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Priorities vs. Reality: A Task Analysis of Secondary School Principals in the State of Minnesota

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Priorities vs. Reality: A Task Analysis of Secondary School

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Abstract

"The principal's role in delivering quality education has long been recognized as an important organizational characteristic of schools. How principals should perform their roles, however, has been the subject of debate" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 21). Since the inception of the principalship, the role of the principal has encompassed all operations of their school. During the early 1900s principals were primarily managers of facilities. Principals were predominately male teachers who performed clerical administrative duties such as the school schedule, length of year, facility management etc. (Kafka, 2009). As the role of education in our society has grown, so has the principalship. Each decade has brought changes to public schools as the needs of society have changed. Schools grow and change, and at the head of each school is a principal who is responsible for this growth and change (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005).

During the 1950s and 1960s, our country went through turbulent times in the arenas of social change and global competition. Schools became the focus of change in order to help solve the inequities in society and to help us compete scientifically and economically on the world stage. By the 1970s, our educational systems ranking on the world stage started to suffer. Principals were directed to focus on instructional leadership in order to better prepare our students to compete globally. Rigorous education of children was prioritized as a means for America to better compete in the global society (Drake & Roe, 1994). "His cardinal function is the *improvement of instruction*, which will enhance the learning experiences of his students" (Melton, 1970, p. 2).

Society has seen major changes over the past 100 years, socially and scientifically. Technology is now part of our schools and everyday experience. As society has evolved, so has public education and the role of the public school principal. Duties have been added to the principalship, nothing has been deleted. The management issues of previous decades still exist and the instructional leadership duties continue be expanded upon. With all the responsibilities of today's principalship, what are the most important functions for principals to perform? There is continuous conflict within the definition of the principalship as instructional leader or building manager or both (Portin & Jianping, 1999). "The historical conflict between the instructional leadership role and managerial aspects of the principalship has had a major impact on the entire profession" (Richardson, 1991, p. 9).

The purpose of this study is to determine those leadership tasks that consume the majority of Minnesota secondary school principals' time. The study will examine Minnesota secondary school principals' perceptions of those tasks they believe should consume the majority of their time. These perceptions will be compared to Minnesota secondary school principals' reported time on job-related tasks. The study will ascertain whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals' perceived priority tasks match actual time on task and if they spend more time providing instructional leadership or managerial leadership.

Acknowledgement

I began my doctoral studies after 30 years in education, 16 of these as a head secondary principal. The only regret I have is that I did not begin this process 15 years earlier. The process of earning my Doctorate has been the most rewarding professional development that I have engaged in during my career. The cohort process employed by St. Cloud State University provided stimulating discussion, unwavering support, and the collegiality necessary for me to see the process through to the end. Each of the 15 members of Cohort 6 provided a unique perspective and inspiration for me.

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To retired superintendent, Dr. Sue Ann Gruver and my current superintendent, Dr. Terri Staloch—thank you for your support and understanding that at times, course work had to take precedent.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Linda. The life of a high school principal requires a huge time commitment. Working on my Doctorate meant more time away and sacrifices in our family schedule. I could not have done this without her understanding and support.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all public school principals. Only those in the ranks understand the constant competing priorities. Only those in the position understand the desire to serve all students, all staff, and the constant struggle to be everything to all stakeholders. Only public school principals understand the sacrifice to self and family required to perform our jobs. I am humbled by the quality and professionalism of the principals I have met throughout my career.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The "principal teacher" position came into existence in the early 1800s as schools began to increase in population (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eagle, 2005). At this time, principals were predominately male teachers who performed clerical administrative duties such as the school schedule, length of year, facility management and other tasks (Kafka, 2009). They cared for the facility, school grounds, generated reports and, through all of this, gained authority over the teachers in the building (Kafka, 2009). "The secondary-school administrator is a direct descendent of the headmasters of the Gymnasia and Latin Grammar Schools" (Knezevich, 1962, p. 323).

In reviewing the literature, it appeared that, over the past 200 years, the role of the secondary school principal expanded exponentially. Each decade resulted in changes in the public schools as the needs of society changed. Schools have grown and changed and, at the head of each school, was a principal who was responsible for managing that growth and change (Goodwin et al., 2005). While schools hold fast in maintaining and supporting the present system of education, society continues to change; the world is in constant change (Drake & Roe, 1994).

During the first half of the 19th century, schools were formed in large cities with expanding student bodies. As these schools grew, the duties of the principal teacher increased to include budget, personnel and facility management (Goodwin et al., 2005). Kafka (2009) explained that during the 1950s, there was an emphasis placed on efficient administration and principals were instructed on the duties they were to perform on a minute-by-minute basis. She further stated that, during the latter part of the 1950s and early in the 1960s, the nation's schools were asked to help solve societal issues.

The 1960s and 1970s brought about the advent of schools assuming many social programs. Principals became the leaders of these initiatives in their schools (Kafka, 2009). Curriculum reform expanded exponentially in the 1960s and continued to increase in the 1970s with the infusion of federal dollars intended to advance science and mathematics programs (Hallinger, 1992). The principal as instructional leader role was spawned in the 1970s and was positioned at the forefront in the 1990s during the standards-based reform movement (Terosky, 2014). Rigorous education of children was emphasized as a means for American schools to better compete in the global society (Drake & Roe, 1994).

"The principal's role in delivering quality education has long been recognized as an important organizational characteristic of schools. How principals should perform their roles, however, has been the subject of debate" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p.21). "Calls for accountability in America's schools have created increased responsibilities for educational leaders" (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006, p.1). Leading every school is a principal, and it is the principal's responsibility to implement federal, state, and local policies along with current best practices in education. "Although the principal is certainly not the only responsible person on the staff, forward-looking school programs are usually characterized by competent principals who know how to exert leadership" (Trump, 1977, p. 62). It became evident during a review of the literature on the principalship, that internal and external stakeholders expected the school principal to oversee all aspects of school improvement.

". . . Scholarship on the history of the principalship demonstrates that it has always been a complex and multifaceted role and that principals have historically drawn on shifting sources of authority to assert their institutional and personal power" (Kafka, 2009, p. 318). Researchers and

authors have provided social descriptions of the principalship throughout history, but there has

been little written about what principals actually do (Kafka, 2009). Each decade resulted in new

challenges for schools and the principals that led them (Goodwin et al., 2005). "Principals today

are expected not only to be instructional leaders, but also disciplinarians, supervisors, fund-

raisers, public relations experts, and fiscal managers" (Olson, 2000, p. 2). "Educational

leadership seem to have as many definitions as there are people willing to define it" (Williams,

2000, p. 265). Research and literature vary widely on those leadership tasks that are most

important for principals to perform. Federal, state, and local policy makers have directly

impacted the role of the principal through mandates, statutes and policies (Portin, Williams, &

Shen, 1998). "Even though the principalship is a well-established role in the field of education,

there is still some disagreement concerning the nature and boundaries of the major functional

categories of the principal's role" (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974, p. 10). Portin and Jianping (1999)

stated that it was important for the principal to be both an instructional leader and a good

building manger. Management, instructional leadership, which role takes precedent? "Views of

the principal as instructional leader, administrator, community leader, disciplinarian, and

organizational change agent dominate the literature" (Richardson, 1991, p. 9). Are principals

managers or are they instructional leaders and, if they are both, which role should consume the

majority of a principal's time? "Do we really want the principal to be primarily an instructional

leader or do we expect him/her to be primarily a manager of people and things?" (Roe & Drake,

1980, p. 11).

　　Administration, therefore, includes all of those tasks aimed at maintaining the stability of

　　the organization, from preparing reports, constructing class schedules, disciplining pupils,

meeting with parents, solving non-instructional problems for teachers and students, to the common managerial duties of budgeting, making personnel decisions, and maintaining the building. (Cuban, 1988, p.60).

Cuban (1988) alleged that all aspects of administration are equally important and dictated by the needs of the district. Mintzberg (1989) believed that management was the most important role that any leader can perform. "It is the manager who determines whether our social institutions serve us well or whether they squander our talents and resources" (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 24). District office leaders as well as local school boards prioritize the managerial aspects of the principalship, evaluation, student discipline, physical plant, and others and principals are rewarded accordingly (Roe & Drake, 1980). Cuban (1988) maintained that throughout the years, the bureaucratic image of the principal was etched in history due to the demands of school boards, comparisons with corporate management, and weaned on the dream of scientific management. This image was and is carried by principals and non-principals alike (Cuban, 1988).

"But other expectations generated a competing image of a principal improving instruction" (Cuban, 1988, p.57). They asserted that the primary role of the principal was instructional leadership, and the majority of this role was working with teachers on improving instruction (Trump, 1977). "At some level, principals always have been instructional leaders – but never before has their role been more prominent" (Finkel, 2012, p.51).

A review of the literature on the principalship highlighted the disagreement among researchers on which role, instructional leadership or managerial leadership, was the most important function of the principalship. "The historical conflict between the instructional

leadership role and managerial aspects of the principalship has had a major impact on the entire

profession" (Richardson, 1991, p. 9). Today there continues to be conflict in defining the primary

role of the principal as instructional leader or building manager or both (Portin & Jianping,

1999). Some authors believe principals are simply middle managers and their duties are a result

of the priorities established by upper management. As middle level managers, are they

representatives of central office administration (Smith & Andrews, 1989)? "Today's educational

leaders must grapple with complex, dynamic educational systems while responding to social and

political pressures" (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002, p. 5). Principals are the key players in

instructional leadership, management, problem solving and school personnel management

(Portin et al., 1998). "Studies of principals at work indicated that the real world of school

administration is often quite different from the world described in the theoretical literature and in

principals' preferences" (Sergiovanni, 1991 p. 24).

Problem

In reviewing the literature on the principalship, it was noted that the role of the principal

has expanded and evolved over time. Kafka (2009) explained that the duties of today's principals

have evolved over many years, and that those duties were an accumulation of all prior

experiences and initiatives. Hallinger (1992) stated, "The principal's role has changed over time,

becoming more demanding in response to societal changes and school reform efforts" (p. 35).

Despite the volume of information written on the principalship, there appears a lack of data

which reveal those tasks with which principals currently devote their time to. "Given the

significant time constraints under which principals operate, critical examination of the how they

can best use their time to promote school success is essential" (Grissom, Loeb & Master, 2013, p. 440).

