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Principal Perceptions of the Relevancy of the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies

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Principal Perceptions of the Relevancy of the

K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies

By

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the relevancy of the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies as perceived by practicing Minnesota principals. The study used a mixed-methods approach. First, a quantitative survey was administered to Minnesota principals. The survey asked respondents to consider the relevance of each of the 16 Minnesota principal competencies. Based on the results of the survey, principal focus groups were held to gather additional input, including recommended changes to principal preparation programs within the state. While affirming the competencies currently in place, this dissertation provides policymakers with practitioner perspective and recommendations for improving principal preparation within the state of Minnesota.

Key Words: Principal, Leadership, Policy, Competencies

Acknowledgements

To paraphrase a friend, writing a dissertation is one of the more selfish things a person can do during their life. Now that mine is completed, I have even more admiration and respect for those that have completed such a task. However even more so, it has become glaringly obvious to me that while the act of writing can be quite lonely, the support and understanding of others throughout the process is crucial. I suppose my journey has been no different than others, in that I have benefited from an unbelievably supportive family, patient colleagues and encouraging university.

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Introduction

Educational research (e.g., Marzano, Waters, McNulty 2005; Wahlstrom, Seashore, Leithwood, 2010) conducted over the past 10 years on the role and impact of the school principal provides solid academic support for comments made by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in 2010. In remarks made to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., Secretary Duncan referred to the responsibility of school administrators to lead reform efforts within our nation's schools.

> And we know what it takes: great principals and teachers and a professional learning culture where everyone takes responsibility -- from parents and students to educators. We all must be held accountable for these outcomes. We have learned from NCLB that if we don't mandate real consequences in these struggling schools, nothing will change -- and none of us can accept that. We have reached this stage of education reform after decades of trying, failing, succeeding and learning. We're building on what we know works -- and doesn't work -- and while there are still some honest policy disagreements among key stakeholders, there is far more consensus than people think.

Later in 2010, in comments supporting the development of the National Board of Certified Administrator project, Duncan was even more direct, stating, "There are no good schools in this country without good principals. It simply doesn't exist" (NBPTS, 2010, p. 4).

Adding to this sense of responsibility and accountability is language found within the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. NCLB requires principals to not only ensure accountability measures are being met at the teacher and school level, but also includes significant school re-organization consequences (including principal re-assignment) if school improvement efforts do not yield increased student performance on standardized tests.

National principal accountability measures changed dramatically with the 2001 passing of NCLB. The law states that by 2014, all students attending public schools will be proficient in the areas of reading and mathematics. Schools that do not make adequate yearly progress are placed on the "Needs Improvement" list. Not making adequate yearly progress sets off a series of consequences, ranging from a first-year warning to an eventual school re-structuring including principal re-assignment (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010).

Within the politicized world of public education, few words have had greater influence than the ones first introduced in 1983: "Our nation is at risk." While principal standards and skills were not specifically addressed within the report, it did recognize that "principals play a crucial role in developing school and community support" (NCEE, 1983, p. 6). To critics of public education who point to increased costs, drop-out rates, and America's continued decline in international educational rankings, it may appear that the call included within *A Nation at Risk* went unanswered.

Since *A Nation at Risk*, educational research has exploded in the area of the principal's affect on schools. Prominent educational scholars (e.g., Marzano, Darling-

Hammond) have conducted scholarly research on the role of the principal in leading American school reform efforts. Recent studies find that other than direct classroom instruction provided by teachers, it is the actions and beliefs of the school principal that have the most significant affect on student learning (Wahlstrom, Seashore, Leithwood, 2010). With the attention placed on public school accountability and the principal's role within school leadership coupled with the emergent findings of principal impact on student achievement, it is natural to examine the skills and knowledge needed to lead such important work.

Problem Statement

To become a licensed principal in the state of Minnesota, candidates must demonstrate entry-level aptitude in 16 distinct competencies. Principal competencies are included in state rule and are developed by the Minnesota Board of School Administrators. This governor-appointed board, comprised of state officials, representatives from higher education, and practicing school administrators, has rule-making authority to determine licensing guidelines for state principals, superintendents, community education directors and special education directors.

The 16 competencies serve as the framework for Minnesota principal preparation programs. However, a study of the relevancy of these competencies, as viewed by practicing Minnesota principals, had not yet been conducted. As the state licensing board continues to expect principal preparation programs to deliver standards- and research-based programs to prospective principals, current practitioners can provide valuable insight on how the competencies relate to the realities of the principalship.

Research Question and Purpose

This mixed-method study sought to answer the following question: What is the relevance of the Minnesota principal competencies to Minnesota principals? Practicing K-12 Minnesota principals were invited to evaluate the relevancy of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions included in the Minnesota competencies. The primary purpose of my research was to provide various stakeholders in Minnesota K-12 educational administration (higher education, licensing committees, superintendents and practicing principals) with useful information related to the skills and knowledge required for school principals.

A secondary focus of the research was to enhance and inform the work of those in preparatory principal programs. As higher education continues to prepare candidates for the 21st century principalship, it is important that the skills and abilities outlined in preparatory programs are aligned with the realities of the position. An aim was to describe the nature of the relationship between what is taught to aspiring principals and what current principals view as the realities of the position.

Finally, the results from this study are intended to inform the work and direction of the Minnesota Board of School Administrators as they continue their work of ensuring rigorous and relevant preparation of school administrators. By identifying principal perceptions of the Minnesota competencies in relation to the realities of the principalship, the study provides state policymakers with data and analysis that can be useful when Minnesota standards are reviewed and revised.

Significance of the Research

The professional significance of this study is highlighted by the demographic realities of the Minnesota principalship and the increased attention on principal performance at the national and state level. This includes high-stakes testing requirements, administered at the state level, found in current federal legislation (most commonly referred to as "No Child Left Behind").

The state's 343 school districts continue experiencing principal turn-over and transitions. Principal retirements have occurred at a steady pace throughout the state for the past 15 years. Joann Knuth, executive director of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, indicated that "since 1995, we have lost significant experience within our schools, and yes they are getting replaced, but there is always scarcity of top-quality school administrators" (J. Knuth, personal communication, June 2009). Principal turnover research conducted by Norton (2002) and Fuller, Baker, Young (2007) point to lack of continuity and the inability to build positive, lasting relationships with stakeholders as challenges posed by personnel changes in the principal position.

In recent years, Minnesota has begun a number of initiatives focused on professional development and licensing of principals. In 2006, the Minnesota Legislature began funding the Minnesota Principal's Academy, a professional development opportunity coordinated through University of Minnesota's College Readiness Consortium. The Academy was established in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the University of Minnesota. Its design is based on the

leadership standards developed by the National Institute for School Leadership, and mobilizes "academy members to put leadership best practices from education, business, the military and other fields to work on behalf of their students and schools" (University of Minnesota, 2010, p.1).

In April 2010, the Minnesota Board of School Administrators established a principal performance assessment task force charged with designing a performance-based assessment framework for principal licensure. The work of the task force is motivated by concerns over quality control within higher education institutions and the desire to be proactive with increased accountability expectations from the federal and state level. The task force is examining models developed by education organizations such as the Interstate Standards for Licensing Leaders and the National Board of Professional Administrators. State models are also being examined including elements and processes found within the Connecticut Assessment for Principals.

Most recently, representatives from the state's educational leadership associations established a task force charged with designing a comprehensive principal evaluation tool to be used in Minnesota schools. Representatives and executive directors from the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Board of School Administrators developed a framework and process that can be implemented by superintendents and principals to identify professional growth targets, document progress over time, and indicate performance level in both a formative and summative manner. The rationale for the establishment of the evaluation

was to not only provide a useful tool for school administrators but to also provide evidence to Minnesota legislators that the education profession is committed to demonstrating progress in its efforts to improve principal performance.

While each of these endeavors casts further attention on the importance of the principalship, what is unclear is their alignment to the realities of the principalship.

Methodology

What follows is an overview of the methodology that was used for the research. Included in this section is a general description of the participants, sampling methods used and the rationale for such methods. The research design and data collection procedures are discussed next. The section concludes with a description of the data analysis procedures that were utilized. A complete description of the study's research methodology is found in chapter three.

Research design. A mixed-methods research methodology was used for this study. Mixed-methods research includes combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods in order to provide a fuller understanding of the research problem. For this study, the quantitative sample and data analysis informed the creation of the qualitative elements of the study.

Participants. The target population for this research proposal was Minnesota school principals. This determination was made based on their professional investment in state principal standards. Delimiting the sample to include only Minnesota principals was based on the relevance of Minnesota standards to Minnesota administrators and the researcher's access to the state's K-12 principals. Utilizing the distribution list from the

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals and the Minnesota Elementary

School Principals Association, the intention was to survey the school principal population

in Minnesota. Participants in the qualitative element of the study were derived from the

quantitative participants.

   Data collection. First, a digital survey asked respondents to complete a Likert scale

rating of the Minnesota principal competencies. Specifically, participants were asked to

rate the competencies in terms of their relevancy to the daily professional life of a school

principal. For this study, relevancy wa defined as a concept that encompasses

importance, meaning and value.

     Focus groups were conducted once the quantitative survey had been administered.

The purpose of the focus groups was to provide participants the opportunity to share

additional perspective on the relevance of the Minnesota principal competencies and for

the researcher to further investigate themes from the quantitative survey. Further, focus

groups assisted in efforts to increase the reliability and validity of the quantitative data

that was collected in the survey. Focus group participants were asked open-ended

questions addressing high-frequency responses from the survey. These responses served

as the organizational method for data collected during focus group meetings.

   Principals for the focus groups were not randomly selected. Rather, focus group

locations were determined first, with proximate principals invited to attend.

   Data analysis. The collection of both numeric and narrative data required a mixed-

method approach to data analysis. Quantitative data was organized in relation to the

Likert scale rating of each competency. The qualitative aspects of the study were coded

based on the Minnesota competencies. Each competency was organized as a primary node, and data analysis was based on field notes taken during focus group interviews.

Definition of Key Terms

The terms defined in this section have been selected based on their direct relation to the research.

Competency. An identified skill, knowledge-base or capacity (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

Relevancy. A concept that encompasses importance, meaning or value.

Mixed-methods research. An approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms (Creswell, 2009).

Summary

The preceding introduction provides an overview of the increased emphasis and accountability placed on principal leadership within schools. The chapter includes a description of how principals are licensed in Minnesota and the state's reliance on 16 leadership competencies. A synopsis of the research study is provided, along with the study's rationale and professional significance. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the methodology that was used and definitions of key terms that were used in the study.

The next chapter details the review of literature that has been conducted related to the research study. In order to assist Minnesota principal preparation programs in remaining relevant and grounded in best practice, it is important to report on the latest research associated with principal impact on student learning, accountability and standards.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

In the last ten years, scholarly research has confirmed what many in education have believed for a long time; high quality educational leadership positively impacts student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, Orr, 2010; Morrow, 2003; Marzano et al, 2005; & Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Because the focus of the research study is the relevance of the Minnesota principal competencies, it is important to examine the role of the principal.

The research selected for inclusion in the review of literature describes the principals' role in student learning, principal accountability for school improvement, highly effective principal preparation programs, principal standards and principal licensure. These areas align to the research study by establishing the importance of the principalship in improving schools, demonstrating how principal standards have developed over time, and comparing regional principal licensure programs. These specific components of the principalship provide guidance to the researcher by developing a richer understanding of the subjects examined and a clear link to the research study's focus on Minnesota principal competencies.

Principals and Student Learning

In reviewing the literature, four categories emerged on the principal's influence on student achievement: setting direction, leadership, school culture, and collaborative decision-making.

