?</p>	Copied handouts of some items being discussed however there were some items referenced but no handouts provided

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>k. Feedback</b> How did the presenter provide feedback to participants? How did participants provide feedback to presenter?	HR randomly checked for understanding by asking questions like “does that make sense?”  ELI asked for little feedback and didn’t really check for understanding.  Academy Facilitators provided feedback to participants by acknowledging the thoughtful questions

## APPENDIX C: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

**Module:** \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>a. Goals/Objectives</b> Are the goals/objectives of this module clear in the binder?</p>	
<p><b>b. Items</b> What items are in this section of the binder?</p>	
<p><b>c. ISLLC Standards</b> Are the ISLLC standards covered under this module clear?</p>	
<p><b>d. Relate to Principal Role</b> Is it clear how the materials relate to the principal role? Could these items be adapted and used once in the principal role?</p>	
<p><b>e. Material Presentation</b> How are the materials for this module organized? Are they understood on their own or is more information needed?</p>	
<p><b>f. Information</b> What information is provided within the documents used in this module?</p>	
<p><b>g. Design</b> Are the documents designed to provide information, record information, reflect, or all of the above?</p>	

## APPENDIX D: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS DATA

**Module: One - Leadership**

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>a. Goals/Objectives</b> Are the goals/objectives of this module clear in the binder?	If you look at the agendas from this section and a page toward the beginning of the notebook the module is outlined with objectives included
<b>b. Items</b> What items are in this section of the binder?	Only a copy of the ISLLC standards
<b>c. ISLLC Standards</b> Are the ISLLC standards covered under this module clear?	All standards were reviewed in this module as part of the introduction to the academy; however, only standards 1, 2, 4, 6 were focused on during this module
<b>d. Relate to Principal Role</b> Is it clear how the materials relate to the principal role? Could these items be adapted and used once in the principal role?	The ISLLC standards are clearly related to the principal role because they are the expectations for school principals.
<b>e. Material Presentation</b> How are the materials for this module organized? Are they understood on their own or is more information needed?	This module did not have a lot of materials presented within it but appeared to go in a logical order and were easily understood on their own; from looking at the agendas for this module some of the handouts are missing
<b>f. Information</b> What information is provided within the documents used in this module?	Only the ISLLC standards were provided for review
<b>g. Design</b> Are the documents designed to provide information, record information, reflect, or all of the above?	This document was designed only to provide information

Note: the agendas for this module (9/24, 10/01, 10/08, 10/15, 10/22, and 11/5 indicate that more than the ISLLC standards were reviewed however no supporting documents were supplied.

**Module: Two – Teaching and Assessing for Learning**

	<b>Evidence</b>
<p><b>a. Goals/Objectives</b> Are the goals/objectives of this module clear in the binder?</p>	Clearly outlined on page 4 of notebook and on the agenda for the 4 meetings (11/12, 11/19, 12/3, 12/10)
<p><b>b. Items</b> What items are in this section of the binder?</p>	Handouts about professional learning communities, an EDL article, “Quad” instructional focus, lesson plan template, relationships power point, evaluation explanation (both for classified and appointed staff), related definitions
<p><b>c. ISLLC Standards</b> Are the ISLLC standards covered under this module clear?</p>	Listed on page 4 – overview of the module
<p><b>d. Relate to Principal Role</b> Is it clear how the materials relate to the principal role? Could these items be adapted and used once in the principal role?</p>	Yes – how to evaluate staff and create a professional learning community as well as build relationships are clearly related to the role; The items would be tools participants could use after the academy and easily adapt them for their use.
<p><b>e. Material Presentation</b> How are the materials for this module organized? Are they understood on their own or is more information needed?</p>	Broken into sections that flow from one to another – based on the agendas provided  Most are easily understood on their own; however the “quad” instructional focus needs more information to be understood
<p><b>f. Information</b> What information is provided within the documents used in this module?</p>	Tools to be used in the role: lesson plan template, evaluation directions, “quad” instructional focus
<p><b>g. Design</b> Are the documents designed to provide information, record information, reflect, or all of the above?</p>	Professional Learning communities, EDL article, and relationships power point appear to be informational only  The lesson plan template, evaluation directions, “quad” instructional focus appear to be tools to reflect upon or record information.