Limited research exists illustrating those administrative tasks which consume the majority of secondary school principal's time and those tasks principals believe should consume the majority of their time. Furthermore, few studies have been published specifically comparing the time secondary school principals devote to instructional leadership tasks and time allocated to managerial leadership tasks.

Purpose of Study

Is instructional leadership the principal's highest priority task when such issues as student safety, parental concerns and declining enrollment are facing the school? (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). "Much of the current attention to the challenges of school leadership, however, has avoided such practical questions. It has focused instead on all of the things principals *might* do-not on what they actually do" (Portin et al., 2003, p. 12).

The purpose of the study was to determine those leadership tasks that consumed the majority of Minnesota secondary school principals' time. The study examined Minnesota secondary school principals' perceptions of those tasks they believed should consume the majority of their time. Those perceptions were compared to Minnesota secondary school principals' reported time on job-related tasks. The study ascertained whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals' perceived priority tasks paralleled actual time on task and determined if principals devoted more time to providing instructional leadership or providing managerial leadership.

The purpose of this research was accomplished through surveying Minnesota secondary school principals. A Secondary School is defined as a school which typically has pupils enrolled in Grades 7 through 12 or a portion of (Minnesota statute 120A.05, § 13, 2016). The survey compared principals' actual time on task to their preferences of those tasks they believe to be priorities. Time on task comparisons were also analyzed based on the participants' gender, years of administrative experience, and school grade configurations.

Questions of the Study

The following guiding questions were used to analyze time spent dedicated to tasks preferred by Minnesota secondary school principals.

1. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time?

2. What did Minnesota secondary school principals report as the actual time they devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks?

3. How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership tasks?

4. How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial and instructional leadership tasks?

Significance of the Study

"Drawing on a theatrical metaphor, the role of the principal seems capable of being played or interpreted in several different ways including instructional leader and bureaucrat"

(Sergiovanni, 1992 p. 310). Literature and research over the past 50 years has examined the conflicting roles of the school principal. Controversy exists over whether the principal's role should be identified as an instructional leader or as a manager. Studies conducted in the United States and Canada about principals highlight the conflict among principals who believe they should devote their time to influencing instruction and yet observe themselves encumbered with the managerial aspects of the job. "This incongruence between how principals actually spend time and how they believe they should spend time has been fairly consistent over the past 20 years" (Petzko et al.,2002, p. 8). Research has not been undertaken about Minnesota secondary school principals to ascertain where those administrators believe they should commit their work time and those duties for which they actually devote their time.

The study is intended to expand the body of research on Minnesota secondary school principals work habits and attempt to ascertain whether or not gender, years of experience, and school grade configuration impact those tasks on which principals commit their time.

Delimitations

According to the online American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2011), delimitation means; "To establish the limits or boundaries of; demarcate" (2011). Simon (2011) defined delimitations in terms of research. "The delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of your study" (p.2). This study had multiple delimitating factors:

- Respondents in the study were limited to public secondary school principals in the State of Minnesota. Private and charter schools do not have to comply with the same federal regulations as public schools; thus, they were not included in the study.

- Only secondary school principals who were active members of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, were invited to participate in the study.

- The study was developed from a compilation of similar surveys used in other states and from relevant literature.

- Survey responses were limited to those administrative tasks that were defined in the survey instrument and may not encompass all of the tasks of all principals surveyed.

- The survey was conducted during a single point of time during the school year. The researcher acknowledges that priorities of principals are not consistent throughout the school year, and thus, the study was limited by each principal's perceptions during the time period the study was conducted. No attempt was made to conduct a comprehensive, longitudinal study.

- The study was self-reported by respondents and, consequently, the validity was based on the respondents' honesty and self-perceptions.

Definitions

Instructional Leadership. Those tasks that involve ensuring quality instruction, modeling good teaching practices, supervising curriculum and ensuring quality teaching resources, developing and implementing evaluation systems, motivating staff, and coordinating staff development (Drake & Roe, 1994; Portin).

Managerial Leadership. Those tasks that involve budgeting, scheduling, transportation, school safety, communication, personnel administration, student discipline and facilities (Portin, DiPaola & Tschannen & Moran, 2003; Drake & Roe, 1994).

*Middle School***.** According to Minnesota statute 120A.05, § 11 (2016), non-secondary schools which serve students in grades below Grade 10 and at least two consecutive grades above Grade 4.

*Principal***.** For the purpose of this study, principals were those administrators responsible for the management and oversite of a public school facility serving secondary school students and were members of the Minnesota Secondary School Principals Association. Excluded from this definition were assistant principals, deans of students and directors.

*Public School***.** For the purpose of this study, a school that was supported by public taxes and operated under the jurisdiction of the state and a local school board.

Secondary School. According to Minnesota statute 120A.05, § 13 (2016), a school that generally enrolls pupils who are enrolled in Grades 7 through 12 or a portion of.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized in a five-chapter format. Chapter I provides the problem, the purpose of the study, background of the study, the research questions, significance of the study and definition of terms.

Chapter II reviews relevant literature upon which the study is based. The literature was organized in three themes: an historical review of the secondary school principalship, exploring the development of the position, and the factors that influenced the principalship over the past 150 years; an exploration of a sampling of tasks attributed to managerial leadership and definitions of those tasks; and an examination of instructional leadership, its definition and those tasks included in instructional leadership.

Chapter III delineates the research methodology, including the research questions, research design, study sample, data collection instruments and reliability and validity procedures for the collection, and analysis of the data.

Chapter IV presents a detailed analysis of the data collected from the study survey.

Chapter V presents a summary of the findings, conclusions drawn by the researcher based on data collected, and recommendations tendered for the field

Chapter II: Literature Review

To fully understand the role of the principal today, understanding the history of the principalship is important. "Various images of school principals' work permeate the literature including 'brief encounters,' 'fire-fighting,' 'lone ranger,' and 'administration-bound'" (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 294). For decades, researchers and authors have attempted to define the role of the principal. "The principalship has evolved according to the following sequence: a classroom teacher, a teacher with a few administrative functions, the teacher principal, and the supervising principal" (Knezevich,1962, p. 320). Initially, the principal was the manager of all things school related and remained so until the mid to late 1960s. "Through the last quarter of the 20th century, the demands on both schools and principals have dramatically increased" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003 p.43). It appears that the role of the principal as an instructional leader started to emerge in the late 1960s due to political issues and changes in society (Hallinger, 1992). "By the mid-1970s, relatively few American principals could avoid the responsibilities that came with programme and curriculum management" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 36). In 1983 *"A Nation at Risk"* was published and, according to Drake and Roe (1994), this report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education opened the door to education being on the political agenda from 1983 through 1985. Murphy, Manning, and Walberg (2002) proposed that the increased public focus on the educational system necessitated principals be good communicators and adept at public outreach.

It seems especially important that leaders develop the knowledge and skills that foster community involvement in school improvement, including parent outreach and community partnerships, especially around issues of social justice and equity. Increased

financial and human resources should be dedicated to community building. (Murphy et

al., 2002, p. 2).

As society has changed and evolved, so has the role of the principal. One group's top

priority for what a principal should be doing is very often a low priority for another group

(Krajewski, 1979). "The principal's role has become increasingly complex as the nature of

society, political expectations, and schools as organizations have changed" (Valentine & Prater,

2011, p. 5). As evident through reviewing the literature on the principalship, the position has

grown over the last century and additional duties have been added to the role. As new duties are

added to existing duties the priorities have to be made as time available remains the same.

The review of related literature was divided into three main themes—an historical

perspective, managerial leadership which includes communication and public relations, and

instructional leadership.

Historical Perspective

Historically, the secondary principalship is one of the oldest administrative positions in

education and can be traced as far back as 1515 (Knezevich, 1962). In America in the early

1800s, public schools were small and had no principal, teachers performed those tasks important

to maintaining their school and serving the students. Eventually the need arose for a lead teacher

to be named, the "principal teacher" (Goodwin et al., 2005). These principal teachers became the

managing heads of their schools and 1839, the Cincinnati Board of Education gave a definition

to the role of the duties of the principal teacher (Goodwin et al., 2005). Goodwin et al. (2005)

explained that the duties associated with this role were to; function as the head of the school;

oversee classes and courses of instruction for all students in the building; examine problems in

the school and fix these problems, make those in control of the school aware of problems with no

solutions; supervise assistants; classify pupils; and keep the school clean to name a few. During

the first half of the 19th century, schools formed in large cities with growing student bodies. As

these student bodies increased, duties of the principal teacher increased to include budget,

personnel, and facility management (Goodwin et al., 2005). In the first few years of the century,

principals were lead teachers with administrative duties and were also in charge of promoting

and protecting community values (Beck & Murphy, 1992). During the 1900s, principals moved

beyond helping students and parents to becoming involved in community health and social

services (Kafka, 2009). Through the 19th and 20th century, principal continued to gain power and

prestige and in 1916 the National Association of Secondary School Principals was formed

(Kafka, 2009).

The United States Department of the Interior released the *Cardinal Principles of*

Education in 1918 (National Education Association, 2018). This report, by the Commission on

the Reorganization of Secondary Education, (CRSE) provided guidance to secondary schools on

what subjects were important to teach to all students. The subjects, referred to as the 7 Cardinal

Principals, were health, command of fundamental process, worthy home-membership, vocation,

civic education, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. This report provided grade

configuration for elementary and secondary schools and gave official status and responsibilities

to the role of the principal. "For unification, when administered by a principal who him-self

recognizes the social value of all types of secondary education and inspires a broad spirit of

democracy among teachers and pupils, the comprehensive high school is a better instrument for

unification" (National Education Association, 2018, p.25). The Cardinal Principals of Education

gave official status and responsibilities to the role of the principal (Goodwin et al., 2005). The

Cardinal Principals of Education gave status to the principalship, but there is limited literature on

what the responsibilities of principals in this era were. Goodwin et al. (2005) wrote that

principals in the 1920s taught, developed community relations, inspected toilets, set clocks, went

to the post office and so on. Kafka (2009) stated:

> By the 1920s, the modern school principalship had been established and looked markedly
>
> similar to the position today. Principals had bureaucratic, managerial, instructional and
>
> community responsibilities. They were expected to lead and instruct teachers, to monitor
>
> students, to communicate with the district, and to work with parents and members of the
>
> wider community. Moreover, they were seen as pivotal figures in any school reform
>
> effort. For many observers at the time, the principal was the school. (p. 324)

Kafka (2009) explained that principals in the 1920s were viewed as scientific managers,

as well as spiritual and religious value-centered leaders. Religious imagery associated with the

principalship disappeared in the 1930s and principals as business managers in a factory type

model became the norm (Beck & Murphy, 1992). The Commission on the Reorganization of

Secondary Education report detailed the principal's role, (National Education Association, 1918)

but, it was not until the 1950s that literature which portrayed the principal as the overseer of all

things school-related. "The principal's role has changed over time, becoming more demanding in

response to societal changes and school reform efforts" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 35).