Setting direction. Hallinger and Heck (2000) indicated that principals impact school performance by setting direction, establishing organizational structures, and shaping shared goals. Successful principal leadership guides school policies, procedures and practices that contribute to student learning. Researchers Marzano et al. (2005) reaffirmed these findings, identifying principal focus (defined as "establishing clear goals and keeping those goals in the forefront of the school's attention,") as a key principal practice affecting student achievement (p. 42). Given the impact of principals in these areas, it is important to determine practicing Minnesota principals' perceptions on the competencies related to setting direction.

Leadership. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) found three specific leadership areas in which the principal affects student learning: collective, shared and instructional leadership. They found that collective leadership is linked to student achievement through an educational leader's ability to affect teachers' efficacy within the classroom. Shared leadership, defined as "teachers' influence over, and participation in, school-wide decisions with principals," assists with the development and sustainment of professional learning communities (p.41). These learning structures allow teachers and principals to share instructional values, create a common focus on student learning, and collaborate on curriculum and instruction. Within an instructional leadership model, principals impact student achievement through direct involvement in classroom instructional practices, strong teacher-principal relationships, and the strengthening of professional communities centered on student learning.

Further, Marzano et al. (2005) identified 21 leadership roles and responsibilities which have a considerable impact on student achievement. A full listing of these responsibilities is found in Appendix A. According to the researchers, a .25 average effect size exists between student achievement and learning. Marzano et al. (2005) point to the substantial effect of principals on student learning as a main reason for principal preparation programs across the country incorporating more leadership skill development.

Leadership, Diversity Leadership, Values and Ethics of Leadership, Instructional Leadership and K-12 Leadership are all identified as categories within the Minnesota principal competencies. Considering the prominence of leadership within the Minnesota competencies, it is important to determine Minnesota principals' perceptions of its relevance.

School culture. The research of Redalen (2009) stated that leaders shape productive school cultures and set the context for student learning through their efforts in the following areas: focusing on organizational health, developing norms of collegiality, fostering high staff morale, communication, decision-making processes and collaborative administrator and teacher leadership. Reeves (2007) reported that school leaders are required to define school culture, understand the importance of culture, use appropriate tools when attempting to change the culture, and be willing to engage in the unglamorous work that helps change school culture. In short, Reeves found that "meaningful school improvement begins with cultural change, and cultural change begins with the school leader" (p. 94).

Collaborative decision-making. The National Policy Board for Educational Administrators (2002) found that the principal's ability to include school stakeholders in key influence areas such as managing operations and resources enhances student learning. Silins, Mulford, and Zarins (2002) confirmed the importance of collaborative decision-making, finding that "a school's effectiveness is proportional to the extent to which teachers participate in all aspects of the school's functioning" (p. 613). Marzano et al. (2005) determined that student learning improves when staff members are involved in developing school policies, when input from various stakeholders is sought regularly, and when leadership teams are used to make school decisions.

The preceding section synthesized research related to the principal's impact on student learning specifically around the areas of setting direction, leadership, the development of school culture, and collaborative decision-making. As attention and expectations on student learning and results have continued to expand, accountability of the principal has increased. The next section of the review of literature is focused on the topic of principal accountability.

Principal Accountability

Principals are a central element of the educational accountability movement at national, state and local levels. The literature review associated with principal accountability provided the researcher not only with an overview of existing accountability laws and reforms, but with a richer understanding of the link between principal leadership and school accountability. This relates to the research study by gauging the relevance of accountability initiatives as shared by Minnesota principals.

No child left behind. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, best known as No Child Left Behind, created a new system of accountability within the field of education. Student performance on standardized assessments, aligned to state-wide standards, determine whether schools make adequate yearly progress on the law's mandate of having all students proficient in the areas of reading and mathematics by 2014. Wanker and Christie (2005) indicate that United States public education has not seen such a deliberate focus on student achievement since the implementation of Public Law 92-142 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1972).

According to Yell and Drasgow (2005), No Child Left Behind has four major principles: accountability for results, research-based instruction, expanded local control and flexibility, and increased parental options. Yell and Drasgow (2005) further stated that No Child Left Behind is focused on increasing the academic performance of all students.

The following discussion identifies three categories related to school accountability efforts. The section concludes with the federal government's latest initiative to support principal leadership.

School change. Scholars indicate that principal leadership is a key driver for change and source of support for building leadership capacity among others(Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000; Gewirtz, 2003; Lambert, 2002, 2003; & Stricherz, 2001). Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) re-assert the impact of highly effective principals on leading school change. Using the leadership responsibilities from their 2003 meta-

analysis study, Waters et al. identified specific first order and second order change practices related to each responsibility and their effect on student achievement.

Improved instruction for all. Numerous research studies provide evidence that principal quality affects a range of school outcomes, including student academic performance (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Ladd, 2009; Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009). Ladd (2009) found that teacher perception of school leadership is the most significant indicator affecting teachers' plans to stay or leave their school. Further, the study suggests that quality principals may be most important in retaining effective teachers in disadvantaged schools. Beteille et al. (2009) found that effective principals are more effective in recruiting, retaining, and working with teachers to realize instructional goals within their schools.

Griffith (2004) stated that leadership can have a positive effect on student learner outcomes associated with a number of factors, ranging from the manner in which the goals are developed and executed to the manner in which instruction is planned and carried out.

Principal placement. A number of researchers have found that low-performing, disadvantaged schools are least likely to have effective principals (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2009; Horng, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2009; Grissom & Loeb, 2009). Horng et al. (2009) concluded that:

> If consistent and experienced school leadership matters to student achievement, our research suggests that low-income students, students of color, and low-performing students are at a distinct disadvantage compared to their peers. These

students are more likely to attend a school with a first-year principal, a principal

with less average experience…or a temporary or interim principal (pp. 28-29).

Further, Grissom and Leeb (2009) found that high-poverty schools tend to be led by

principals who do not self-report strong organizational management skills. Principals

within these schools are more apt to have high instructional management skills, a

dimension of school administration that does not improve school performance.

Race to the top. Supported by recent research on the importance of principals on

student learning, the federal government has begun to focus additional efforts on

developing and demanding higher quality principals. Passed in 2009 by President Barack

Obama, Race to the Top is a competitive federal grant program which intended to

stimulate education reforms within states. In order to be awarded a Race to the Top

grant, states must demonstrate how teacher *and* leadership improvement are central

elements of reform efforts.

Further, President Obama's 2011 federal budget allocated an additional $950 million

in education funding designed specifically to spur teacher and leadership innovations.

This funding requires states to put quality leaders in struggling schools (Pritzker, 2010).

The federal government has increased principal accountability through initiatives such

as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. As detailed above, the principal is

instrumental to school change efforts and instructional improvements, both of which are

key leadership responsibilities included within the Minnesota principal competencies.

The next section of the literature review focuses on the elements of highly effective

principal preparation programs.   This is an important topic related to the research study

because principal licensing programs within the state of Minnesota are driven by the 16 core leadership competencies.

National Exemplary Principal Programs

In their most recent book on improving school leaders, Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) identifies the characteristics of effective leadership programs, and makes recommendations to improve preparation programs across the country. Through their nationwide study of preparation programs, Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) sought to identify not only the effective leadership practices of administrators but also how to develop educational leaders with these characteristics on a national scale.

> Since the "effective schools" research of the 1980's, which identified the importance of principals who function as strong instructional leaders in improving academic performance, many studies have identified the critical role of principals in recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers; creating a learning culture within the school; and supporting improvements in student learning (Leithwood and Duke, 1999; Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004; Pounder, Ogawa and Adams, 1995). Knowing that these leadership practices matter is one thing, but developing them on a wide scale is quite another. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010, p. 4-5)

Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) determined that exemplary principal preparation programs share four common traits: intense principal recruitment, significant mentorship for new principals, a rigorous focus on instructional improvement and transformational leadership, and common standards for principals.

Principal recruitment. Attracting prospective candidates into the principal profession has become increasingly difficult. Young and Creighton (2002) determined that the principalship has become unappealing. Bass (2006) identified the perception of job stress as the main indicator deterring potential principal candidates from entering principal licensing programs. This is confirmed by Price (2004), determining that "unrealistic expectations and work conditions combined with a lack of monetary incentives have led to shrinking highly qualified principal applicant pools" (p. 1). As a result, Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) identifies the need for innovative programming to increase recruitment of prospective principal candidates.

Mentorship for new principals.   Formal and informal mentoring of new principals has drastically increased in the last decade. A 2003 study supported by The Education Alliance at Brown University and the National Association of Elementary School Principals found that in 1998, less than half of the country's school superintendents indicated that the presence of a formal mentoring program for new principals within their school district. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) identified mentoring as a valuable professional development strategy for new principals.

The Wallace Foundation (2007) stated that "roughly half of the nation's states have now adopted mentoring requirements for new principals—a striking turnabout considering how rare acceptance of or funding for such mentoring was prior to 2000" (p.3). Further, the Wallace Foundation (2007) found that while the growth of principal mentoring programs is a good sign, many programs fall "far short of their potential" (p.3). Their recommendations for improvement (e.g., high-quality mentor training, state-

wide data collection on mentoring characteristics, mentorship beyond the first-year) align with Darling-Hammond's call to include mentorship support and programming into principal preparation programs.

Focus on instructional improvement and transformational leadership. Lashway (2003) indicated that due to changing roles and expectations for school principals, principal preparation programs are changing as well. "The (expectation) that principals have a positive impact on student achievement challenges traditional assumptions, practices, and structures in leadership preparation programs" (p.2). A 2000 study sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) examined the need to reconsider the role and functions of the principal. Their report, *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship*, advocated for a re-definition of the principalship to include instructional leadership, community leadership and visionary leadership.

Jackson and Kelley (2002) affirmed Danielson's findings in her examination of highly effective preparation programs. California State University, Fresno, and the University of Louisville were identified by Jackson as highly effective for their focus on instructional and transformational leadership. Jackson and Kelley (2002) highlighted how California State University has used the two-tier system of licensure of California to provide differentiated field experiences for candidates and graduates of the program. For example, rather than assign principal candidates to typical administrative internship experiences, California State University requires Tier 1 candidates to complete a field experience as a master teacher. Jackson and Kelley indicated that Tier 2 field

experiences focus on transformational leadership practices. The University of Louisville

IDEAS Program was identified by Jackson and Kelley (2002) based on its cohort-model,

its collaboration with Louisville Public Schools, and its mentorship element centered on

instructional leadership.

   Common principal standards. Lauder (2000) identified the establishment of clearly-

defined performance standards as a critical element of principal preparation programs.

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen (2007) found that exemplary pre-

and in-service development programs for principals have common components, including

a "comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned to state and professional standards,

specifically the ISLLC which emphasize instructional leadership" (p.64).

   For most states, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

(ISLLC) provides the framework to assist in defining the principalship and to inform

preparation program coursework and field experiences. Darling-Hammond et al. (2010)

assert that common standards for principals provide continuity in preparation programs

and also serve as a critical framework for practicing principals. This connects to the

proposed research study in that the researcher will ask practicing Minnesota principals

about the relevance of the common standards (competencies) used in Minnesota.

National principal standards are discussed in next section of the literature review.

   The preceding section identified four common features of highly effective principal

preparation programs; purposeful recruitment efforts, support for new principals, focus

on instructional leadership, and the implementation of common standards. In the final

section of the literature review, a closer examination of national principal standards is

conducted, including an analysis of how standards have changed over time. The section concludes with a review of the most recent initiative related to national principal standards; National Board Certification for Principals.

History of Principal Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) is responsible for the development, analysis and revision of national policy standards related to principal preparation. The consortium is coordinated by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers, and is comprised of the prominent educational organizations within the country, including the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National School Boards Association and the University Council for Educational Administration (ISLLC, 1996).