**Module: Four – Educational Support Services**

	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>a. Goals/Objectives</b> Are the goals/objectives of this module clear in the binder?	Page 6 shares the goals and objectives for this module
<b>b. Items</b> What items are in this section of the binder?	Accountability system – AZ v. Federal AZ accountability packet AYP Packet Explanation of IDEAL Blogging and suggested books
<b>c. ISLLC Standards</b> Are the ISLLC standards covered under this module clear?	Indicated on page 6 of the notebook
<b>d. Relate to Principal Role</b> Is it clear how the materials relate to the principal role? Could these items be adapted and used once in the principal role?	The materials are clearly related to the principal role and could be adapted to fit the style of the principal because all items deal with the management of a school – accountability and labeling
<b>e. Material Presentation</b> How are the materials for this module organized? Are they understood on their own or is more information needed?	All are aspects of accountability and could be understood on their own with a little bit of background; however, someone explaining the documents and going through discussion would be better.
<b>f. Information</b> What information is provided within the documents used in this module?	Accountability – what AZ learns and AYP are, why they are important, labeling, what IDEAL is and how it can be useful
<b>g. Design</b> Are the documents designed to provide information, record information, reflect, or all of the above?	The documents are designed solely to provide information.

Note: based on the agendas for the 2/4, 2/11, 3/11, and 3/18 meetings, additional handouts were provided to participants but not to the reviewer.

## APPENDIX E: E-MAIL RECRUITMENT LETTER

Title of Project: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of an Urban School District Leadership Academy for Principal Recruitment and Professional Development: A Case Study.

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research study. The purpose of the study is to evaluate how participation in a leadership academy, a professional development instrument, impacts the recruitment and development of school leaders in a large, public, urban school district. You are eligible to participate because you are employed by TUSD, have participated in the leadership academy, and currently work as a principal or assistant principal in the district.

If you agree to participate, your participation will involve 1 interview(s) about your experience as a participant. The interview(s) will take place in a location convenient for you and will last approximately 60-90 minutes. You may choose not to answer some or all of the questions. During the interview(s), written notes will be made in order to help the investigator review what is said. Your name will not appear on these notes. The researcher will also ask for your permission to tape record the interview to increase the accuracy of the information provided. Your name will not be associated with the tape recording, and the recording will be destroyed after transcription.

Any questions you have will be answered, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. There are no known risks from your participation, and no direct benefit from your participation is expected. There is no cost to you except for your time, and you will not be compensated for your participation.

The researcher will provide you with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity and protect the confidentiality of the information shared. Only the principal investigator will have access to your name and the information that you provide. In order to maintain your confidentiality, your name will not be revealed in any reports that result from this project. Interview information will be locked in a cabinet in a secure place.

You can obtain further information from the principal investigator, Jennifer Harper, Ed.D. candidate, at (520) 626-6818. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721.

By participating in the interview(s), you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

Thank you.

Jennifer Harper, M. Ed.  
University of Arizona  
Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT

### *Leadership Academy Study*

#### **Introduction**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. Study personnel will be available to answer your questions and provide additional information. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. A copy of this form will be given to you.

#### **What is the purpose of this research study?**

The purpose of this case study is to evaluate how participation in a leadership academy, a professional development instrument, impacts the recruitment and development of school leaders in a large, public, urban school district. At this stage in the research, the leadership academy will be generally defined as professional training provided by a district to help train current employees as future school leaders.

#### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

You are being invited because you participated in the district's leadership academy and are currently employed in the district as a principal or assistant principal.

#### **How many people will be asked to participate in this study?**

Approximately fifteen individuals who have participated in the academy will be to participating in the study.

#### **What will happen during this study?**

Approximately fifteen semi-structured interviews will be conducted and transcribed for further analysis. The interviews will then be analyzed for certain themes based on current literature. Once this analysis is complete, conclusions will be drawn from the data about the impact of the leadership academy on retention and recruitment of school leaders in the district and submitted in a scholarly paper.

#### **How long will I be in this study?**

Approximately 60-90 minutes will be needed from each participant to complete this study. During this time you will be asked to answer questions about your participation in the leadership academy. You do not have to answer all of the questions.

#### **Are there any risks to me?**

The things that you will be doing have little social risk and little risk of breaching confidentiality. Although I have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions I ask may be stressful or upsetting to you. If this occurs you can stop participating immediately. I can give you information about individuals who may be able to help you with these problems.

**Are there any benefits to me?**

The question and answer process may prove beneficial as you reflect on your experiences as an educational leader and this study may be used to inform others of the perceived impact on recruitment and development of school leaders that a leadership academy as an instrument of professional development has for a district.

**What are the alternatives for participating in this study?**

The alternative is not to participate in this study.