The 1950s brought Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, desegregation influenced

American schools (Goodwin et al., 2005). "Civil rights regulations also helped in the erosion of

local authority by increasing the demands and constraints on local school administrations, thus

limiting choices" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 25). Louis (1988) explained that the launching of the

Soviet Satellite *Sputnik* caused a flurry of concern in the 1950s and moved science education to

the forefront of education. "Even though the federal government has no constitutional authority

in the area of education, the impact of Sputnik placed education front and center in the mind of

the public and created a mindset for the federal government's involvement in public education"

(Ellis, 2007, p. 222). The 1960s were an era of social reform which brought forward educational

policies and programs aimed at helping schools with high numbers of "at risk" students (Louis,

1998). The 1960s saw radical social unrest and change, the social forces in public education led

to conflict and change (Goodwin et al., 2005). Literature revealed little acknowledgement that

there are few simple solutions to the many concerns facing education (Beck & Murphy, 1992).

> This omission, which also occurred at other points in history, suggest that scholars and
>
> practitioners have tended to stress the principal's role in facing solvable problems, even if
>
> these relate to trivial issues, and that they have often ignored the reality that principals
>
> must deal with troublesome situations not amenable to quick solutions. (Beck & Murphy,
>
> 1992, p. 393)

"The late 1960s, however, saw the beginning of a series of state and federal policy

actions, voter initiatives, and court decisions that eroded the long-standing tradition of local

control and dispersed authority among multiple agencies and levels of government" (Timar,

2003, p. 182). "During the 1960s and 1970s, a new role priority emerged for American principals

as they became progressively more responsible for managing federally sponsored, funded

programs aimed at assisting special student populations" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 36). The 1960s and

1970s were also active years for curriculum reform and innovation with a flood of federal dollars

to elevate schools education in Science and Mathematics (Hallinger, 1992). The advent of teachers' unions in the 1970s and collective bargaining agreements changed the foundational nature of the principalship (Goodwin et al., 2005). Public schools and the principals that led them were susceptible to the demands of a variety of external and internal stakeholders (White-Smith & White, 2009).

Goodwin et al. (2005) explained that every decade brought additional forces in education, all to be handled by the principal. Title IX legislation was passed in 1972 and in 1975, Federal Public Law 94-142, Education for Handicapped Children was enacted. This law spelled out Free Appropriate Public Education, (FAPE) for all handicapped children in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). These programs were the beginning of decades of legislative mandates and laws that added more responsibilities to American principals (Goodwin et al., 2005). Early in the 1980s, state and federal policy makers contended that they did not feel schools focused enough attention on curriculum quality, academic standards, and teacher evaluation (Sergiovanni, 1992). "The mid-1980s marked a major turning point in American educational policy" (Timar, 2003, p. 177).

Since the 1983 publication of the report on American education entitled *A Nation at Risk*, the vitality of the national economy has been linked to the educational system, shifting political focus on public education from issues of equity to issues of student achievement" (Lugg, Bulkley, Firestone, Garner, 2002, p. 6).

A Nation at Risk painted American schools as underperforming when compared to schools of other industrialized nations (Timar, 2003). "International comparisons of student achievement, completed a decade ago, reveal that on 19 academic tests American students were

never first or second and, in comparison with other industrialized nations, were last seven times"

(Gardner, 1983, p. 16). "*A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education,

1983) was a highly critical report to policy makers and the general public that placed direct

blame on the poor performance of the school system." (Onorato, 2012, p. 123). "With the

publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), an

unprecedented period of school reforms began across America" (Lyons, 1999, p. 18). After the

release of *A Nation at Risk*, priorities for principals were changed (Martin & Willower, 1981).

"By the mid-1980s, professional norms deemed it unacceptable for principals to focus their

efforts solely on maintenance of the school or even on programme management" (Hallinger,

1992, p. 37). Schools were defensive at first and eventually embraced the need for reform (Drake

& Roe, 1994). Goodwin et al. (2005) believe that 1988 through the early 1990s saw more

involvement in school management issues by teachers, students, parents and the community. Site

based management became the focus.

> When one reflects on the duties of the principal teacher in 1839 and reviews the social,
>
> legal, managerial and political expectations that have been added through the 19th and
>
> 20th centuries, one begins to understand the complicated and complex role of the
>
> contemporary principal. (Goodwin et al., j2005, p. 7).

Literature revealed that accountability became a primary focus for schools.

Public Law 103-227, *The Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was signed into law by

President Clinton on March 31, 1994. "Goals 2000, a set of national objectives, and the National

Commission on Teaching, which translates the call for higher standards in K-12 schools to

similar, standards-based reform proposals for teacher preparation and professional development

programs" (Louis, 1998, p. 19). A review of the literature highlighted other national school change initiatives such as those proposed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. "The ISLLC began work in 1994 to redefine school leadership. The standards represent state, professional, and university interests in school administration and are based on literature on school improvement and effective school leadership" (Catano & Strong, 2006, p. 226). ". . . ISLLC set out to develop a powerful framework for redefining school leadership and to marshal the forces necessary to bring that design to life" (Murphy, 1988, p. 3). All through history, forces driving school change and its leadership are located within the educational system itself and the social, political and economic systems which house or institutions of education (Murphy, 1988). "The principalship has been a strongly influenced by reform efforts of the last 20 years and by powerful economic and social challenges" (Goodwin et al., 2005, p. 1). In 2001, President Bush signed into law the, *No Child Left Behind* legislation, (NCLB). "The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is arguably the most extensive education policy initiative in the United States over the last four decades" (Dee & Jacob, 2010, p. 149). "The majority of the content of the NCLB Act are changes to Title I of the ESEA of 1965 (NCLB, 2002, January 8)" (Ellis, 2007, p. 223). NCLB required that states administer annual examinations to students in Grades 3 through 8 and at least once in Grades 10 through 12. Students must be tested in reading and mathematics. States must rate each one of their schools and the various sub groups for each school, and yearly progress is then reported to the appropriate state educational governing body (Dee & Jacob, 2010). "NCLB represents the first time in 40 years of federal involvement with local education that the federal government has attempted to dictate curriculum" (Ellis, 2007, p. 224). "For the past two decades, the legislature has routinely enacted during each session literally

hundreds of measures dealing with K-12 education" (Timar, 2003, p. 188). Sergiovanni (1992)

stated that, since the 1950s, there has been a national trend of transferring the local authority of

schools to the state and federal level. This has largely been done through funding of special

programs, state and federal programs, civil rights initiatives, etc. "Public schools both manifest

and inculcate predominant social values, even when they foreswear an explicit focus on values

education (e.g. in the back-to-basics movement of the 1980s)" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 43). The

destiny of schools will always be in the hands of various interest groups, each seeking to have an

advantage over others (Sergiovanni, 1992). "In today's dynamic schools, emerging problems

cannot be solved with standardized procedures. Customized responses, such as creating

individualized lesson plans for at risk students, are necessary" (Crow, Hausman, Scribner, 2002,

p. 20). It would appear that principals need to understand the changing world around them and

the implications for their staff and students.

> School systems are changing. They are transforming in response to various pressures,
>
> including parent complaints about the quality of education, labor market demands for
>
> increasingly skilled workers, rapid advances in technology, and the growing popularity of
>
> public school alternatives such as charter schools and advocacy for vouchers for private
>
> education" (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000, p. 1).

There are as many ideas on what education means as there are citizens in this country

(Louis, 1988).

> However, three themes are woven into most calls for reform; the need to respond to the
>
> changing needs of students and families, the press toward making the educational system
>
> accountable for its performance, and the increasing concerns about whether or

educational system is preparing us for the 'global economy' of the next century. (Louis,

1998, p. 15)

It seems apparent that a century of changing public priorities has had a profound impact on the

role of the school principal.

Advances in technology have changed the nature of the work of the principal. Managerial

tasks have increased as regulations, reporting requirements and e-mail access to principals have

increased (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Principals are agents of change who must

constantly develop new understandings of technology (Crow et al., 2002). "As instructional

leaders of their schools, principals must be cognizant of e-mail's capabilities within the learning

environment and become the role models for their teachers and students to use technology"

(Carter, 1997, p. 113). Principals are expected to manage their schools, connect with their

communities, promote the district vision, and oversee instructional programs (Catano, &

Stronge, 2006). Public communication and family outreach have become more important as

technology has advanced. Keeping families informed and engaged has become an additional

responsibility for the principal (Constantino, 2007). In large school systems, one cannot expect a

single district contact to handle all communications; the principal of each building must be ready

and prepared to handle public relation issues (Cone, 1971). "The choice is not whether a

principal is a leader or manager but whether the two emphases are in balance and, indeed,

whether they complement each other" (Sergiovanni, 1991, p. 16). It is apparent from the

literature that, as technology increases and school information becomes more available,

principals need to become adept in managing all forms of communication.

Managerial Leadership

"Everyone agrees that the principal should be the leader of the school. But what does this

mean?" (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974, p. 9). Is the principal a building manager, leader of staff, a

change agent? "When we think of *organization*, we think of *management*" (Mintzberg, 1989 p.