Rationale for national principal standards. Scholarly research synthesized by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2008) identified the following benefits to the existence and/or implementation of national principal standards: the existence of a common, consistent language when describing effective principal leadership, assisting state development of consistent expectations for principal licensure, guiding improvement efforts for principal preparation programs at colleges and universities, and providing a framework for professional development for practicing principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Kearney, 2003; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

A major catalyst for the development of national principal standards was negative

perceptions of principal preparation programs. In a 1998 survey of U.S. superintendents,

IEL (2000) reported that half of all respondents indicated a shortage of qualified

candidates for principal vacancies. The study included data clarifying the difference

between the quantity of licensed principals (of which there are plenty) compared to the

quantity of *quality* licensed principals. Further, IEL (2000) stated that many states

(including Minnesota) report a surplus of licensed administrators who do not hold school

leadership positions. This concern was reinforced in a 2001 survey conducted by Public

Agenda. In their analysis of the survey, Hale and Moorman (2003) reported that 69% of

principal respondents indicated that leadership preparation programs were not aligned to

the realities of the principalship.

1996 ISLLC standards. National standards for school leaders were first developed

by the ISLLC in 1996. Six standards served as guiding principles for state education

officials and policy-makers when developing, implementing and/or revising policy

related to the training and licensure of educational leaders. Each standard included the

knowledge, dispositions and performances expected of administrators. A full listing of

the 1996 ISLLC standards, knowledge, dispositions and performances is found in

Appendix B.

NBPEA (2008) indicates that since the initial development of the ISLLC standards in

1996, 43 states have adopted and used them to help create state licensure requirements.

Some states and educational organizations have expanded upon the standards, developing

even more specific components and practices related to each grouping. For example,

Iowa and Minnesota licensing boards have further delineated the ISLLC standards to include state-developed characteristics and definitions to the standards.

2008 ISLLC revisions. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration and the Council of Chief State School Officers were responsible for revising the national principal standards (ISLLC) in 2008. The updated ISLLC standards reflect the input of over 100 research projects and studies, and cite research conducted by the Wallace Foundation and Linda Darling-Hammond. The revised standards reflect the changing dynamics of the 21st century school principalship and are more policy-focused (NBPEA, 2008). Changes related to policy were made in response to the fact that the 1996 ISLLC standards were being used as a model by states to develop education leadership policy.   As a companion document, the Council of Chief State School Officers also developed a set of performance expectations and indicators for principals. See Appendix C for a complete listing of the 2008 ISLLC standards.

National board certification for principals. On the national front, the most recent development in the area of principal standards is the development and implementation of the National Board Certification for Principals. Developed by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, board certification for principals was developed to "create a consistently reliable process to develop, recognize and retain effective principals" (NBPTS, 2010, p.2). Similar to the national board standards for teachers, the principal standards are grounded in standards statements and core propositions that accomplished principals are expected to know and to be able to do. A full listing of the standards statements and core propositions is found in Appendix D.

Certifying accomplished principals is the primary, but not the sole goal of NBPTS. Joseph Aguerrebere, executive director of NBPTS, stated that national certification of principals will also assist in developing a "broad professional consensus around standards for principals that can be used to talk about different ways to develop principals in the first place" (Maxwell, 2009, p.1). Aguerrebere also sees a time when national standards will replace individual state's licensing requirements. "Right now, we've got different rules for licensure for every state, and that makes for a very fragmented profession," stated Aguerrebere (Maxwell, 2009, p.2).

The preceding section provided an overview of the development and revision national principal standards. Next is a closer look at the principal licensure requirements found in the Midwest region of the country. Because the research study was specifically focused on elements of Minnesota's requirements for principal licensure, it is important for the researcher to provide a comparison of Minnesota's requirements to its regional neighbors.

Regional Principal Licensure Requirements

As demonstrated through the literature review thus far, national educational organizations, task forces and committees focused on principal standards and preparation have all played roles in the development of new principal standards; however this role is limited. In the end, individual states establish licensing and certification requirements for principals. States also approve the university and college programs that provide the education for aspiring principals. While it seems likely that states will continue to set their own requirements for becoming a principal, Darling-Hammond (2010) identified the need for common standards and expectations for principals, both in the field and in their

preparation programs. What follows is a review of the principal licensure requirements for Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

Wisconsin

In 2004, Wisconsin revised all certification programs leading to licensed educational administrative positions in the state. This included principal preparation programs. According to the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2008), the Wisconsin licensure program utilizes the ISLLC standards. Required components for principal certification include sequenced course work, field studies embedded in classes, the development of a whole school improvement plan, administrative field experiences, and the development of an electronic portfolio that documents learning and exhibits levels of performance against the standards. Further, Wisconsin candidates are required to develop a portfolio that documents learning and exhibits levels of performance related to the six ISLLC standards.

Iowa

Iowa state statute includes similar licensing requirements to those of Minnesota and Wisconsin and uses the ISLLC standards as the general framework for coursework and end of program portfolio defense (School Administrators of Iowa, 2010). Along with the adoption of ISLLC standards, Iowa identified specific administrator responsibilities under each standard. This hybrid is called the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. Standard 1 of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders is provided as an example.

Iowa Standards for School Leaders

Standard 1:

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

The Administrator:

- In collaboration with others, uses appropriate data to establish rigorous, concrete goals in the context of student achievement and instructional programs.

- Uses research and/or best practices in improving the educational program.

- Articulates and promotes high expectations for teaching and learning.

- Aligns and implements the educational programs, plans, actions, and resources with the district's vision and goals.

- Provides leadership for major initiatives and change efforts.

- Communicates effectively to various stakeholders regarding progress with school improvement plan goals.

North Dakota

Principal licensure in North Dakota is separated into two levels, both of which are solely based on college or university coursework. Level I credentialing is attained by principal candidates who earn a master's degree from a North Dakota state-approved university program. Courses required within these programs are:

- Theory and practice of leadership and administration;

- Legal and political foundations of education;

- Supervision and staff development;

- Statistics, research, analysis, and writing;

- Educational foundations, curriculum, and instruction;

- Information systems for management and instruction;

- Administration of the secondary school; and

- Secondary school curriculum.

Level II licensure in North Dakota is available for educators serving in principal roles in schools with enrollments less than 100 students. The Level II credential requires twenty semester hours of graduate credits taken in a master's degree program from a state-approved program in educational administration. Course preparation for the Level II credential is as follows:

- Leadership, planning, and organizational behavior in education;

- Educational law and organizational structure of education;

- Personnel, supervision, and staff development;

- Curriculum, instruction, and learning theory;

- Policy and educational finance;

- Administration of the secondary school; and

- Secondary school curriculum.

South Dakota

Similar to North Dakota, South Dakota requires principal candidates to earn a master's degree in Educational Administration prior to licensure. Individuals seeking licensure choose to specialize and become licensed as either a secondary or elementary school principal. Thirty-five credits, including an internship experience, are required. For licensed South Dakota principals wishing to obtain K-12 certification, there are three additional requirements that are completed within the non-licensed area: principalship practicum, curriculum practicum, and internship.

Minnesota

Along with earning a master's degree and 30 additional credits in educational leadership, Minnesota candidates are required to complete 320 hours of field experience/internship under the supervision of a practicing school administrator. Internship experiences assist candidates in satisfying the final program requirement; the principal portfolio. A candidate's competence in core leadership domains are reflected through the development and presentation of the portfolio.

Minnesota and the ISLLC Standards

Before 2008, the 21 entry-level competencies that were required elements of the Minnesota portfolio were identical to the ones found in *Principals for Our Changing Schools,* a 1993 publication from the National Policy Board for Educational

Administration. This work, done prior to the adoption of the ISLLC Standards, attempted

to identify the necessary professional skills, along with the content knowledge, needed by

entry-level principals. As a result, 11 of the domains were process (skill) oriented, with

the other 10 being content-focused. Details of each domain were included to provide

further clarification and direction to aspiring principals and state licensing personnel

related to the scope of each category. A complete listing of these competencies is found

in Appendix E.

   In 2008, the Minnesota Board of School Administrators recommended revisions to

the Minnesota standards and these were ultimately adopted by the state legislature. The

recommendations were based on the updated 2008 ISLLC standards and legislative

input. Appendix F provides a full description of each competency as outlined in

Minnesota State Board Rule 3512.0500.

   Regional comparisons. Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota all include ISLLC standards

language within state statute or rule. As a result, college and university preparation

programs in each of these states develop course curricula and program requirements

aligned to ISLLC. Wisconsin and Minnesota both require principal candidates to develop

a portfolio, documenting fieldwork completed through internship experiences. While

none of the states identified above have instituted a performance assessment requirement

for licensure, Minnesota continues to examine how other states (e.g., Connecticut) have

incorporated this concept to increase program accountability and candidate readiness.

Summary

The review of literature discussed five core areas central to the proposed research study: principal influence on student learning, principal accountability, principal preparation programs, principal standards, and principal licensure requirements. Key findings were discussed related to principal impact on student learning, principal influence on accountability efforts within schools, and the associated leadership responsibilities. Research on exemplary principal preparation programs was also reviewed. Included in this review were specific program elements considered essential for effective principal preparation programs.

The review of literature focused next on national principal standards and state licensure requirements. The history of national standards (and their revisions) was reviewed, including a review of recent national efforts to further bolster principal standards through a national certification process. The final element of the review of literature examined the principal licensure requirements for the five-state area of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Included in this review was an identification of commonalities and differences amongst the states.

Examining each of these areas related to the principalship is critical to the researcher in building a comprehensive foundation for the proposed research study. As the next chapter describes, the researcher determined Minnesota principals' perceptions on the cornerstone of Minnesota principal preparation; the Minnesota K-12 principal competencies.

Chapter III

Methodology

The following chapter outlines the mixed-method approach that was used to answer the research question: What is the relevance of the Minnesota principal competencies to Minnesota principals? This section begins with a discussion of mixed-method design, a relatively new genre in the social and human sciences. Next, this section provides a description of the participants of the study, as well as a discussion of the sampling methods that were used and the rationale for such methods. Lastly, data collection procedures and instrumentation are described, concluding with an explanation of the data analysis procedures that were used to answer the research question.

In short, this mixed-methods study entailed two stages of data collection. First, an online survey was implemented to rank principals' perceptions of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The survey was followed by focus group interviews conducted with selected participants to further examine principals' perceptions of the relevance of the Minnesota competencies.

Mixed-Method Design

The following section outlines a brief history of mixed-method design, including its origins and defining characteristics. The section concludes with a discussion on the rationale for selecting a mixed-method design for this research proposal.

History. The beginning of mixed-methods research design is traced to what is often referred to as the "paradigm wars" within the social and behavioral sciences. A phrase initially coined by Gage (1989), the "paradigm wars" references the research debate

regarding the superiority of two research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative.

Hammersley (1992) traces the paradigm dispute to the mid-1800's, with subsequent

debate between qualitative and quantitative research methods intensifying in the 1950's

and 1960's within the fields of psychology and sociology. Attempts at bridging the

theoretical divides between the positivist (quantitative methods) and constructivist

paradigms (qualitative methods) were unsuccessful until researchers began demonstrating

how research studies (many dating back to the very time period in which the debate was

most intense) incorporated and benefited from the utilization of both methodologies.

Many terms have been used to describe the methodology and research within mixed-

methods research, including *integrating, synthesis,* and *pragmatic research*. Bryman

(2006) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) report that recent research writings

exclusively use the term *mixed-methods*.

Defining characteristics. A guiding principle within mixed-methods research is that

combining quantitative or qualitative strategies provide a better understanding of the

research problem than either used alone. The collection of both numeric and narrative

data requires a mixed-method approach to the research design and data analysis.

Creswell (2010) defines mixed-methods research as follows:

> An approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and
>
> quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative
>
> and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. It is
>
> more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the

use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater

than either qualitative or quantitative research (p.4).

Today, mixed-methods research is widely used to triangulate quantitative and qualitative

data sources, to deepen understanding of qualitative and quantitative research, and to

better explain and build upon the results from each other's research (Creswell, 2010).

Creswell cites three primary challenges faced by the researcher when conducting a

mixed-methods study. First, mixed-methods research requires extensive and varied data

collection. Data collection procedures for this study of perceptions of the Minnesota

principal competencies are specifically outlined later in this chapter. Second, Creswell

points to the time-intensive data analysis processes involved in mixed-methods research.