**Will there be any costs to me?**

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

**Will I be paid to participate in the study?**

There will be no compensation for your participation.

**Will video or audio recordings be made of me during the study?**

I will make an audio recording during the study so that I can be certain that your responses are recorded accurately but only if you check the first box below:

I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

I do NOT give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

**Will the information that is obtained from me be kept confidential?**

The only persons who will know that you participated in this study will be the research team members: Jennifer Harper (primary researcher) and Dr. John Taylor (professor). Elizabeth Moll, the professional development director for TUSD, will know which names she provided me; however, she will not know which individuals actually participated in the study. Also, the only individual who will know your responses to questions will be the principal investigator, Jennifer Harper, as your name will be changed in the research to protect your identity as well the name of the schools represented.

Your records will be confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the study. It is possible that representatives of the sponsor that supports the research study will want to come to The University of Arizona to review your information. Representatives of regulatory agencies (including The University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program) may access your records.

**What if I am harmed by the study procedures?**

If your participation in this study mentally or physically harms you, you will be referred to the proper services.

**Notice of Confidentiality**

Your records will be confidential. Neither you nor your school will be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

**May I change my mind about participating?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to not begin or to stop the study at any time. Your refusing to participate will have no effect on your employment. You can discontinue your participation with no effect on your employment. Also any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

**Whom can I contact for additional information?**

You can obtain further information about the research or voice concerns or complaints about the research by calling the Principal Investigator Jennifer Harper, Ed. D. Candidate at (520) 626-6818. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research participant, have general questions, concerns or complaints or would like to give input about the research and can't reach the research team, or want to talk to someone other than the research team, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. (If out of state use the toll-free number 1-866-278-1455.) If you would like to contact the Human Subjects Protection Program via the web, please visit the following website: <http://www.irb.arizona.edu/contact/>.

**Your Signature**

By signing this form, I affirm that I have read the information contained in the form, that the study has been explained to me, that my questions have been answered and that I agree to take part in this study. I do not give up any of my legal rights by signing this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

**Statement by person obtaining consent**

I certify that I have explained the research study to the person who has agreed to participate, and that he or she has been informed of the purpose, the procedures, the possible risks and potential benefits associated with participation in this study. Any questions raised have been answered to the participant's satisfaction.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of study personnel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Study personnel Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL  
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

1. How long have you worked for the district?
2. What positions have you held in the district and prior to joining the district?
3. What is your current principal position? Describe the duties of this position.
4. Describe your educational experiences (probe for degrees held and fields).

Academy

5. Describe the mission and goals of the academy (as you understand them).
6. In your opinion, how do the mission and goals of the academy tie into the mission and goals of the district?
7. What was taught during the academy? How was this information delivered?
8. Describe the academy experience (probe for interactions, style of delivery, projects, knowledge gained, etc.).
9. Describe the differences between the academy and your university principal preparation program?
10. Were you able to provide any feedback about the academy design? If so, how was that provided? If not, what are your thoughts about this? (Was your feedback accepted and used?)
11. What knowledge was gained from the academy? Did you learn any new information that you've been surprised about through the academy?
12. Describe improvements you would like to see in the academy to further aid in the development of school principals.

Recruitment

13. To your knowledge, what criteria were used to select participants for the academy (describe the process, why do you believe you were selected)?
14. Describe the events leading up to your participation in the academy (probe for recommendation, why interested, etc.).
15. Describe the professional goals that related to your participation in the academy. How did your participation aid you in achieving these goals?
16. Describe your participation in the academy (length of the training, support received). Did the academy, as professional development, last as long as you expected?
17. In what way has the academy enhanced or hindered your professional networking ability? Describe.
18. Describe what your expectations were upon completion of the academy (probe for position changes, placement, remain in district, etc.).
19. What effect, if any, do you feel your participation in the leadership academy had on your desire to accept a principal position?

Development

20. How does the academy prepare participants to handle the "new" demands of school principals (e.g. accountability, data-driven decision making, highly qualified teachers, school choice, etc.)?

21. In your opinion, how does academy participation develop future school principals for the increased demands and risks, both professional and personal, associated with the principal position?
22. Describe what your concerns were about having a school principals' role (probe for challenges, insecurities, barriers). How, if at all, did the academy address these concerns?
23. What skills did you gain or experience growth in from your participation in the leadership academy?
24. How do you feel the leadership academy aided your ability to fulfill the duties of your current position as a principal?

Other

25. Is there anything I left out? Is there anything else you feel I should know?

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