7). Mintzberg (1989) further discussed the importance of management in society. It is the

manager who determines how an organization uses its resources and talents and it is the manager

who determines whether our social institutions are successful at serving our society. **"**School

administration is defined as a process concerned with the execution of policies related to organizing and

allocating human and material resources to accomplish the predetermined objectives" (Knezevich, 1962,

p. 35). Managerial tasks performed by school principals include; maintaining all school records,

submission of reports to school officials and outside agencies, developing and maintaining the

school budget, administration of building personnel, student discipline issues, course scheduling,

facility administration, supervising supplies and equipment, oversight of pupil accounting,

supervision of program and instruction as dictated by the district office, and communicating to

all stakeholders internal and external (Drake & Roe, 1980). "The activities of a secondary-school

principal in recent years have been associated with disciplinary control, preparing class

schedules, keeping records, preparing reports, supervision of instruction, and to some extent

supervision of student activities" (Knezevich, 1962, p. 317). Knezevich (1962) further explained

that, "administration is the means to an end" but that it is the administrator's job to understand

the end and shape the path to the "end" (p. 318). In a post Columbine society, most principals

devote their attention to managing their schools and controlling their students (Lyons &

Algozzine, 2006). Throughout history, much has been written about the school principal and

what his/her most important duties are. Scholars and researchers have each put their own theories

forward as to what and effective principal is and what they should deem most important. The outcome is the implementation of leadership and management theories and practices that look good and sound good but are not practical nor applicable for public schools (Sergiovanni, 2001).

Today's public school principal has a wide variety of managerial and leadership responsibilities and, according to Lyons and Algozzine (2006), the most important job of the principal is that of, "chief educational accountability officer" (p. 2). Spillane and Hunt (2010) stated that the managerial role involves working to maintaining the stability of the organization. Management is also budgeting, hiring creating schedule, planning, gathering information and maintaining the physical plant (Portin & Jianping, 1999). "The usual debate has involved the question of whether a good principal is a bureaucrat or an instructional leader" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 313). Kafka (2009) stated that management, instruction, bureaucratic leadership, and responsibilities to the greater community were all part of the early principal position. Principals were to lead teachers, guide instruction, monitor students, work with parents, and communicate with the district office. During this time, the principal was seen as the central figure of the school and was expected to be the leader in school reform (Kafka, 2009). "The predominant role enacted by principals from the 1920s until the 1970s was one of administrative manager" (Valentine & Prater, 2011, p. 5). Melton (1970) asserted that the principals first and foremost task is that of student achievement and instructional leadership. Melton also stated that, "Any description of the scopes of the secondary school principalship as it exists today-or even tomorrow-must be tentative, always subject to change as conditions themselves alter" (Melton, 1970, p. 1). Mintzberg (1989) stated that the primary purpose of the manger is to oversee an organization and make sure it serves its purpose. Mintzberg included the insurance of delivery of

goods and services in the manager's primary role. "It is useful to think of the principal's role as a balance between leadership and management" (Portin et al., 1998, p. 5). Leadership is that which involves the supervision of curriculum, improvement of instruction, working collaboratively with staff and community and developing a vision for the building. Management involves all other tasks, budgeting, building maintenance, schedules, reports and related tasks (Portin & Jianping, 1998). In an era of increased accountability, new responsibilities are added to the duties of the principal on top of the traditional managerial duties, managerial duties still account for the majority of a principal's time (Cooley & Shen, 2003). "The complexities in schools and communities demand the amount of time that principals must spend on management areas just to ensure the school operates at acceptable levels at the expense of leadership initiatives" (Cooley & Shen, 2003, p. 21). In a national study conducted in 1978, successful principals reported that excessive paperwork and district office meetings were a detriment to them in performing their duties (Gorton & McIntyre, 1978). Not only do leaders deal with the day-to-day school issues, but they face external issues such as budget shortfalls, staffing shortages and problematic school boards (Lugg et al., 2002). Accountability at the federal and state level have increased the decentralization of public schools. School leaders at every level need to keep appraised of changing mandates and current national trends in education (Lugg et al., 2002). Cuban (1988) stated that principals are caught in the middle of the school organization, positioned between the district office and the teachers. "Job descriptions for principals invariably lean heavily upon managerial duties, which carry out the intentions of the school board and superintendent" (Cuban, (1988, p. 57). "There is little doubt that today's

school principal, in fact any school administrator, is confronted with an enormous task of trying to not only do the right thing, but to do it the right way" (Tobin, 2014, p. 3).

Historically, if a principal was a good building manager with narrowly defined expectations, that was good enough (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) explained that expectations of solid management have not decreased but rather much more has been added. Kafka (2009) explained that the roles and responsibilities of today's principals have evolved over time, an accumulation of all prior experiences and initiatives. No Child Left Behind and other mandates have raised the level of accountability for principals and schools (Kafka, 2009). Managerial tasks have increased as regulations, reporting requirements and e-mail access to principals have increased (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

> Because the management tasks are often more explicit, not complying with them becomes very visible to district administrators. Some management tasks also can have legal consequences. As a result, principals understandably give a high priority to attending to managerial responsibilities often at the expense of leadership responsibilities. There simply is not enough time to do both. (Portin et al.,1998, p. 6)

In 2003, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran conducted a survey of the working conditions of principals; over half of the principals surveyed reported that they were spending more time on paperwork and e-mails compared to five years ago. One third of the principals surveyed reported that the time they spend on special education issues also increased dramatically over the same time period. "Administrators must lead schools toward improved instruction while managing schools so that they function effectively. This traditional dilemma is becoming more difficult to

handle as public expectations for improved schools rise" (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002, p. 5). "In

addition to the time constraints, the principal, because of external priorities, are increasingly

becoming mangers, rather than instructional leaders" (Portin et al., 1998, p. 1). In a study

conducted by Hemphill (1965), principals reported the major roadblock was lack of time in

general along with their inability in providing time for teachers to engage in activities for

improvement in teaching practices. Hemphill reported that administrative planning alone or with

a subordinate took most of a principal's time seconded by meeting with students on non-

disciplinary matters. In a study of principals in the state of Washington conducted by Portin and

Jianping (1999), 75% of the principals participating reported that in the past five years they have

had more responsibility for monitoring truancy, site based decision making, interacting with

parents, working on school and community relations, administering special education programs,

and dealing with the impact of growing student diversity. All these seem to suggest that

principals are expected to provide more leadership, on one hand, and to take on more managerial

responsibilities, on the other (Portin & Jianping, 1999). "Perhaps the most widely heralded role

of the principal is that of instructional leader, which conjures up images of a task routine

dominated by the generation of innovative curricula and novel teaching strategies" (Martin &

Willower, 1981, p. 83). Martin and Willower (1981) studied five principals in a North Eastern

state and found, contrary to this image of principals, those studied on average spent 17.4% of

their time on instructional leadership and 81.4% of their time was spent on management tasks

that took on average 1 to 4 minutes. These principals performed 177 separate tasks an hour, 50%

of which were interrupted. "Today's principals are bogged down even more than their

predecessors as the job gets larger and larger, mostly with duties and assignments not directly

related to improving instruction" (Trump, 1977, p. 63). Managerial tasks continued to consume the majority of a principal's day (Martin & Willower, 1981).

American schools have been in reform mode since the mid-1960s. The nature of reform such as it is, makes the demands on the role of the principal unreasonable (Cooley & Shen, 2003). Cooley and Shen (2003) further reported that the demands of the principal are such that they do not have the time needed to spend in the classroom. "Principals are still heavily engaged in traditional roles such as managing resources and maintaining physical security" (Cooley & Shen, 2003, p.19). In 2008, Gilson surveyed 332 principals in the state of Iowa. The survey collected information on where principals spent their time, what tasks consumed their time. Principals reported that time spent on leading curriculum and instruction was valuable and worthwhile however, managerial duties consumed the majority of their time (Gilson, 2008). "Although working with teachers to improve student achievement is considered to be most important, this survey indicates that our leaders spend, at best, less than 30% of their time on professional activities, professional growth, and classroom observations" (Gilson, 2008, p. 91). "This incongruence between how principals actually spend time and how they believe they should spend time has been fairly consistent over the past 20 years" (Petzko et al., 2002, p. 8). A study conducted of principals in Ontario Canada reported that the average secondary principal spent 59.3 hours at work (Pollock, 2014). This same study had principals spending 85.6% of their work week on management issues, meetings and dealing with community relations and only 5 hours a week on instructional leadership activities. "Many principals complain that they are forced to spend too much time handling administrative tasks such as setting bus schedules and overseeing custodians, and too little time on instructional leadership" (Hertling, 2001, p. 3).

The majority of special education duties used to be performed by the district's director of special education but contemporary principals now assume many of these duties (Lynch, 2012) Principals must become experts in IDEA and special education issues so that the principal can help regular education teachers to see the importance of educating students with IEP's (Lynch, 2012). This is another example of not only the changing role of the principal but the expansion of their duties. Focusing on special education programs appears to lead to the exercise of less leadership (Portin & Jianping, 1999). "All these suggest that the changing principalship in the last five years is marginally related to the opportunity to provide more leadership, and the marginal relationship seems to indicate that the changing principalship increases managerial activity rather than leadership" (Portin & Jianping, 1999, p. 105). Fewer educators are seeking principal positions. These educators cite the changing demands of the principalship including increased accountability, responsibility for raising student achievement without adequate support and legal and special education issues as reasons for not becoming a principal (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). In a study conducted among principals in the state of Virginia, respondents indicated their highest significant issues are special education law, legal issues and non-academic student discipline issues (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). "Among principals, more than one half said they were spending much more time on paperwork and on e-mail compared to 5 years ago, and 30% said that they were spending more time on special education meetings" (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 54). "As such, many principals, understandably so, fall victim to the pull of managerial tasks" (Terosky, 2014, p. 26).

The new roles and responsibilities added to the job responsibilities of principals can be seen as layering of duties, one duty on top of the other (Portin et al., 1998).

Principals are approaching the limits of the amount of time they can dedicate to the job.

Legislators, school boards, and district administrators who are proposing additional

changes that will affect the school and the principal's role should realize that many

principals are severely limited in their capacity to take on additional duties. (Portin et al.,

1998, p. 1)

The role of the secondary principal has evolved since its inception in the late 1800's and

in the 1960s and 1970s the importance of instructional leadership rose to the forefront of

conversations (Hallinger, 2003; Kafka, 2009). "Moreover, as early as 1863 superintendents

worried that principals' other duties were distracting them from their ability to spend time

working with struggling and new teachers" (Kafka, 2009, p. 323). Traditional labor/management

issues and the presence of bargaining units lead to leadership responsibilities remaining

predominately with the building principal. Principals are also involved in statute, code and policy

requiring them to be responsible of every aspect of their school (Portin, & Jianping, 1999). As a

social institution, the public school is a reflection of the norms of society and the desires of the

nation. As such, impact of society on public schooling as well as the changing nature of schools

affect teachers, students and parents (Portin, & Jianping, 1999). In a study conducted by Cooley

and Shen in 2003, a representative sample of principals across the nation reported that they spend

much more time engaged in activities related to maintaining physical plant security and

managing the school than those activities dealing with student achievement and building

professional communities among staff.