Data analysis processes for this study are previewed later in this chapter and will be fully

articulated once the study has been completed and all analysis has been completed.

Finally, the researcher needs to have a solid understanding of both quantitative and

qualitative research methodology and how elements of both are incorporated into the

mixed-methods study.

In designing a mixed-methods study, Creswell (2009) points to four influencing

factors that must be addressed by the researcher; timing, weighting, mixing and

theorizing. For this study, the collection of quantitative and qualitative data was done

sequentially, starting with the quantitative data collection. This timing supports the

primary intent of the study and its emphasis on collecting statewide principal perception

data. Quantitative survey results was used to guide focus group questions and topics

conducted once the survey has been administered. In mixed-methods design, weight is

typically given to the methodology utilized first and is dependent upon whether results from the first data collection and analysis will inform or influence the second data collection. For this research study, the questions and themes for the second data collection (focus groups) were drawn specifically from the initial quantitative survey. In this regard, weight was given to the quantitative data.

Rationale. The rationale for selecting mixed-methods research design for this study is best demonstrated by examining the characteristics of mixed-methods and their relationship to the research question. The characteristics discussed earlier, along with how they will be addressed within this research study, point to a specific mixed-methods research design. Creswell identifies six design strategies utilized within mixed-methods research: Sequential Explanatory Design, Sequential Exploratory Design, Sequential Transformative Design, Concurrent Triangulation Design, Concurrent Embedded Design and Concurrent Transformative Design.

For this study, a sequential explanatory design model was utilized. Sequential explanatory design involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. The purpose of the qualitative element of the study is to build on the results of the initial quantitative results. Data mixing within this strategy occurs when the initial data analysis informs the secondary data collection. While data is collected separately, it is connected by its use within both phases. By using a sequential explanatory design, the quantitative results will be further interpreted and explained through the collection and analyzing of qualitative data. Figure 1 provides a visual model of how the sequential explanatory design model was applied to the study.

Figure 1. Sequential Design Model of the Study
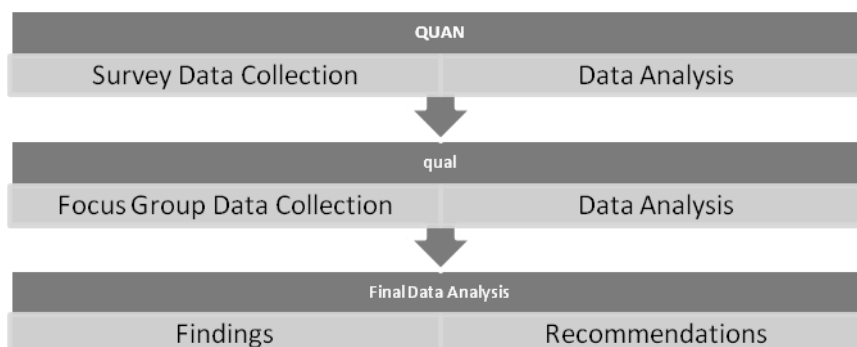
Participants

The samples for both stages of this research included K-12 Minnesota school

principals. Participants in the qualitative component of the study were derived from the

survey participants. Limiting the samples to include only Minnesota principals was

based on the relevance of Minnesota standards to Minnesota administrators, and was also

based on the participants' professional investment in state principal standards.

Superintendent, teacher and student perceptions on principal standards, although not

included in this proposed study, provide a viable research topic for future study.

Drawing upon resources from the Minnesota Association of Secondary School

Principals (MASSP) and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

(MESPA), nearly all Minnesota principals were invited to participate in at least one

element of the study. MASSP is the state professional organization for secondary

principals, providing leadership, professional development and legal services to

practicing principals since 1925. With a membership of 1,050 practicing secondary

principals (serving grades 7-12), MASSP Executive Director Joann Knuth approximated

that 1,100 principals currently serve in Minnesota secondary schools. Knuth identified

4% of middle and high school principals in the state are not MASSP members. MASSP's

database was utilized in order to attain the names and electronic addresses of all

practicing secondary principals within Minnesota. All necessary confidentiality

agreements were in place prior to the dissemination or use of any information obtained

from MASSP.

MESPA is the state professional organization for elementary principals. Like

MASSP, MESPA provides leadership, staff development and legal services to nearly all

principals serving in elementary (grades K-2) and intermediate (grades 3-6) schools

across the state. There are currently 500 members of MESPA, 99% of all practicing

elementary principals within the state of Minnesota. MESPA's database was used as

well, and their use adhered to the same confidentiality and privacy standards as noted

with the MASSP membership.

Quantitative Data Collection

Procedures. The sampling procedure for the quantitative data collection was single

stage. All MASSP and MESPA practicing principals were invited to participate in the

electronic survey. The only administrators that were not reached were those either

without Internet access or those who are not members of the state professional

organization. Participants were provided consent information prior to taking the

electronic survey. The consent information (Appendix H) indicates that participation in

the study was voluntary, and that submission of the completed survey would be

interpreted as informed consent to participate. In May 2011, over 2,000 surveys were

disseminated to practicing school principals in Minnesota.   Permission to use the

MASSP catalog of principals was granted by Executive Director Joann Knuth on November 20, 2010. MESPA permission was granted on February 1, 2011. MASSP and MESPA protocol was adhered to, including the submission of all forms, questionnaires, and the formal research proposal for MASSP and MESPA review and approval.

All principals within the MASSP and MESPA database received an e-mail which included a description of the study, an invitation to participate in the study, the requested date of completion, all required language related to confidentiality, potential risks of participating in the study and a link to the survey. Respondents were made aware that clicking on the survey would indicate their consent to participate in the study. Because the survey was administered electronically, respondents submitted their responses directly to an on-line collection point.

Completed surveys were coded only to track respondents. A list of coded participants was kept in a secured, locked location, and was accessible only to the primary and secondary researchers. In an effort to maximize response rates, a follow-up request was made five days after the survey was initially disseminated.

Instrumentation. An original electronic survey (Appendix G) asked respondents to complete a Likert scale rating of the relevance of the skills, knowledge and dispositions identified in the Minnesota principal competencies. The intent of the survey was to gather and analyze data to provide an accurate view of practitioners' opinions of the Minnesota principal competencies. Nationwide, there have been a number of perception surveys developed to gauge the views of principals on principal preparation standards. However, a study specifically addressing the relevance of the Minnesota principal

competencies adopted in 2008 had not been conducted. As a result, developing an original survey was required.

SurveyMonkey was used as the on-line survey administrator. The rationale for choosing SurveyMonkey included its wide-spread use, its familiarity within the education community, and its ability to serve as a warehouse for responses prior to data analysis. This commercial survey tool is also capable of generating results and reporting descriptive statistics back to the researcher.

Study participants were asked for background data related to their years in education, present position, and the organizational structure of their current position. Because the survey was designed specifically for this research, detailed attention was given to assure its validity.

Creswell (2009) identifies three traditional forms of validity to consider when examining a survey instrument: content validity, concurrent validity and construct validity. Content validity addresses the degree to which the survey questions measure the content they were intended to measure. Concurrent validity, sometimes referred to as predictive validity, considers whether survey results correlate with other survey results that attempt to measure the same thing. Construct validity refers to a survey's ability to measure hypothetical constructs. Creswell indicates that the definition of construct validity has expanded to include whether the results of the survey "serve a useful purpose and have positive consequences when they are used in practice" (p.149). Because the survey had not been used previously, concurrent validity was not as applicable to this study as content and construct validity.

Content and construct validity of the survey was established in two ways. First, a small group of principals from south central Minnesota was asked to review a draft survey for the purpose of providing feedback related to the survey's applicability and readability. This group also assisted in verifying that the survey accurately depicted the 16 Minnesota principal competencies. Next, feedback on the instrument was sought by the Center for Excellence in Scholarship and Research (CESR) at Minnesota State University-Mankato. Under the direction of Dr. In-Jae Kim, CESR provides input relative to survey instruments and an instrument's ability to measure the research questions upon which the survey was designed. Suggestions for improvement to the survey were incorporated into the final instrument revisions.

Qualitative Data Collection

Procedures. Focus groups were held to collect qualitative data. Kruger and Casey (2009) define a focus group study as "a carefully planned series of discussions to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (p.2). Led by a group facilitator, focus groups typically include 5 to 10 people. The goal of the focus group sessions included in this study was to gather contextual information from respondents, provide opportunities for open-ended responses, and to assist in the explanation and interpretation of the preceding quantitative data collected. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to provide participants the opportunity to share additional perspective on the usefulness of the Minnesota principal competencies and for the researcher to further investigate themes from the quantitative survey.

Limitations of focus group interviews include setting (focus groups are typically not conducted in the participants' natural setting), bias (the researcher's presence may limit participant responses or candidness) and the fact that not all focus group members may be as engaged and participatory as others (Creswell, 2009).

Three regional focus groups were conducted. Principals who completed the electronic survey were invited to attend a 30-minute focus group meeting. Principals for the focus groups were not randomly selected. Rather, the selected sample of 6-8 principals per focus group session represented a cross-section of principals from rural and urban/suburban areas.

The following six essential questions offered by Miles and Huberman (1994) were used in considering the qualitative sampling plan for this study:

- Is the sampling relevant to the research question and framework?

- Will the phenomena in which you are interested in appear?

- Does your plan enhance generalizability of your findings?

- Can believable descriptions and explanations be produced?

- Is the sampling plan feasible?

- Is the sampling plan ethical, in terms of such issues of informed consent, potential benefits and risks, and the relationship with informants?

Sample relevancy was addressed by inviting practicing Minnesota principals to participate in the focus group sessions. Focus group sessions were semi-structured, in that there were specific questions asked based on the initial quantitative findings. These structured elements of the sessions allowed for data collection directly related to the

research question. Focus group settings consisted of one high school and one

metropolitan area hotel. In part, locations were selected based on the researcher's desire

to collect perspective from rural and metro area principals. Sample selection was also

based on principals' willingness to participate in the focus group and proximity to the

researcher. Propinquity helped facilitate the data collection process.

Consent forms for the focus group sessions were distributed to attendees prior to the

start of each meeting. The focus group consent form (Appendix I) includes the voluntary

nature of participant involvement, and principal anonymity when research results are

released.

Instrumentation. Focus group interview questions focused on emergent themes from

the quantitative survey. Participants were asked to provide information related high and

low frequency survey responses, and were also invited to share professional and personal

examples that illustrate the relevance of specific principal competencies.

Interviews were audio taped and transcribed. An interview protocol (Appendix J) was

utilized that incorporated interview details (time, date, participants), instructions to

ensure standard procedures were used with each focus group and the questions asked at

each focus group session. Notes were taken during the focus group sessions for the

purpose of documenting specific participant responses and citing general themes,

questions and ideas that emerge from the group as a whole.

Qualitative reliability refers to the intentionality of wording, format and content

(Creswell, 2009). Two reliability procedures, transcription checks and code definition

review, were used to increase the reliability of the research study. In order to avoid

reporting errors, focus group transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy and revised accordingly. Assistance in this effort was sought from individuals with transcription experience. To assure consistency in code definitions, Gibbs (2007) recommends that researchers purposefully review code definition throughout the data collection process in order to assure code meaning and word definitions remain consistent. This review was conducted after each focus group session

Creswell (2009) states that qualitative validity is "determining whether findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account" (p. 190). The trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility of focus group data was sought by incorporating a number of validity strategies.

First, multiple focus groups were held, allowing for the triangulation of various data sources. By collecting data from multiple sources at different times, themes that emerge during the analysis phase increase in credibility. Second, member checking was utilized in an effort to ensure accuracy and provide participants with the opportunity to comment on the themes derived from the focus groups and ultimately the study's findings. Member checking invitations were made to participants after each focus group. Finally, researcher bias was identified and reflected upon within the study. As a practicing Minnesota principal, there are no doubt professional experiences that affect the researcher's view of the Minnesota principal competencies and their relevance within the profession.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative analysis. First, data was organized in relation to the relevance rating of each competency. The analysis will focus on the frequency of specific responses.