. . . In the context of accountability, secondary principals' responses to their involvement

in professional activities suggested that additional responsibilities were added to their

traditional roles, that they paid substantial attention to instructional leadership, and that

management tasks still occupied more time and energy than leadership initiatives.

(Cooley & Shen, 2003, p. 20)

Portin et al. (1998) believed that public schools across the nation have experienced major

changes due to new federal programs, curriculum adoptions at the state level and site based

management implementation. They stated that nationally, schools are experiencing a change in

their demographics, and that family dynamics are changing as are socioeconomic factors. Ethnic

diversity is growing as are changing family priorities and job responsibilities. The focus of these

changes has been on how they impact students, teachers, and parents. Little attention has been

given as to how these changes affect principals who must lead and implement the restructuring

of their schools and its implementation (Portin et al., 1998).

It is assumed by policy makers, parents, teachers and the public-at-large that principals

have the capacity to lead and supervise the implementation of new programs and

regulations while continuing to provide previously assigned responsibilities (e.g., provide

instructional leadership, manage resources, assure a safe school environment, and

respond to parent and community requests)" (Portin, & Jianping, 1999, p. 97).

In 1972, approximately 22% of school age children were members of a minority group

(Louis, 2003). Louis (2003) explained that in 2000, this figure was approximately 39% with

most of the growth occurring in our Hispanic population. The shift in student populations has

been gradual and children in the United States are also poorer than most other developed

countries (Louis, 2003). According to Louis (2003), middle class Americans are many times

ignorant of our changing population and resistant to its implications. "School leaders have to

organize their resources in ways that permit them to address the needs of immigrants and poor students while maintaining the support of middle class parents who have traditionally viewed the schools as 'theirs'" (Louis, 2003, p. 374). "New societal forces are changing the roles that the principals traditionally have played and are making obsolete many of the grounds rules within which he traditionally has operated" (Melton, 1970, p. 1). Principals are overwhelmed by high expectations, state and district mandates that require extensive paperwork and increasingly complex social and societal problems (Hertling, 2001). "The process of managing change is one of the most fundamental and enduring roles of Leadership" (Onorato, 2012, p. 123). Central forces; demographics, accountability, hybrid governance and the professionalization of teaching is changing and shaping administrators (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002).

"In fostering a sound program of school-community relations, the principal must become intimately acquainted with the values, expectations, needs, and aspirations of the local community" (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974, p. 320). The role of the principal in communication with internal and external stakeholders has always been a part of managerial leadership (Drake & Roe, 1980). Since the advent of the first principal position, a portion of their time has been spent working with the community and parent groups, meeting with citizens and business clubs, and with influential citizens in effort to bring funding to their school. Originally this was called community relations and later public relations; these are the political roles that principal must assume (Cuban, 1988). "Many principals simply recognized a central fact of American Life, any public organization such as schools or hospitals in a democratic society will not be left to the experts alone" (Cuban, 1988, p. 76). The school principal needs to understand the perceived educational needs and expectations of the community they serve (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974). "The

principal also must become skilled in communicating and interacting with diverse reference groups and in shaping their understanding of school purposes, programs operations, costs and outcomes" (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974, p. 320). "The principal is a communicator, explaining the school's goals, procedures, and objectives to everyone concerned" (Melton, 1970, p. 6). Melton further explained that the secondary principal must deliver his/her message in accordance with the needs of their specified audience. Students need to understand and learn to value their learning. Certified and non-certified staff must understand the mission of the school and the overall operations made more difficult by their isolation in their rooms or the various parts of the building (Melton, 1970). "Effective communication must be displayed at three levels, one-to-one, small group, and large group to articulate the vision of the school to the school district, parents and the larger community" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 15). The principal is responsible for communicating with the public, parents of students, and community members at large in an articulate and unified fashion explaining the educational process (Melton, 1970). "More than one principal noted that the least productive portion of the day was spent dealing with a barrage of e-mail and other correspondence from downtown" (Portin,2004, p. 18). Public relations and parent connection is important to student success therefore an important part of the principal's managerial responsibilities (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). Principals who desire to have a positive impact on learning for all students, especially struggling learners, can integrate different forms of communication process that connect the school to families thereby increasing the success of all students (Constantino, 2007). It would appear as accountability increases in today's educational system, so do the communication responsibilities of the principals who are leaders of schools.

None of this is new, as early as the 1920s principals were expected to foster good community relations (Goodwin et al., 2005). "What is new is the degree to which schools are expected to resolve society's social and educational inequities in a market based environment" (Kafka, 2009, p. 328). In 1998, Louis reported that American education has become market-driven with the idea that marketing a school and offering choices leads to stronger schools and a stronger society. This philosophy also argues that weaker schools will improve under this market-based philosophy or they will go under. The underlying theme is that competition improves quality (Louis, 1998). Two recent accountability issues have received considerable attention: market accountability driven by school choice, i.e. charter schools and vouchers; and political accountability (Lugg et al., 2002). Educational leaders need to be cognizant of those educational programs and systems that offer the greatest return on investment to the citizens (Lugg et al., 2002). "The average citizen looks aghast at this ever-growing school tax bill. Then he sees the well paid administrators working in plush surrounding with the very latest equipment. This is when john Q. Public begins to distrust public school systems" (Cone, 1971, p. 34). Cone (1971) cautioned that if administrators continue to ignore the problems presented in the larger society, then the nation's schools are in trouble. Principals should create a healthy balance with the creation of productive professional communities and being cognizant of and attending to the demands for accountability, the demands of the changing market, and the concern for civic capacity (Crow et al., 2002). "Evidence also shows that school choice enlarges the principals' environmental management functions, particularly parent outreach. It remains unclear whether such management diminishes the time that principals allocate for internal leadership" (Crow et al., 2002, p. 21).

The popularity and access to e-mail is making the principal position one that spans the seven days of a week (West, Peck, & Reitzug, 2010). Confidentiality issues are on the rise due to sharing of e-mails and students taking pictures and recording negative school incidents causing turmoil with which principals must spend time on. These issues necessitate principals becoming adept at navigating the student discipline issues associated with technology and its media implications (West et al., 2010). "Although e-mail has enabled greater communication with parents, teachers and the community, it has added a significant new time demand on principals" (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 59). In a study of 1,423 principals in Ontario Canada, it was reported that the average principal spent 11 hours a week writing and responding to e-mails which equated to 18.2% of their work week (Pollock, 2014). "New media technology is having a significant impact on the city school experience in ways that certainly add to a principal's stress" (West et al., 2010, p. 252). Managerial tasks have increased as regulations, reporting requirements and e-mail access to principals have increased (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). West et al. (2010) explained that advancing technology has made it easier for outsiders to request detailed information; these requests necessitate an answer from the principal to gather information which then becomes another added demand on the principal's time. The impact of missing work means missing e-mails and spending hours catching up on those e-mails when returning to work (West et al., 2010). Not only has e-mail changed the manner in which we communicate, it has also fundamentally changed the daily management duties of the principal. Management duties continue to dominate a principal's day (Howell, 1981).

Instructional Leadership

"The historical conflict between the instructional leadership role and the administrative management aspects of the principalship has had a major impact on the profession" (Richardson, 1991, p. 2). "*Instructional Leadership* emerged as a term that described a broad set of principal roles and responsibilities designed to address the workplace needs of successful teachers and to foster improved achievement among students" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 44). Contemporary principal duties have expanded to include significant responsibilities in the area of instructional leadership ensuring all students achieve at a high level and ensuring the needs of students with disabilities are met (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). "Instructional leadership is a complex and difficult concept, one that is not easily defined or operationalized" (Bartell, 1989, p.127). Literature is abundant with descriptions on what instructional leadership is and what it is not.

> Effective instructional leaders establish and implement clear goals and specific achievement objectives for the school. They plan, implement, and evaluate instructional programs including learning objectives and instructional strategies for the school. They also provide a purposeful school environment conducive to learning, conduct and affect school program, and evaluate teachers and staff members. (Williams, 2000, p. 269).

From a review of the literature, it was found that researchers established those roles that they felt were most important for principals. During the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, researchers stated that the most important role of the principal was that of instructional leader who is responsible for the academic achievement of all students (Smith & Andrews, 1989). "The majority of the principal's time is spent directly on the improvement of instruction" (Trump,

1977, p. 66). The implication is that instructional leadership is the most critical of responsibilities

for school principals (Whitaker, 1997). "His cardinal function is the *improvement of instruction*,

which will enhance the learning experiences of his students" (Melton, 1970, p. 2). The picture of

the instructional leader in the 1980's focused the principal's role in managing curriculum and

instruction (Hallinger, 1992). Advocates of school reform suggest a sharing of leadership with

the assumption was that instructional leadership and program management was driven by

knowledge gleaned from outside the school doors (Hallinger, 1992). Instructional leaders are to

be experts on curriculum and instruction and should be able to intervene directly with teachers

on instructional improvement (Valentine, & Prater, 2011). Valentine and Prater (2011) continued

by stating that by the latter part of the 1980s and into the 1990s it was believed that to be a high

achieving school, the principal needed to be an instructional leader. For the past 20 years,

educational leadership has been focused on the principal as the developer of instruction in his or

her school (Whitaker, 1997). Instructional leadership as a role of the principalship meant that,

"The principal was expected to be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction and able to

intervene directly with teachers in making instructional improvements" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 37).

Instructional leadership involves ensuring quality instruction, modeling good teaching practices,

supervising curriculum and ensuring quality teaching resources (Portin, 2004). Smith and

Andrews (1989) defined a principal who is an instructional leader as someone who: provides the

resources necessary to achieve the school's academic goals; possesses the necessary knowledge

and skills necessary to lead the teachers in curriculum and instruction and the improvement of

both; communicates internally and externally, one-on-one and with the larger group; and is a

visionary who interacts with staff, students and parents as a visible presence for improvement.

The principal in cooperation with his/her staff should direct, guide, and coordinate all aspects of the educational program in his/her school. Thus, the main function of the principal is to improve the instruction and enhance the educational experience for all students (Melton, 1970). "The principal, then, is first and foremost and instructional leader: All his other activities must directly support this central function, or else he jeopardizes his *raison d'etre*" (Melton, 1970, p. 2). Effective instructional leadership is that which is concerned with teaching and learning and the resources that support these activities. This is the central purpose of schools and education (Williams, 2000). "It is the responsibility of the instructional leader to align the school's standards and practices with its mission and to create a climate that supports teaching and learning" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 333). Jackson (2014) contended that the school environment continues to evolve and being a good manger is not enough for today's principal. Standardized testing and the advent of Common Core require principals to be instructional leaders and guide teachers in best practices in teaching and learning (Jackson, 2014). "If the image of the principal as bureaucrat emerged simultaneously with the origin of the past, so, too, did the notion that the principal supervised the school's curriculum and instruction, leading the staff to improved schooling" (Cuban, 1988, p. 57). Much of the literature appears to identify instructional leadership as a priority for principals.

"Almost everyone agrees that the principal should be the "instructional leader" of the school" (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974, p. 205). Since the 1920s, principals professional training and their beliefs have been focused on instructional leadership (Cuban, 1988). In 1988, Murphy contented that the body of literature relating to the principal as an instructional leader was limited. "Early efforts to describe the instructional leadership activities of school administrators

were hampered by serious definitional problems" (Murphy, 1988, p. 121). Educational literature varies in definitions of instructional leadership but a compilation of descriptions defines instructional leadership as those leadership functions that support classroom teaching and student learning (Grissom et al., 2013). **"An obvious challenge for a concept as broad as *leadership functions that support teaching and learning* is distilling which behaviors count as instructional leadership and which do not" (Grissom et al., 2013, p. 433). "It is unlikely that a single definition is or should be universal for those beliefs, skills and behaviors which are sometimes included in discussions of instructional leadership" (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979, p. 35). Melton (1970) stated instructional supervision involves developing a balanced professional staff through effective hiring and ongoing professional development. Principals supervise individual teachers in their growth and improvement. The performance of teachers is evaluated within the context of cooperatively determined objectives and criteria. The principal empowers staff leadership in providing professional growth opportunities (Melton, 1970). Trump, (1977) suggested that the majority of a principal's time should be spent on instructional leadership. Depending on the size of the school principals are required to work with multiple departments. "However, even in the largest schools in major cities and suburbs, the principal spends most of his or her time working directly with teachers on improving instruction." (Trump, 1977, p. 66). In their publication, *The Principalship*, Roe and Drake (1980) identified some categories that they believe encompassed the essence of instructional leadership:

1. Motivate all staff to maximum performance.
2. Work with all staff to develop a realistic and objective accountability for learning.

3. Cooperatively develop assessment procedures for all programs to assess programs and identify areas for improvement.

4. Work in conjunction with staff developing and implementing an evaluation system for all staff.

5. Work with staff on the development and implementation of evaluating and reporting student progress.

6. Involve the community in the operation of the school, (develop the appropriate channels).

7. Continuously look at best practice and provide time and resources to help staff adopt those that advance student learning.

"Across effective schools research, principals were characterized as instructional leaders whose strong backgrounds in curriculum and instruction enabled them to improve classroom practice" (Ylimaki, 2007, p. 12). Instructional leadership involves creating and environment in the school where all stakeholders have a voice in improving student achievement (Roe & Drake, 1980). In 1988, Murphy stated that most definitions of instructional leadership came from a job analysis of observable concrete behaviors. Research failed to take into account the complex nature of the school organization (Murphy, 1988). "At the environmental level, researchers have tended to ignore community influences on the exercise and interpretation of instructional leadership behaviors" (Murphy, 1988, p. 124). In an *Education Week* article, Olson (2000) wrote that principals are to revise instruction in all subjects taught in their school. Principals also work with their staffs on building new skills in teaching and they conduct observations and evaluations of these teachers. Principals order materials, review student achievement data, and research new

delivery methods and strategies. All of this is different from the experiences of the parents and the greater community so principals must communicate these initiatives to the public, (Olson, 2000). "Yet surprisingly little is understood about how principals manage this leadership for instruction, or whether they lead differently depending on the subject" (Olson, 2000, p. 1). "From our perspective, the principal's role comprises three dimensions of instructional leadership activity: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting the school learning climate" (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987, p. 57). Spillane and Hunt (2010) defined the instructional leadership role as working with teaching and learning and that which attends to the instructional core. Instructional leadership is comprised of those activities that support and or improve the implementation of curricular programs in the classroom, in staff development, and in coaching teachers (White, & Agarwal, 2011). "Paying attention to the role of instructional leader is paramount to improving teaching and learning. Engage teachers in instructional dialogue and meaningful supervision (not evaluation)" (Glanz, 2005, p. 24). Sergiovanni (1991) explained that instructional leadership involved the implementation of new goals, structures and procedures whereas management is simply taking care of the organization. Lynch (2012) contended that instructional leadership encompasses five areas of leadership defining and communicating the schools educational mission; managing curriculum and instruction supporting teachers with research based practices; building sense of worth, belonging and efficacy among all staff members; demonstrating school commitment to students and enhancing self-worth through student achievement for all; and establishing high expectations for all students. It is apparent from the literature that the definitions of what constitutes instructional leadership are as varied as the authors who attempt to define it.

"At some level, principals always have been instructional leaders, but never before has their role been more prominent" (Finkel, 2012) p. 51). "In essence, the concept of instructional leadership is being promoted as a counter narrative to the image of the principal consumed with administrative tasks void of instructional substance" (Terosky, 2014, p. 6). "The role of the secondary-school administrator has changed as purposes of the institution and the clientele have changed" (Knezevich, 1962, p. 323). In the late 1950s into the 1960s, democratic leadership emphasis was replaced by the concern that principals use proven strategies to promote excellence. This refocus on priorities was due to societal issues such as Sputnik, the Coleman Report and the Cold War (Beck & Murphy, 1992). Models of what constitutes instructional leadership emerged in the early 1980s from research conducted on effective schools (Hallinger, 2003). "As pressure mounts for school systems to raise students' academic proficiency, principals face greater challenges and the role of the instructional leadership becomes more crucial, especially for students with disabilities in rural school systems" (Lynch, 2012, p. 41). During the 1980s, concern arose over Americas place in the global economy. Principals were to focus their attention on managing schools to promote a stable economy to enhance our national security (Beck & Murphy, 1992). "Because the demands of the school community and mandates from various authorities, many principals continue to not only fulfill their traditional roles in managing the school but also take up new responsibilities in areas such as curriculum and instruction" (Cooley & Shen, 2003, p. 21). Hallinger (1992) stated that the educational reform movement of the 1960s and 1970s was conceived and introduced not by practicing educators, but by public policy makers outside of education. "It was the intention of policy makers to reform the managerial behavior of principals into an instructionally-oriented role" (Hallinger, 1992, p.

38). In 1983, the report *A Nation at Risk* was released by The National Commission on Excellence in Education, United States Department of Education (Lyons, 1999). This report criticized the quality of our nation's schools demanded sweeping school reform. These reforms were intended to provide a better education for all students and were dictated by federal and state policies (Louis, 1998). In October of 1992, the National Education Goals Panel issued a second "report card" on our nation's schools. Schools were seen as average at best and the report alleged that American parents were satisfied with their children being average while other countries expected more of their students (Drake & Roe, 1994). Beginning in the 1960s, federal and state policies began to erode local decision making giving power through legal processes to teachers and parents and/or allowed state and federal governments to make decisions for schools (Timar, 2003).

A Report of the Task Force on the Principalship, (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000) reported that the century prior to 2000, a principal adept at managing their building was good enough. Taking care of building needs, security, budget, student safety, and public relations, busing, food service, and personnel duties was their locus of concern. These responsibilities have not diminished; principals now, however, must do more. The first priority for principals must be in the area of instructional leadership, being leaders for student learning. Principals must serve as leaders for student learning, guide improvements in teaching and learning, have knowledgeable in academic content and pedagogical techniques (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). The advent in 2002 of *The No Child Left Behind Act* had significant influence on educational pedagogy and curriculum (Groen, 2012). "No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2002) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) brought

the principal's role as instructional leader to the forefront of public education in the United

States" (Lynch, 2012, p. 40). State and federal testing are politically charged initiatives and

public schools are under pressure to do well on standardized tests or the risk facing public

scrutiny. School leaders respond to this accountability by improving teaching and learning (Lugg

et al., 2002). Present day principals can lose their jobs if students do not perform well on

standardized assessments. This was not the case in the past (Ylimaki, 2007).

> With No Child Left Behind and other requirements of accountability within the public
>
> education system, school principals at all levels, now more than ever, must step into
>
> classrooms and provide the support, guidance and feedback necessary to ensure quality
>
> teaching and enhanced student achievement. (Duval & Wise, 2004, p. 23)

Instructional leaders must be knowledgeable in IDEA and ADA (504) requirements

which has compounded the duties of the principal (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). In

1970, Melton (1970) reported that instruction and learning are always at the forefront in all

decisions. School programs and procedures are adapted to each student needs and each teacher is

seen as an individual. Short and long range goals for the school are established by the principal

and are to be educationally sound and feasible. "Whereas, traditionally, public school

administrators have been shielded from direct market and accountability pressures, in the future

governing agencies and external constituencies will be more demanding, numerous and

knowledgeable" (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992, p. 85). The current focus on accountability

measured by students' test scores and the absence of support in the area of capacity building

leave principals feeling that they are solely responsible for their school's achievement (Pepper,

2010). In their article, *Reshaping the Role of the School Principal,* Crow et al. (2002) contended

that principals are often caught between these forces and must find a way to transcend them for the good of their students. In order to navigate the external and internal forces, principals must become collaborative instructional leaders driving school improvement through research tailored to their school's context (Crow et al., 2002). "Current accountability pressures have renewed interest in instructional leadership among policymakers, scholars and educational administrators" (Ylimaki, 2007, p. 12). Rather than turning to the principal-directed model of instructional leadership from the 1980's, a new style of shared instructional leadership is now sought that meshes better with the current climate of accountability (Ylimaki, 2007). "The main point of instructional leadership is to develop and foster effective schooling" (Bartell, 1989, p. 126).