Data collected from SurveyMonkey was analyzed in order to determine the mean score for each principal competency. Results were reported descriptively according to the 16 Minnesota principal competencies. High and low frequency responses from the quantitative survey informed the development of focus group questions. Additionally, elementary and secondary principal responses were compared and reported. A comparison was also conducted on principal and assistant principal responses.

Qualitative analysis. The qualitative aspects of the study were coded based on the 16 Minnesota competencies. Each competency was organized as a primary node, and data analysis rested on the degree and depth provided by focus group participants.

Coding was completed in three waves. First, open coding was conducted to assist the researcher in the initial labeling and categorizing of focus group data. This coding process relied on the 16 Minnesota principal competencies as its organizational method. Code saturation was met as all 16 competencies were distinguished as its own code. Once open coding was complete, axial coding occurred. Axial coding "helps identify relationships between categories and the links that create a web of meaning for the people under study" (Straker, 2008, p. 4). This procedure assisted the researcher in identifying connections and relationships amongst the principal competencies. Axial coding also led to the identification of emerging themes within the data. Finally, selective coding was completed. "Selective coding involves the process of selecting and identifying the

categories and systematically relating them to other categories" (Straker, 2008, p. 4).

Categories that emerged as a result of this process are shared in chapter four.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Mixing

The process of mixing quantitative and qualitative data includes determining when the

mixing of quantitative and qualitative will occur, and whether the data will actually be

merged, kept separate, or combined in some way. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007)

identify three types of mixing processes: connected, integrated and embedded.

Connected mixing occurs when "the quantitative and qualitative research are connected

between a data analysis of the first phase of research and the data collection of the second

phase of research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 208). As demonstrated earlier in Figure 1,

connected mixing was utilized for this study as results from the quantitative survey was

completed and served as the basis for focus group interviews. Although both elements

collected separate data, they were connected in that one informed the other.

Summary

The preceding chapter provided an overview of mixed-methods research, including

the rationale for its use in this research study. Specific information was shared regarding

the participants of the study and the methods that were used to gain access to them. The

quantitative and qualitative elements of the study were discussed, outlining both the data

collection and data analysis strategies that were deployed throughout the study.

Chapter IV

Findings

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected sequentially for this study. The organization of the data presented in this chapter follows this same sequence; quantitative data presented first, followed by the qualitative data. The quantitative section is divided into two sections: (1) a demographic profile of respondents, and (2) survey results. The qualitative section also has two parts: (1) demographic profile of respondents, and (2) focus group results. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Quantitative Data Presentation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sample size. The participating sample in the quantitative survey included 597 elementary, middle school and secondary school principals and assistant principals in the state of Minnesota. The survey was distributed to 1,585 members of the two major principal organizations in the state; the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (1085 members) and the Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association (500 members). The survey response rate was 37.6%.

Years licensed. Table 4.1 represents the total length of time (in years) as a licensed Minnesota principal. Sixteen respondents (2.7%) indicated being licensed less than a year. One hundred thirty six respondents (22.9%) stated being licensed between one and five years. One hundred sixty-four respondents (27.7%) reported being licensed between six and ten years, and 277 (46.7%) responded that they have been licensed for over ten years.

Table 4.1

Years Licensed as a Minnesota Principal

Time	Frequency	Percent
Under 1 year	16	2.7
1 to 5 years	136	22.9
6 to 10 years	164	27.7
Over 10 years	277	46.7

Location. Table 4.2 depicts the geographic location of the respondents' schools. A majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they currently serve in a rural school. Two hundred nineteen respondents (36.7%) indicated serving in suburban schools and seventy-three (12.3%) in urban schools.

Table 4.2

Location of Current School

Location	Frequency	Percent
Rural	302	51
Suburban	217	36.7
Urban	73	12.3

Gender and ethnicity. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 indicate the gender and ethnicity of the responding school principals. Three hundred seventy-three males (62.8%) completed the survey compared to two hundred twenty-one females (37.2%). There were 567 white respondents (95.8%). The second highest ethnic representation was Black or African American with 16 respondents (2.7%). There were five (0.8%) Asian respondents, three (0.5%) Hispanic or Latino and one (0.2%) American Indian or Alaska Native. There were no Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders represented.

Table 4.3

Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	221	37.2
Male	373	62.8

Table 4.4

Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.2
Asian	5	0.8
Black or African American	16	2.7
Hispanic or Latino	3	0.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	567	95.8

Highest degree. Table 4.5 reports the highest degree attained by survey respondents. Three hundred nine (53.1%) respondents indicated having a sixth year certificate. Two hundred twenty-eight (39.2%) reported earning a specialist's degree and forty-five (7.7%) holding a doctorate degree.

Table 4.5

Highest Degree Attained

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Sixth-Year Certification	309	53.1
Specialist	228	39.2
Doctorate	45	7.7

Current position. Table 4.6 describes the current administrative positions held by respondents. Of the 452 respondents (77%) who reported holding a principal position, 232 were in elementary positions, 174 were serving as a high school principal and 46 were middle school principals. One hundred thirty-five (23%) reported serving as an assistant principal at the elementary, middle school or high school level.

Table 4.6

Current Position Held by Respondents

Position	Frequency	Percent
High School Principal	174	29.6
Middle School Principal	46	7.8
Elementary School Principal	232	39.5
Elementary School Assistant Principal	17	2.9
Middle School Assistant Principal	42	7.2
High School Assistant Principal	76	12.9

Survey Results

Table 4.7 (Appendix K) illustrates the responses to the question related to the relevancy of the 16 Minnesota competencies. Statistical analysis was conducted for various group differences on this specific survey question. In order to complete this analysis, three specific kinds of analysis were completed using SPPS software; t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests, and Post- Hoc tests. T-tests were used to

compare two groups (i.e., males and females). ANOVA tests were utilized to compare more than two groups (i.e., rural, suburban, urban). Post-Hoc tests occurred once these analyses had been completed, and assisted in making more definitive determinations on specific statistical differences within and across different categories. For this study, Post-Hoc tests were run to identify which demographics had a significant difference within the category.

Except for the area of gender, ANOVA tests were used to examine overall group variances on the 16 Minnesota principal competencies for each demographic indicator. The analyses of variance resulted in significant p-values ($p<.05$) for a large number of groups and competencies. What follows is the summary and corresponding table of each variance analysis.

Time licensed as principal. Table 4.8 illustrates that group difference exists in the Diversity Leadership competency. Specifically, the mean for principals licensed 1 to 5 years was 3.7, compared to 4.1 for principals licensed over 10 years and 4.13 for principals licensed between 6 and 10 years. While this does result in a significant p-value of .000 (see Table 4.9), the mean difference range from 3.7 to 4.1 does not indicate a meaningful difference.

Table 4.8

Mean Difference Amongst Time Licensed as Principal--Diversity Leadership

Time Licensed	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Under 1 Year	15	4.13	.833
1 to 5 Years	133	3.74	.910
6 to 10 Years	159	4.13	.860
Over 10 Years	262	4.10	.878

Table 4.9

ANOVA Differences Amongst Time Licensed As Principal—Diversity Leadership

Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	14.277	3	4.759	6.338	.000
Within Groups	424.215	565	.751		

Location. There is a significant difference in Diversity Leadership and Monitoring Student Learning. For Diversity Leadership, all group differences are significant. In particular, the group difference between Rural and Urban respondents is almost 1 (see Table 4.10 and 4.11). For Monitoring Student Learning, the group difference between Suburban and Urban is not significant but the remaining comparisons are (see Table 4.12

and 4.13). Even so, the actual difference is less or equal to .26, indicating little practical significance.

Table 4.10

Mean Difference Amongst Principal Location--Diversity Leadership

Location	*n*	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rural	288	3.71	.837
Suburban	209	4.24	.823
Urban	72	4.69	.880

Table 4.11

ANOVA Differences Amongst Principal Location—Diversity Leadership

Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	70.946	2	35.473	54.349	.000
Within Groups	369.420	566	.653		

Table 4.12

Mean Difference Amongst Principal Location—Monitoring Student Learning

Location	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rural	290	4.43	.699
Suburban	208	4.61	.603
Urban	72	4.69	.596

Table 4.13

ANOVA Differences Amongst Principal Location—Monitoring Student Learning

Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.749	2	2.875	6.732	.001
Within Groups	242.117	567	.427		

Gender. Significant group differences exist for 14 of the 16 competencies. Leadership and Communication are the two competencies that do not demonstrate gender group differences. The largest difference, in Diversity Leadership, is .48.

Ethnicity. In order to run Post-Hoc tests for Ethnicity, American Indian or Alaska Native participants (of which there was 1) and participants who did not include their ethnicity were removed from the ethnicity analysis. There is significant mean difference

for Diversity Leadership. The mean difference between African-American and white respondents is 1, with African-American respondents rating the competency more relevant than white.

Highest degree earned. In comparing responses of survey participants holding sixth-year certificates, Specialist degrees or doctorates, significant group differences initially existed for Leadership, Communication and Safety and Security. However, post-hoc tests did not yield significant group differences in Leadership and Communication. Further, the mean difference between sixth-year certificate and doctorate respondents in the remaining category, Safety and Security, was only .37.

Current position. Table 4.14 (Appendix L) illustrates significant group differences in the following competencies; Diversity Leadership, Communication, Community Relations, Curriculum Planning and Development, Instructional Management, Human Resource Management, Safety and Security, Instructional Leadership and Monitoring Student Learning. The largest mean difference is in Diversity Leadership, with the difference reaching almost .5.

<center>**Qualitative Data Presentation**</center>

Qualitative data was collected by conducting three focus groups with Minnesota principals. Focus groups were held between November 30, 2011 and January 25, 2012. Two sessions were held in New Ulm, Minnesota and one was conducted in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These two locations were selected in order to collect diverse perspectives from a range of principals with experience at different levels of the principalship (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school) and with different geographic experience (i.e.,

rural, suburban, urban). The New Ulm focus groups included principals serving at

different levels throughout the K-12 system. The Minneapolis session had principal

representation from suburban schools.

   After presenting profile information on each focus group, the focus group protocol

that was implemented for each group will be reviewed. The section concludes with a

discussion on the themes that were identified through the coding process that provided

the mechanism for analyzing the information gathered from each group.

Focus Group Profiles

   In total, 19 principals participated in three focus groups that were held between

November 30, 2011 and January 25, 2012. Of the 19 principals, 12 were high school

principals, 2 were middle school principals, and 5 were elementary principals.

   Focus group one. The first focus group was held at the district administrative offices

for New Ulm Public Schools in New Ulm, Minnesota. The focus group served as the

agenda item for the November Little 10 principals' meeting. Little 10 is a professional

development and networking group for school principals and superintendents. The

organization is comprised of 10 school districts in west central and south central

Minnesota. All principals attending the November Little 10 meeting were invited to

participate in either focus group one or focus group two. Principals self-selected which

group they attended, with the only criteria being that the groups be six to eight principals

in size. Focus group one had six participants (four women and two men), and included

five elementary principals and one high school principal.   Each principal was currently

serving in rural Minnesota schools.

Focus group two. The second focus group was held immediately following the first group. Again, this was held in conjunction with the November 30, 2011 Little 10 meeting. Eight principals (one woman and seven men) from rural Minnesota schools participated in the second focus group. No principal (except the researcher) attended both focus groups. All eight participants were currently serving as high school principals, with one individual working as a K-12 assistant principal.

Focus group three. The final focus group was held on January 25, 2012 at the winter conference of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals. The conference was located at the Marriott City Center Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The focus group was not a scheduled component of the conference. Rather, it was held in a small meeting room after the annual principal recognition banquet. Five principals participated in the focus group. All participants were men. Of the five participants, four described their schools as suburban, and one identified his school as rural. The focus group included four high school principals and one middle school assistant principal.

Focus Group Protocol

Introduction and forms. Identical procedures were used for each focus group. Prior to beginning, attendees were read an introductory script that outlined the purpose of the research study, its expected outcomes, potential risks of participating in the study, and the voluntary nature of the focus group (see Appendix J). Next, attendees were provided a consent form and were asked to read, sign and date if they were a willing participant. Signed forms were collected by the researcher. In each of the three focus groups, there were no attendees who did not sign and ultimately participate in the discussion.

Recording. After forms were collected, a digital recording device was turned on with all future information captured for transcription. The audio software program Audacity was used to digitally record each focus group. As a back-up, the Ipad application AudioNote was used. In all cases, the primary recording was sufficient for transcription purposes. As a result, the AudioNote files were not used.

Focus group questions. Nine questions were asked at each focus group (see Appendix M). The same nine questions were used in all three sessions. Five of the nine questions specifically addressed the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies. Two questions related to the day-to-day work of principals, and one question focused on principal preparation within Minnesota. The final question provided participants with the opportunity to share any additional information prior to the conclusion of the session.

Except for one instance, participants did not access or use any ancillary materials when answering questions. For question three, participants were provided with a list of the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies (Appendix F). At the conclusion of the focus group, the quantitative survey results (Appendix K) were distributed to interested participants.

Transcription. At the completion of each focus group, the audio files were uploaded to Burns Transcription Services, a professional transcriptionist service in St. Paul, Minnesota. Full transcriptions were returned to the researcher via e-mail within three days of submission.

Coding Schemes and Themes from Focus Groups

According to Gorden (1992), interview coding allows researchers to organize relevant information in a usable and accessible manner. The coding procedure outlined by Gorden (1992) provided the framework for organizing the information collected in the three focus groups. The sequential steps suggested by Gorden include defining the coding categories, assigning coding symbols, classifying relevant information, testing the reliability of the coding, and measuring the reliability of the coding. Information was classified using a question-response matrix (see Appendix N).

Coding categories. As stated in chapter three, each of the 16 Minnesota principal competencies was used as a primary node. Once each competency's frequency was noted, initial categories were developed based on responses to specific focus group questions. A listing of these preliminary categories is found in Appendix O. This process was used for all nine questions, followed by the identification of recurring patterns and/or overlapping themes. This analysis led to the establishment of the final coding categories by which the data was sorted. The final coding categories identified were K-12 Competency Relevancy, Communication Skills, Internships, Professional Development and The Principalship. To increase the reliability of the initial and final coding categories, transcript review and the crafting of coding categories were conducted twice, with a 10-day time-lapse between each process.

Coding process. Participant responses were coded using the transcript line and symbol process endorsed by Gorden. This method, by which numbers and symbols provide easy navigation back to the original transcript, collects like-responses and gives a

visual representation of response frequency. In order to address the issue of coding

reliability, the researcher coded the information twice, with a two-week time-lapse

between each process. There was 96% agreement between the first and second coding

experiences.

Coding Themes

Several themes emerged after coding the data. Table 4.15 presents the common

themes that emerged as a result of the questions focus groups were asked to discuss.

Table 4.15

Focus Group Themes and Frequencies

Theme	n	Frequency
K-12 Competency Relevancy	15	62
Communication Skills	15	31
Internships	16	49
Professional Development	8	17
The Art of the Principalship	14	48

K-12 competency relevancy. Focus group data aligned with the quantitative survey

results indicating strong relevancy of all 16 of the K-12 principal competencies. When

asked to share why they believe principals rated the principals so highly, participants

cited the strong alignment between the competencies and the day-to-day work of principals.   Principals in each focus group indicated that they could easily identify work done daily that falls within each of the 16 competency areas. As a participant in focus group one noted, "They're all relevant to everything we do. I mean, in three or four days time, I'll bet you've done every one of them" (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011). A member of focus group two indicated that "At least once a week on average you're going to deal with every one of these single things. You'll encounter each and every one" (Focus group two participant, personal communication, November 30, 201). Other focus group members affirmed these views:

> I think you could put the list in from of you and name multiple things you did under every one of them without even thinking about them. There's just something about your day or your week that falls under every one of these, No matter whether you're looking for it or not, it just pops up (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).
>
> When I had to do my eFolio, I found artifacts in every one of these so quickly. It was almost like zoom, zoom, zoom, right in it went. So they must be organized by someone who has done the work (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).
>
> There is not one competency that does not happen somewhere in my week or possibly even in my day, and so clearly they have been researched and studied. I mean, that is what we do every single day (Focus group three participant, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Two additional findings from focus group interviews support the results of the quantitative survey. When answering the introductory question about the daily work of principals (note: focus group participants were not provided a listing of the competencies until question three), respondents used words and phrases such as "leading", "organizing," "analyzing data," "supervising staff," "observing teachers," "student management," "managing relationships," "communicating with stakeholders," "instructional leadership," and, "administrative decision-making". Strong similarities exist between the words and phrases used by focus group participants and the language used in the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies.

The second focus group question asked respondents to identify the "must have skills and or knowledge for practicing principals." Again, without access to a listing of the K-12 Minnesota Principal competencies, respondents consistently cited skills and knowledge easily linked to the state competencies. Words and phrases used included "conflict resolution," "systems-thinking," "communication skills," "leadership," "attitude of a learner," "vision," "people skills," "judgment," "listening skills," "special education knowledge," "common sense," "understanding of negotiated agreements," "information gathering," and, "role of a mediator".

Communication skills. All three focus groups identified communication skills as an essential skill in order for principals to be successful. Its consistency and frequency throughout each focus group affirms the quantitative survey findings that placed it as the most relevant competency as perceived by Minnesota principals. Of the 569 survey respondents, 89.1% (n=507) found it to be very relevant to their role as a school leader.

When asked to speak more specifically about the role of communication, respondents in each focus group cited the need to use interpersonal skills with the wide-range of school stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members. A participant in focus group one indicated that communication skills:

> (is) having relationship skills, how to connect with kids, how to connect with parents, how to have the tough conversation you need to have with teachers or parents or kids and maintaining that relationship that you don't want to destroy. If you don't know how to talk to people and you don't know how to interact with people, you're not going to last (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).

Listening skills were mentioned in each focus group as a sub-set of communication skills. Five respondents indicated that listening tends to be a top priority of staff and parents. One respondent stated that "more times than not, especially with staff members, they do not want me to solve their problem, they just want someone to listen to them. Maybe five minutes to just let them vent. That's a big part of my day" (Focus group three participant, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Internships. All three focus groups shared that pre-service principals have the best opportunity to learn and practice the skills found within the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies through meaningful and rigorous internship experiences. In each group, concern was expressed about verifying the rigor and comprehensive nature of principal internships.

Respondents generally had positive feelings towards their own internship experiences, however did indicate that time demands of teaching and coaching did prove challenging to satisfy the internship hour requirements. Potential remedies for these concerns were discussed, including paid internships, requiring candidates to take a leave of absence from teacher duties, or allowing candidates to specialize in elementary, middle, or secondary school administration.

Providing authentic and meaningful principal experiences across the K-12 spectrum was a recurring theme in each focus group. In particular, concern was expressed over the readiness of new principals to address the complex issues and demands of the job.

> I think you need to be the dean of students or an assistant principal as an ideal transition to the job, because you're not ready. I mean, you're just not ready to do all these things. You're put in situations early in your career that you really don't know the answer and you're really not ready for that intensity or rigor, the depth that you really need to be functional in the position (Focus group two participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).

> For me, the biggest thing is pace. Most people are not prepared for the pace. We probably should do something with our system to prepare people for the pace and the number of decisions they are going to have to make (Focus group three participant, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

> I'm seeing internships where, really, people are doing it over and above what they're doing for teaching. And I understand the financial pressure to that, but I don't know that it's really preparing them, because they're not dealing with those

tough things like human resource management. So I'm concerned about if you're

calling that an internship in some cases, it's not a strong enough experience

(Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).

Professional development. In all focus groups, the need for on-going opportunities

for principal growth and networking emerged as a theme. For example, one respondent

stated, "the principalship is always changing, and new principals, along with all of us,

need to stay up on things and make sure we know what we are doing" (Focus group three

participant, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Mentoring was identified as a key element of principal survival and success. One

respondent described a principal from a neighboring school who had "taken him under

his wing" and provided answers to questions and with the feeling that he "was not alone"

(Focus group two participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011). As a focus

group two member noted, "Having a good mentor is huge, because that mentor can save a

lot of time and give some strong direction" (Focus group two participant, personal

communication, November 30, 2011). Other participants affirmed the view that support

for new principals is crucial for their success.

> We have all talked to people that we've learned from, someone we can call.
>
> Having that network to know that you're not alone and you can call somebody
>
> who's maybe been through this before and give you some—we all do that all the
>
> time. Just to have that resource (Focus group two participant, personal
>
> communication, November 30, 2011).

The internship is a good place to start supporting up and coming principals. You

can learn an incredible amount with that real-life experience, working on a

supportive administrative team (Focus group three participant, personal

communication, January 25, 2012).

In Focus Group one, the recommendation was made to include professional

networking within the K-12 Minnesota Competencies. When asked for clarification,

respondents indicated that new principals should know where and how to access

information from professional organizations and practicing principals within the state.

The art of the principalship. Multiple responses collected throughout the focus

group interviews centered on the complexity of the principalship. Specifically,

respondents noted the integrated nature of the principal competencies. "(With) the

diversity of the assignment, all of these (competencies) come into play somewhere along

the line" (Focus group three participant, personal communication, January 25, 2012).

"The expectation and reality is that we have the ability to follow through and act on any

one of these, and there are many times when they overlap (Focus group two participant,

personal communication, November 30, 2011).

When responding to questions specifically related to the K-12 Minnesota

Competencies, each focus group referenced how the competencies are integrated within

the work of the principal. In Focus Group one and Focus Group two, the suggestion was

made that Leadership and Organizational Management could likely serve as headings by

which each of the other 14 competencies could be sorted and connected to one another.

Further, the view was shared that due to the complexity of the principalship, principals

"need to be able to maneuver in and out of the competencies" (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).

While recognizing the relevance of each of the competencies, focus group members reported frustration when some elements of the principalship consume a disproportionate amount of time. The most striking example of this is in the area of instructional leadership. Members in each focus group indicated the desire to spend more time in classrooms, observing teachers and working with them to improve their instructional practice.

> Most of us would say that before we became principals, we probably thought that some of these (the competencies) were going to be more important and we would spend more time on them, only to find out a lot of other things get in the way. I think instructional leadership is a big one (Focus group one participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).
>
> I think most of us went into the principalship thinking that we could make some differences in instructional leadership and to the achievement of students, only to find out that that is not a big part of our day (Focus group two participant, personal communication, November 30, 2011).
>
> I would say that I have found that a good percentage of your day is spent just putting out fires and dealing with kids. And unfortunately, observations, formal observations, or just getting into the classrooms and seeing what is actually happening in your classrooms, that should be a higher priority, but all the little

fires and the meetings and so forth take over (Focus group three participant,

personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Member Checking

Three strategies were utilized to increase the external validity of not only the data

collected in the quantitative and qualitative aspect of the research study, but also of the

study's findings.

First, a summary of the quantitative survey results was distributed to principals at the

2012 Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) Winter

Conference in Minneapolis. Principals were asked to indicate whether or not they had

participated in the survey, if they recollected the questions posed to them in the survey,

and whether or not the survey results appeared credible. In total, 15 principals were

invited to provide feedback on the quantitative survey with each answering in the

affirmative on all three questions.