Summary

"It is widely acknowledged that the role of the principal is crucial to a school's effectiveness. Recent reports from many groups have also indicated that this role is becoming more demanding as a result of successive waves of school reform" (Lyons, 1999, p. 18). It is incumbent on today's schools to follow a course that ties them to the current establishment which puts these same schools in difficult situations (Drake & Roe, 1988). "Thus, as interest in educational leadership has grown, so has interest in the principalship–a position that is reportedly more difficult, time-consuming, and pivotal today than ever before" (Kafka, 2009, p. 318). The transformation to an instructional leader from the traditional managerial role added considerable duties to the principalship (Hallinger, 1992). "Is there one best way to play the role of principal? The answer suggested by these studies seems to be no" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 315). "Never before has a school principal's job been more important and never before has the job been more difficult" (Pepper, 2010, p. 43).

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

"The balance between instructional leadership and management responsibilities presents ongoing challenges for school administrators" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 46). Much of the literature regarding the principalship beginning in the 1970s stated that the most important role of the principal was that of instructional leader. School principals have multiple priorities, but their highest priority must be that of instructional leadership, leading for student learning (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). "The principal, then, is first and foremost an instructional leader: All his other activities must directly support this central function, or else he jeopardizes his *raison d'etre*" (Melton, 1970, p. 2).

A review of much of the research reveals that even though instructional leadership is prioritized, managerial responsibilities continue to dominate a principal's work. "The relatively little time principals devoted to instruction is somewhat surprising given the research and district emphases on the principal as the instructional leader of the school" (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010, p. 519). The job of the principal is a contradiction, principals have a strong desire to advance instruction and learning so that all students can succeed. However, the desire to be an instructional leader is tempered by the necessity to manage their school, facilities, and staff and comply with central office demands (Drake & Roe, 1980). "In this little drama, the eternal struggle takes place and in the end the strong instructional leadership role is set aside because of the immediacy and press of everyday administrative duties" (Drake & Roe, 1980, p. 11).

Purpose of the Study

The majority of principals studied reported that they would prefer devoting their time to areas of instructional leadership but in fact committed the majority of their time to management tasks (Drake & Roe, 1980). Toward this end, it was determined that there was no published research of Minnesota secondary school principals in which the time they devoted to instructional leadership tasks was compared to the time they focused on managerial tasks.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals committed more time to performing instructional leadership tasks than they devoted to managerial tasks. Additionally, the study probed whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals preferred to allocate more time to instructional leadership tasks or managerial tasks. Further analyses were conducted on respondents' age, gender, years of experience, and grade configuration variables to ascertain whether or not these variables affected a principal's time on select administrative tasks.

This chapter will describe the research questions, participants involved in the study, the survey instrument used, and present the data analysis methodology.

Questions of the Study

The following guiding questions were used to analyze time spent dedicated to tasks preferred by Minnesota secondary school principals.

1. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time?

2. What did Minnesota secondary school principals report as the actual time they devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks?

3. How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership tasks?

4. How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial and instructional leadership tasks?

Research Design

The methodological design of the research was a quantitative, comparative study employing descriptive analysis. "Quantitative social research is about collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical methods to explain a phenomenon" (Haq, 2015, p. 5). The entire population can be surveyed and even though the population surveyed may not be overly large, statistical comparisons can be made with acceptable solutions (Haq, 2015). The quantitative research methodology was appropriate as the study solicited information from a large population.

In order to determine the difference between the respondents preferred time on select administrative tasks and the actual time they devoted to those tasks, a comparative analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis. Comparative research focuses on concepts and classifications; cases can be selected based on similarities or differences; more observations with limited variables are desired. "The comparative approach is seen as one of the most fruitful in higher education studies, since it allows researchers to broaden their observation base and to achieve a more extensive and reliable understanding of the phenomena observed" (Reale, 2014, p. 409). Larger descriptive categories were assigned to the administrative duties that principals

perform in order to accurately draw comparisons between respondents. "Descriptive analysis refers to statistically describing, aggregating, and presenting the constructs of interest or associations between these constructs" (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 119). Participants were surveyed using forced choice, closed-ended questions. For this web-based survey, forced choice, closed-ended questions were believed to result in the collection of more reliable data. "Close-ended questions in general yield higher percentages than open-ended question for answers that are identical in both question forms" (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2003, p. 159). The study questions were designed to secure participants reports of their estimations of the amount of time they devoted to prescribed tasks.

Participants

Participants in the study were practicing Minnesota secondary school principals who were members of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, (MASSP). Both middle school and high school principals were classified as secondary principals. Only head secondary principals were surveyed in the study. Assistant principals were not invited to participate in the study as their duties and responsibilities were not assessed to be comparable to those of head principals.

MASSP agreed to sponsor the research study; surveys were distributed by MASSP using e-mail. Sample size error was not considered to be an issue as surveys were distributed to all 570 head MASSP secondary school principals.

Instrumentation

A link to a Survey Monkey instrument, developed by the researcher, was e-mailed to all practicing MASSP head Minnesota secondary school principals. The survey contained two primary sections:

- Section 1 requested information relevant to the principal's position including school size, grade configuration, gender, and years of experience,

- Section 2 requested Minnesota secondary school principals to identify those tasks to which they believed they should be committing the majority of their time,

- Section 2 requested Minnesota secondary principals estimate the actual time they devoted to select administrative tasks during a five-day work week.

Survey questions were developed from a compilation of similar studies completed in other states and from relevant literature that compared instructional leadership to managerial leadership. Questions 3, 4, and 9 focused instructional leadership tasks while the remaining questions (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12) focused on managerial leadership tasks (Cooley & Shen, 2003; Horng et al., 2010; Pollock, 2014; Spillane & Hunt, 2010).

The survey method was an efficient means for gathering information from a large population and provided the researcher with the ability to gather a wide range of unobservable data, (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Respondents were asked to respond to questions on principal tasks which had been pre-identified as either instructional leadership tasks or managerial leadership tasks. Respondents were asked to estimate the time they devoted to the tasks over a one week time frame.

The survey instrument was developed in conjunction with professors of educational leadership and piloted with principals from the researcher's home district in order to insure clarity, validity and relevancy of questions. The survey was also field tested with members of a St. Cloud State University educational administration doctoral cohort.

The survey was distributed to study participants by MASSP, using Survey Monkey, through the World Wide Web. "The day has arrived where social scientists and evaluation researchers can use the Internet as an effective tool in their work" (Crawford, McCabe & Pope, 2005, p. 44). Due to the support of MASSP, the survey responses from the study participants were sufficient for the purposes of accurate statistical comparison.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative comparative analyses were conducted of the survey responses that were collected on the Survey Monkey web site. Three correspondences were distributed to study participants. The initial correspondence was in the form of an email which was disseminated October 3rd, 2016.The first communication included an introductory letter from the Executive director of the MASSP explaining the research and enlisting participation by MASSP members. The first correspondence also contained a link to the study survey. Respondents were informed that they would have access to the research study following its completion. The researcher had the ability to monitor the response rate during the 4-week survey window.

Fourteen days into the open survey window, a second e-mail was distributed to respondents thanking those who had completed the survey and encouraging those who had not completed the survey to do so. Three weeks into the survey window, the researcher ascertained the response rate was insufficient to complete the study. A third correspondence was sent to

participants from the researcher through MASSP, and the survey was open for an additional 7

days. The final initial response was 42.9%

Data Analysis

Once the survey window closed, the researcher downloaded the respondent's responses

from Survey Monkey to the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences, (SPSS) which was used

to analyze the data. Both univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted; descriptive statistical

analysis were used. Descriptive statistics are important in education because unlike laboratory

research, the human nature aspect is of great importance (Knupfer & McLellan, 1996). Mean,

median, and mode were compared and analyzed along with ancillary data which helped to

facilitate comparisons among different administrative tasks including similarities and differences

between individual Minnesota secondary school principals and their perceptions. The time

principals reported they believed they should be spending on self-reported priority tasks were

compared to the actual reported time devoted to those tasks. The tasks were sorted into

managerial leadership tasks and instructional leadership tasks so that further analysis could be

conducted comparing time spent on managerial leadership tasks and time spent on instructional

leadership tasks. Comparisons were drawn with relation to gender, years of experience, and

grade configuration of the school to determine if those factors influence the amount of time

principals committed to select administrative tasks.

Summary

Limited research has been undertaken in Minnesota on the amount of time secondary

school principals devoted to select leadership tasks. "Given the significant time constraints under

which principals operate, critical examination of how they can best use their time to promote school success is essential" (Grissom et al., p. 440).

The purpose of the study was to determine those leadership tasks that consumed the majority of Minnesota secondary school principals' time. The study examined Minnesota secondary school principals' perceptions of those tasks they believed should consume the majority of their time. "It is useful to think of the principal's role as being a balance between leadership and management" (Portin & Jianping, 1999, p. 108). Through the use of survey data, quantitative comparisons were made with regard to the secondary school principals daily/weekly job tasks. Specific attention was placed on those areas that principals themselves believe to be priority tasks to ascertain if their reported time on task correlated with their belief in priority tasks.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter IV was to present the findings of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine those leadership tasks that consumed the majority of Minnesota secondary school principals' time. The study examined Minnesota secondary school principals' perceptions of those tasks they believed should consume the majority of their time. Those perceptions were compared to Minnesota secondary school principals' reported time on job-related tasks. The study ascertained whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals' perceived priority tasks paralleled actual time on task and determined if principals devoted more time to providing instructional leadership or providing managerial leadership.

Questions of the Study

1. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time?

2. What did Minnesota secondary school principals' report as the actual time they devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks?

3. How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership tasks?

4. How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial and instructional leadership tasks?

All study participants were members of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, (MASSP).

The first contact with study participants was in the form of an electronic letter, (e-mail) from David Adney, Executive Director of the MASSP (see Appendix A). The letter reported the purpose of the study, a request for respondents to participate in the study, and the link to the survey via Survey Monkey (see Appendix B). The survey request was e-mailed to 552 head Minnesota middle school and high school principals who were members of MASSP. The e-mail was distributed on October 3, 2016 and 121 principals responded on this day with one principal responding on October 4. Fourteen days later, a second request for participation was e-mailed to participants which secured 68 additional respondents (see Appendix C). On October 24, a third and final request for participation was e-mailed from MASSP (see Appendix D) and 45 respondents completed the survey on the day of the third request, with one additional participation the next day. A total of 238 principals responded to the survey request with one denial for a total of 237, or 42.9% agreeing to the informed consent. Of those participating in the survey, 71 of the respondents, or 30% identified themselves as female while 166 respondents, or 70% identified themselves as male. Respondents were asked to cite the number of years of experience they had had as a head principal. Principals with 9 years or less experience totaled 137, or 57.8%. Forty-two respondents, or 17.7% stated they had more than 16 years of experience (see Table 1).