Next, a copy of the fully transcribed focus group was sent to two members of each

focus group. Principals receiving the transcripts were asked to review its contents and

provide comments related to its accuracy. In all cases, principals participating in the

review of transcripts reported that the focus group data had been transcribed correctly.

The final member checking strategy used was a principal discussion held during a

concurrent workshop session at the MASSP Winter Conference. Participants were asked

to comment on the findings of the research study. Principals affirmed the study's

conclusions, indicating special interest in how the study may lead to improvements in

principal preparation throughout the state.

Summary

Study results were obtained from the analysis of data gathered from Minnesota principals through a quantitative electronic survey administered in September 2011 and three qualitative focus group interviews conducted between November 30, 2011 and January 25, 2012. Demographic profiles of the respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study were presented.

Quantitative data analysis, conducted with the assistance of staff members from the Center for Excellence in Scholarly Research at Minnesota State University-Mankato, was reported and used to inform the development of the qualitative focus group questions. Focus group responses were analyzed through a coding process, which resulted in the identification of the coding themes that were presented.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study and discusses the findings, conclusions, and implications of the study.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The proceeding chapter includes three sections. First, a brief summary of the research study is presented. The second section discusses the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study outlined in chapter four. The chapter concludes with a discussion of recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

This mixed-methods study examined the relevancy of the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies. The purpose of the study was to determine how practicing principals perceive the relevancy of the competencies in the profession and to provide the opportunity for current principals to report on the skills and abilities needed for the job.

The on-line survey collected quantitative information related to Minnesota principals' perceptions of the relevancy of each of the 16 competencies. The survey also collected demographic information from respondents in order to conduct more extensive analysis of the results. After the survey results were analyzed, three focus groups were held to gather qualitative data.

Analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data were reported sequentially in chapter four. Major quantitative findings were shared first, identifying descriptive, *t*-test and ANOVA results. Qualitative results followed, including focus group categories, themes and select respondents' quotations used to substantiate the themes identified by the researcher.

Conclusions

Results of the study identify two key findings related to the research question: What is the relevance of the Minnesota principal competencies to Minnesota principals?

Finding one. The first finding of the research study was that Minnesota principals report close alignment between the Minnesota K-12 Principal Competencies and their work as principals. The high level of relevancy reported with the 16 competencies is noteworthy given the continued work within the state of Minnesota to intensify and deepen principal preparation.

Finding two. A second finding of the research study was that Minnesota principals report that in practice, the Minnesota competencies do not exist in isolation nor are they implemented as such. Rather, a more nuanced approach is necessary, requiring principals to move amongst the various skills, knowledge and aptitudes identified in the competency list. Understanding and implementing the competencies as an integrated whole provides an opportunity for practicing principals to enhance their performance through research-based professional development.

Relevance of the findings. In 2010, the Minnesota Board of School Administrators (BOSA) developed a work group charged with the responsibility of developing a comprehensive principal development program for Minnesota. The work group's findings and recommendations, submitted to BOSA in March 2011, centered on four key elements of high quality principal development programs: rigorous standards related to recruitment, pre-service training, licensing, and professional development (Principal

Performance Assessment Work Group, 2011). The pre-service training and professional development elements of their work closely align with the findings of the study.

In the area of pre-service programs, the work group recommended aligning the ISLCC standards with the Minnesota principal competencies, in an effort to "provide a guide to review the preparation and professional practice for school leaders" (Principal Performance Assessment Work Group, 2011, p. 9). The results of this research study indicate that if an alignment process is undertaken, it be done carefully to ensure that it does not result in crowding out or losing touch with the Minnesota competencies that practicing principals value.

The work group additionally recommended the development of a continuous professional development model, which requires principals to deepen their practice throughout their career. There are two ways in which the research study's findings provide a clear starting point in implementing the work group's recommendation. First, "The Evaluation of Minnesota's School Principals" (which the researcher was a task force member) not only uses the Minnesota competencies as its foundation, but also recognizes the integrated nature of the competencies throughout the evaluation process. The results of the research study indicate that Minnesota principals have validated this approach. Second, an on-going principal development expectation, centered on honing skills and extending knowledge within an integrated competency framework, provides great potential for the tiered-licensing system recommended by the work group.

Darling-Hammond (2010) found that high-quality, robust principal internships are "critical to the success of (highly successful) programs" (p. 65). The research study

revealed strong Minnesota principal sentiment regarding the importance of internships while also expressing a clear concern for their quality. Darling-Hammond (2010) notes that virtually all licensing programs struggle with ensuring rigorous and authentic internships yet does cite programs that have been consistently successful in this endeavor. The challenges identified by Darling-Hammond (2010), including the inability of individuals to afford full-year, non-paid internships and a lack of principal mentoring, were similarly addressed by Minnesota principals in the research study.

Exemplary internship programs cited by Darling-Hammond (2010) include full-year, paid principal internships supported with state and/or federal funds. The Minnesota work group recommended securing financial support through state and private funding sources for principal professional development in Minnesota. Providing resources to support pre-service principals would allow candidates to be released from other school responsibilities (i.e., teaching, coaching). As a result, the expectations for robust and substantive internships would more closely line up with the time demands of the position.

The findings of the research study also support the call of the work group for meaningful professional development well after a principal is initially licensed. Minnesota principals cite on-going learning, networking and support as critical to the profession.

Along with development opportunities offered by the state principal associations, colleges and universities have developed programs to provide continuing education for principals. For example, the Center for School-University Partnerships and the Center for Engaged Leadership, both at Minnesota State University-Mankato, provide several

offerings to principals and other school leaders in developing and enhancing leadership capacity. Examples include the Institute for Continuous Improvement, the Professional Development School Leadership Institute and the Leadership Development Symposium. The research study results indicate strong principal support and desire for opportunities such as these to engage with other professionals in growth experiences.

Minnesota Moving Forward. After the work group's recommendations were submitted in March 2011, BOSA sought and received a $100,000 grant from the St. Paul Foundation and Minnesota Community Foundation to conduct additional research on principal development within the state. Led by Dr. Arnold Danzig, professor in the School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University, BOSA established a committee of national experts with the responsibility of conducting a comprehensive review of Minnesota's principal standards. This review, scheduled to be completed by May 2012, has included interviewing over 50 principals about their views of principal preparation within the state. BOSA Executive Director Stan Mack indicates that their findings, and the initial report submitted by the Principal Performance Assessment Work Group, will serve as key resources when BOSA considers and likely recommends administrative rule changes in 2013 (S. Mack, personal communication, February 2012). As the state continues on the path of examining principal standards and preparation, the research study's findings provide practicing principal perspective on areas of strength and on the areas that are in need of improvement.

Recommendations

As a result of the research study, four recommendations are made related to principal preparation and the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies:

- Continue close alignment between principal preparation and practice. This recommendation can best be achieved by maintaining close relationships between practicing principals and licensing programs throughout the state. Input from principals via regular and replicable surveying should be sought on a consistent basis.

- Carefully consider additions to the K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies. Practicing principals indicate strong alignment and relevancy of the current competencies to the profession. When the competency list is reviewed as part of the principal licensure review process, it is recommended that the Minnesota Board of School Administrators (BOSA) reflect on the results of the study to ensure that changes to the list align with the skills, characteristics, or content knowledge valued by practicing principals.

- Examine the design and expectations of internships to ensure prospective principals are in environments that provide optimal K-12 experiences. Policymakers are encouraged to consider mechanisms that provide financial support for principal internship experiences. Further, licensing programs must continue to call for high-quality, authentic experiences that best prepare pre-service principals for the realities of the principalship.

- Establish and/or enhance links between principal preparation programs and principal development networks. Higher education can provide significant support and

leadership for practicing principals. Programs like the ones in place at Minnesota State University-Mankato are replicable. Initiatives such as these give principals the support they need and the professional development they require to grow as a leader. As a link to this recommendation, the state should strongly consider the call for advanced licensure requirements for practicing principals made by the initial BOSA principal work group.

Recommendations for Further Research

As a result of the research study, the following recommendations are made to guide future research on the topic of Minnesota principal preparation:

- Replicate the study on a regular basis to collect perspectives from practicing principals within the state. Scheduling such a study as part of the larger competency review process undertaken by BOSA ensures that the voices of Minnesota's principals would be heard as part of the revising process.

- Research how school location affects Minnesota principals' perspective of the principalship. Findings from the quantitative survey indicate significant differences amongst urban, suburban and rural Minnesota principals in rating the relevancy of certain principal competencies. Further investigations may provide insight on how to best prepare principals for diverse experiences. Also, such a study could provide data to help assess the feasibility of differentiated principal licensure within the state of Minnesota.

- Research the effectiveness of the K-12 licensure within the state of Minnesota. Participants in each focus group questioned whether combining the elementary and

secondary principal license into a K-12 license is in the best interest of schools and principals. Studying the costs and benefits of the K-12 license by collecting and analyzing input from all stakeholders, including higher education, state officials, licensing boards and principals, would assist in determining if a revision of the all-grade licensure is warranted.

- Research principal internship experiences from various licensing programs. Focus group participants indicate vast differences in the quality of principal interns and in the internship expectations of colleges and university programs. A comparative analysis of how internship expectations and experiences play out at different institutions would identify program elements that help ensure rigor and relevance of the internship.

- Research the status of principal professional development within the state of Minnesota. As the principalship changes, so too must the support and continued learning of those in the position. In some key areas, certain colleges and universities have surpassed traditional state organizations (i.e., MASSP, MESPA) in implementing programs that support continued principal development. Studying principal participation in these new development models would assist in understanding the role higher education can and does play in on-going support for Minnesota principals.

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Appendix A

The 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader

1. Affirmation
2. Change Agent
3. Contingent Rewards
4. Communication
5. Culture
6. Discipline
7. Flexibility
8. Focus
9. Ideals/Beliefs
10. Input
11. Intellectual Stimulation
12. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
13. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
14. Monitoring/Evaluating
15. Optimizer
16. Order
17. Outreach
18. Relationships
19. Resources
20. Situational Awareness
21. Visibility

(Marzano et al., 2005)

Appendix B

The 1996 ISLLC Standards for School Leaders

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

2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.

3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

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

5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

(Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the Council of Chief State School Officers. 1996)

Appendix C

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008

1. An education 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.

2. An education 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.

3. An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

4. An education 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.

5. An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

(Council of Chief State School Officers. 2008)

Appendix D

National Board Standards Statements and Core Propositions

for Accomplished Educational Leaders

Standard I: Leadership for Results
Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Standard II: Vision and Mission
Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Standard III: Teaching and Learning
Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and
provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults
Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

Standard V: Culture
Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Standard VI: Strategic Management
Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

Standard VII: Advocacy
Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Standard VIII: Ethics
Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

Standard IX: Reflection and Growth
Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction.

(National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. 2010).

Appendix E

The 21 Minnesota Principal Competencies

1. Leadership
2. Information Collection
3. Problem Analysis
4. Judgment
5. Organizational Oversight
6. Implementation
7. Delegation
8. Instruction and the Learning Environment
9. Curriculum Design
10. Student Guidance and Development
11. Staff Development
12. Measurement and Evaluation
13. Resource Allocation
14. Motivating Others
15. Interpersonal Sensitivity
16. Oral and Nonverbal Expression
17. Written Expression
18. Philosophical and Cultural Values
19. Legal and Regulatory Applications
20. Policy and Political Influences
21. Public Relations

(National Policy Board for Educational Administration. 1993)

Appendix F

The 16 Minnesota Principal Competencies, 2008

1. Leadership

2. Organizational Management

3. Diversity Leadership

4. Policy and Law

5. Political Influences and Governance

6. Communication

7. Community Relations

8. Curriculum Planning and Development for the Success of All Learners

9. Instructional Management for the Success of All Learners

10. Human Resource Management

11. Values and Ethics of Leadership

12. Judgment and Problem Analysis

13. Safety and Security

14. Instructional Leadership

15. Monitor Student Learning

16. K-12 Leadership

(Minnesota State Board Rule 3512.0500)

Appendix G

The K-12 Minnesota Principal Competency Survey

<u>Demographic Information</u>

1. How long have you been a licensed Minnesota principal?
    a. _____ Under 1 year
    b. _____ 1 to 5 years
    c. _____ 6-10 years
    d. _____ Over 10 years

2. Which of the following best describes the location of your current school:
    a. _____ Rural
    b. _____ Suburban
    c. _____ Urban

3. What is your gender?
    a. _____ Female
    b. _____ Male

4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
    a. _____ American Indian or Alaska Native

    b. _____ Asian

    c. _____ Black or African American

    d. _____ Hispanic or Latino

    e. _____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

    f. _____ White

5. What is your highest degree completed?
    a. _____ Sixth-Year Certificate
    b. _____ Specialist
    c. _____ Doctorate

6. Which of the following best describes your current position:
   a. _____ High School Principal
   b. _____ Middle School Principal
   c. _____ Elementary School Principal
   d. _____ Elementary School Assistant Principal
   e. _____ Middle School Assistant Principal
   f. _____ High School Assistant Principal

7. Please rate the 16 K-12 Minnesota principal competencies in relation to their relevance to your role as a school leader. For this study, relevance is defined as a concept that encompasses importance, meaning, and value.

	Very Relevant	Moderately Relevant	Of Little Relevance	No Relevance

1. Leadership

2. Organizational Management

3. Diversity Leadership

4. Policy and Law

5. Political Influences and Governance

6. Communication

7. Community Relations

8. Curriculum Planning and Development

   for the Success of All Learners

9. Instructional Management

   for the Success of All Learners

10. Human Resource Management

11. Values and Ethics of Leadership

12. Judgment and Problem Analysis

13. Safety and Security

14. Instructional Leadership

15. Monitor Student Learning

16. K-12 Leadership

Appendix H

Online Survey Consent Form

You are requested to participate in research that will be supervised by Dr. Candace Raskin on the Minnesota principal competencies. This survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and responses will be kept anonymous. However, whenever one works with email/the internet there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. Despite this possibility, the risks to your physical, emotional, social, professional, or financial well-being are considered to be 'less than minimal'.

You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. Submission of the completed survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate and that you affirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Candace Raskin via email at candace.raskin@mnsu.edu. If you have questions about the treatment of human subjects, contact the IRB Administrator, at anne.blackhurst@mnsu.edu. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

Appendix I

Focus Group Consent Form

K-12 Minnesota Principal Competencies Study

You are invited to take part in a study of the Minnesota principal competencies. You are a potential participant because you are a principal in the state of Minnesota. The research is being conducted by Professor Candace Raskin and Paul Peterson. We ask that you read this form before agreeing to be in the research.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to find out more information about practicing principals' perceptions on the Minnesota principal competencies. We are interested in learning more about the usefulness of the competencies in relation to the everyday realities of the principalship.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this research, and sign this consent form, we ask that you participate in a 45-minute focus group.

Risks and Benefits

You will be asked to answer questions that address your role as a principal. You may refuse to answer any questions. There are no direct benefits of the study.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. Anything you tell us will remain confidential. In any sort of report of the study, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. We are not asking for your name, address, or phone number. Your name and other identifying information will not be kept with this survey. The surveys will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers for this study will have access to the records.

Voluntary nature of study

Your decision whether or not to participate in this research is voluntary. Even if you sign the consent form, you are free to quit the focus group at any time. You do not need to complete it if you feel uncomfortable doing it.

Contact

The researchers conducting this study are Dr. Candace Raskin and Paul Peterson. You may contact them at candance.raskin@mnsu.edu or ppeterson@stpeterschools.org. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), contact: MSU IRB Administrator Minnesota State University, Mankato, Institutional Review Board, 115 Alumni Foundation, (507) 389-2321.

I have read the above information and understand that this survey is voluntary and I may stop at any time. I consent to participate in the study.

_____

Signature of participant

_____

Date

_____

Signature of researchers

_____

Date

☐ Participant received a copy.

Appendix J

Focus Group Protocol
Minnesota Principal Competencies
(Adapted from the Texas Department of State Health Services
Focus Group Interview Protocol)

Materials and supplies for focus groups
- Sign-in sheet
- Focus group discussion guide for facilitator
- Digital recording device
- Batteries for recording device
- Notebook for note-taking
- Snacks and refreshments for focus group attendees

1. **Consent Process**
   Script:
   Good morning/afternoon, my name is Paul Peterson. I am the principal at Saint Peter High School in St. Peter, Minnesota, and am working on my doctorate in education from Minnesota State University-Mankato. I am conducting this focus group as an element of my mixed-methods research on the Minnesota K-12 Principal Competencies. I am gathering input from regional focus groups to better understand the information that was collected from the electronic survey that was sent to all members of MASSP and MESPA. The primary purpose of my research is to provide various stakeholders in K-12 educational administration (higher education, licensing committees, superintendents and practicing principals) with useful and relevant information related to the preparation, skills and knowledge required for school principals. Before we get started, I'd like to call your attention to the consent form.
   - I would like to record the focus group so I can make sure to capture the thoughts and ideas that are shared. No names will be attached to the focus groups and the tapes will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed.
   - You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at anytime.
   - I understand that privacy and confidentiality are important and ask you to respect each other's confidentiality within this process.
   - Your participation in this focus group is voluntary, and you may excuse yourself from the process at any time.

2. **Focus Group Process and Logistics**
   - The goal is not to achieve consensus or "the answers"; rather, the process is focused on gathering information and principal perspectives.
   - This focus group will last approximately 45 minutes.
   - Help yourself to refreshments and snacks at any time.

3. **Ground Rules**
   - Everyone is asked to participate and be mindful of your own participation.
   - Information provided in the focus group is to remain confidential.
   - Please stay with the group and avoid side conversations.

4. **Turn on Recorder**

5. **Any Questions Before Beginning?**

6. **Introductions**
   - Name
   - Position
   - Years in Position

7. **Begin Discussion**
   - Facilitator reminders
     i. Give participants time to think before answering questions
     ii. Don't move on too quickly
     iii. Use comprehensive probes
     iv. Move ahead when repetition begins

8. **End Discussion**
   - Facilitator reminders
     i. Provide participants with final opportunity to share perspectives
     ii. Thank attendees for their participation
     iii. Invite participants to member-check responses
     iv. Provide contact information for those interested

Appendix K

Relevancy of the Minnesota Principal Competencies

Competency	*n*	Very Relevant	Relevant	Moderately Relevant	Of Little Relevance	No Relevance
Leadership	575	496	72	5	2	0
		(86.3%)	(12.5%)	(0.9%)	(0.3%)	(0%)
Organizational Management	572	387	168	15	2	0
		(67.7%)	(29.4%)	(2.6%)	(0.3%)	(0%)
Diversity Leadership	573	200	221	122	30	0
		(34.9%)	(38.6%)	(21.3%)	(5.2%)	(0%)
Policy and Law	574	266	239	61	8	0
		(46.3%)	(41.6%)	(10.6%)	(1.4%)	(0%)
Political Influences and Governance	571	90	242	199	39	1
		(15.8%)	(42.9%)	(34.9%)	(6.8%)	(0.2%)
Communication	574	511	53	8	2	0
		(89%)	(9.2%)	(1.4%)	(0.3%)	(0%)
Community Relations	574	341	200	30	3	0
		(59.4%)	(34.8%)	(5.2%)	(0.5%)	(0%)

Curriculum Planning and Development	576	310	216	42	8	0
		(53.8%)	(37.5%)	(7.3%)	(1.4%)	(0%)
Instructional Management	572	370	171	27	4	0
		(64.7%)	(29.9%)	(4.7%)	(0.7%)	(0%)
Human Resource Management	576	223	260	80	13	0
		(38.7%)	(45.1%)	(13.9%)	(2.3%)	(0%)
Values and Ethics of Leadership	572	391	147	28	6	0
		(68.4%)	(25.7%)	(4.9%)	(1.0%)	(0%)
Judgment and Problem Analysis	575	437	115	18	5	0
		(76%)	(20%)	(3.1%)	(0.9%)	(0%)
Safety and Security	573	349	182	36	6	0
		(60.9%)	(31.8%)	(6.3%)	(1.3%)	(0%)
Instructional Leadership	574	448	106	16	4	0
		(78%)	(18.5%)	(2.8%)	(0.7%)	(0%)
Monitor Student Learning	574	353	181	33	7	0
		(61.5%)	(31.5%)	(5.7%)	(1.2%)	(0%)
K-12 Leadership	569	258	212	81	18	0
		(45.3%)	(37.3%)	(14.2%)	(3.2%)	(0%)

Appendix L

ANOVA Differences Amongst Current Principal Position

Competency	Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Diversity Leadership	Between Groups	20.153	5	4.031	5.474	.000
	Within Groups	412.337	560	.736		
Communication	Between Groups	1.852	5	.370	2.278	.048
	Within Groups	91.227	561	.163		
Community Relations	Between Groups	4.810	5	.962	2.517	.029
	Within Groups	214.400	561	.382		
Curriculum Planning and Development	Between Groups	6.461	5	1.292	2.741	.019
	Within Groups	265.447	563	.471		

Instructional Management	Between Groups	4.548	5	.910	2.411	.035
	Within Groups	210.875	559	.377		
Human Resources Management	Between Groups	8.872	5	1.774	3.137	.008
	Within Groups	318.474	563	.566		
Safety and Security	Between Groups	6.020	5	1.204	2.772	.017
	Within Groups	243.225	560	.434		
Instructional Leadership	Between Groups	4.873	5	.975	3.396	.005
	Within Groups	160.972	561	.287		
Monitoring Student Learning	Between Groups	12.545	5	2.509	5.946	.000
	Within Groups	236.725	561	.422		

Appendix M

Focus Group Questions

1. Describe your day-to-day work as a principal.

2. What do you see as must-have skills and/or knowledge for practicing principals?

3. In front of you is a list of the 16 Minnesota principal competencies. When you reflect on the list of competencies, what is their relevance to your work as a principal?

4. Why do you believe Minnesota principals tend to rate the relevancy of the current Minnesota competencies so strong?

5. In terms of principal preparation, what changes would you like to see in general in how principals are prepared for the position?

6. In terms of the Minnesota principal competencies, what might you suggest as additions or changes to the current Minnesota principal competencies?

7. The competencies with the lowest overall relevancy ranking were diversity leadership and political influence and governance. Why do you think that is?

8. Leadership and communication were the two competencies with the highest overall

ranking. Why do you think that is?

9. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix N

Question-Response Coding Matrix

QUESTION _____	Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme
Focus Group 1					
Focus Group 2					
Focus Group 3					

Appendix O

Preliminary Coding Categories

Question 1

    a. Instructional Leadership

    b. Building Management

    c. Staff Support

    d. Dynamic Characteristics

    e. Meetings

    f. Other

Question 2

    a. Interpersonal Communication Skills

    b. Content and Administrative Knowledge

    c. Judgment

    d. Survival Skills

    e. Leadership

    f. Data Collection and Analysis

    g. Other

Question 3

    a. Levels of Relevancy

    b. Application Frequency

    c. Perception v. Reality

    d. Instructional Leadership

e. Other

Question 4

    a. Expectations for Principals

    b. Complexity of the Principalship

    c. Alignment to the Principalship

    d. Other

Question 5

    a. Content Knowledge

    b. K-12 Licensure

    c. Special Education

    d. Internships and Practicums

    e. Mentoring and Professional Networking

    f. Other

Question 6

    a. Content Knowledge

    b. K-12 Licensure

    c. Technology

    d. Professional Networking

    e. Other

Question 7

    a. Time Factors

    b. Influence

c. Priorities

d. Minnesota Demographics

e. View of Students

f. Other

Question 8

a. Frequency of Use

b. Link to Other Competencies

c. Definition of the Principalship

d. Situational Experiences

e. Other