Table 1

Years of Administrative Experience

Answer Choices	Responses	
0-3	21.94%	52
4-6	21.52%	51
7-9	14.35%	34
10-12	14.77%	35
13-15	9.70%	23
16+	17.72%	42
TOTAL		237

Respondents were asked to report the number of students who were enrolled in their buildings. Respondents totaled 234 with 43.6% citing that they served in schools of 500 students or fewer. Principal respondents who served in schools of 1,500 students or greater numbered 23 or 9.8% while 8 of those 23 guided schools of over 2,000 or more students (Table 2).

Table 2

School Building Enrollment

Answer Choices	Responses	
0-4499	43.59%	102
500-999	35.47%	83
1000-1499	11.11%	26
1500-1999	6.41%	15
2000-plus	3.42%	8
TOTAL		234

Respondents were requested to identify the grades served or grade configuration of their buildings. The question contained five finite categories and one category labeled other which allowed respondents to write in their grade configuration. Fifty-eight respondents or 25.1% reported that their schools grade configurations did not fit into any one of the five categories

provided. The variation in the responses provided made statistical comparison in this category

unreliable (Table 3).

Table 3

School Grade Configuration

Answer Choices	Responses	
6 through 8	26.84%	62
7 through 9	3.46%	8
7 through 12	22.51%	52
10 through 12	36.80%	85
13-15	2.16%	5
Other (please specify): Responses	25.11%	58
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 231		237

Research Questions

Each of the four research questions are presented individually with an explanation of the

findings following each question. Statistical comparisons were computed using t-test for

Questions 1, 2, and 3. "The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are

statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever you want to

compare the means of two groups . . . " (Trochim, 2006). Statistical significances are reported in

each category at the .05 level or less. Question 4 involved the comparison of multiple groups

and, thus, One Way ANOVA Test and Post Hoc Tests were used. "The appropriate statistical

analysis of this design is also a two-group analysis of variance (ANOVA)" (Bhattacherjee, 2012,

p. 86)

Research Question 1

1. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority

   administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time?

Participants were requested to select a 5-day work week in October and identify the

number of hours they believed they should be devoting to each of 12 administrative tasks.

Classroom walk through/observations was the highest ranked task with a mean of 10.2 hours (n

= 194). Mean hours equate to average number of hours per week principals devoted to a specific

task category. *Formal and informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum and instruction*

was the second highest ranked administrative task with regard to devoted time by secondary

school principals in Minnesota, with a mean of 7.7 hours (n = 193). The third highest ranked

priority task was *building professional development, planning and facilitation* with mean of 6.07

hours (n = 192). The rankings of all 12 task categories are reported in Table 4.

The standard deviation reported in each task category provides the number of hours the

majority of respondents varied from the mean, either more hours or less hours. For example, a

standard deviation of 5.68740 in the first task category establishes that the majority of

respondent's answers ranged between 4.5007 hours to 15.8755 a week that were devoted to

classroom walk through/observation with an average of 10.1881 hours.

Table 4

Time Principals Believed Should Be Devoted to Select Tasks

Task Category	*Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Classroom walk through/ observations.	10.1881	194	5.68740
Formal and informal meetings with teacher regarding curriculum and instruction.	7.7124	194	4.79490
Building professional development, planning and facilitation.	6.0677	192	4.14313
Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff.	6.0440	193	3.74713
Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal.	5.7254	193	3.89741
Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities.	5.6804	194	4.65698
Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	4.0078	193	2.24448
Personal professional development.	3.9741	193	2.91313
Student discipline attendance.	3.8376	194	2.89822
Budget and personnel management.	3.7694	193	2.32960
Building maintenance and school safety.	3.5233	193	1.83520
Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	3.3516	192	2.11021

*Unit of measure for mean is hours

Research Question 2

2. What did Minnesota secondary school principals' report as the actual time they

devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks?

Participants were requested to select a 5-day work week in October and identify to the number of hours they devoted to each of 12 administrative tasks. Their responses were then compared to their responses on the number hours they believed they should be devoting to the same administrative tasks. Based on the respondents' responses, there were statistical significant differences on all 12 questions with $p < .05$ (n=192-194). The greatest mean difference was found on *Classroom walk through/observations*. Principals reported that they preferred devoting an average of 10.1881 hours per week performing these instructional leadership tasks, (n 194). The average reported time on the classroom walk though/observations task was 5.7706 hours per week, (n 194). This represented a mean difference of 4.4175 hours less actual time performing this task than the preferred time performing the task. The second greatest mean difference between respondents preferred time on task and their actual time on task was related to *Reviewing and responding to e-mails, external and internal.* Responding principals preferred to devote 5.7254 hours per week answering e-mails, (n 193) while their reported actual time on task was 9.8212 hours per week, (n 193). The mean difference that principals were devoting to answering e-mails was 4.098 more hours than the respondents would have preferred. Principals' responses to preferred time on task compared to actual time on task had a mean difference of more than one hour a week of 7 of the 12 task categories. This finding suggests that on 58% of the surveyed tasks, principals were not able to allocate the time they desired to perform those tasks by more than an hour. Results for all tasks categories are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Time Believed Should Be Devoted to Select Tasks Compared to Actual Time on Task

Task Category		*Mean	N	Correlation	Sig.
Student discipline attendance	Preferred Actual	3.8376 6.4871	194	.597	.000
Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities.	Preferred Actual	5.6804 6.5747	194	.802	.000
Classroom walk through/ observations.	Preferred Actual	10.1881 5.7706	194	.396	.000
Formal and informal meetings with teacher regarding curriculum and instruction.	Preferred Actual	7.7124 4.8264	193	.420	.000
Budget and personnel management.	Preferred Actual	3.7694 4.4663	193	.455	.000
Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal.	Preferred Actual	5.7254 9.8212	193	.315	.000
Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	Preferred Actual	4.0078 3.8497	193	.411	.000
Building maintenance and school safety.	Preferred Actual	3.5233 3.8394	193	.478	.000
Building professional development, planning and facilitation.	Preferred Actual	6.0677 4.4115	192	.236	.001
Personal professional development.	Preferred Actual	3.9741 2.4741	193	.160	.026
Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff	Preferred Actual	6.0440 8.8912	193	.412	.000
Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	Preferred Actual	3.3516 4.2240	192	.287	.000

*Unit of measure for mean is hours

Research Question 3

3. How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to

managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership

tasks?

For comparison, three of the 12 questions asked of respondents were focused on

instructional leadership tasks. Questions 3, 4, and 9 were considered instructional leadership

tasks while the remaining questions were considered managerial leadership tasks (Cooley &

Shen, 2003; Horng et al., 2010; Pollock, 2014; Spillane & Hunt, 2010). Respondents were not

informed of the tasks that were related to instructional leadership. For comparison, tasks were

ranked according to their means. The three instructional leadership tasks—*classroom*

walkthrough/observations, formal and informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum

and instruction and building professional development, planning and facilitation—were the

three highest ranked tasks respondents stated they believed should consume the majority of their

time. Principals ranked *classroom walk through/observations* as their highest priority task with a

mean of 10.1881 hours allocated per week, (n = 194). *Formal and informal meetings with*

teachers regarding curriculum and instruction was allocate and average of 7.7124 hours per

week, (n = 193) and *building professional development, planning and facilitation* received an

average of 6.0677 hours per week, (n = 192).

When responding to those tasks which actually consumed the majority of their time,

respondents cited that *review and respond to e-mail, external and interna*l was the highest

reported task that consumed the most weekly time with and allocation of an average of 9.8212

hours per week, (n = 193). *Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent*

meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff was second highest in

time consumption for respondents with a weekly average of 8.8912 hours allocated (n = 193).

Supervision for hallways/ common spaces/activities ranked third highest in time allocated weekly

by respondents with a mean of 6.5747 hours per week (n = 194).

Though principals rated *classroom walk through/observations* as their number highest

priority task, respondents ranked it fifth in actual time on task with 5.7706 hours allocated to that

task per week, (n = 194). The 5.7706 hours of time allocated to *classroom walk*

through/observations represents an average of 4.4185 hours per week less time devoted on

classroom walk through/observations than stated as desired by respondents. *Formal and*

informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum and instruction was the task respondents

rated as second most important to allocate their time. When reporting actual time devoted to the

task, respondents rated that task sixth, allocating 2.886 fewer hours per week than they desired,

(n = 193). Respondents ranked *Building professional development, planning and facilitation*

third among those duties on which they desired to commit their time. In actuality, the

respondents ranked their time on task for *Building professional development, planning and*

facilitation eighth devoting 1.6562 fewer hours a week than desired to perform these tasks, (n =

192).

Respondents ranked the task, *Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal* as the

responsibility on which they committed the greatest volume of time and, yet, ranked the task as

fifth among the tasks they desired allocating their time. Principals devoted an average of 4.0958

hours per week more than they desired on this task, (n = 193). The second most time-consuming

task identified by respondents, *meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent*

meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff, was ranked fourth among tasks on which principals desired allocating their time. It was determined they devoted 2.8472 more hours per week on these tasks than desired, (n = 193). *Supervision of hallways/common spaces/activities* was ranked by respondents as third in actual time on task and sixth on preferred time on task. Principals reported committing .8943 more hours per week on these duties than desired, (n = 194). The results for all categories are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Ranked Believed Time Should Be Devoted to Select Tasks vs. Actual Time on Task

Task Category Preferred	*Mean	N	Task Category Actual	*Mean	N
Classroom walk through/ observations.	10.1881	194	Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal.	9.8212	193
Formal and informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum and instruction.	7.7124	193	Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff	8.8912	193
Building professional development, planning and facilitation.	6.0677	192	Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities.	6.5747	194
Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff	6.0440	193	Student discipline attendance	6.4871	194
Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal.	5.7254	193	**Classroom walk through/ observations.**	5.7706	194
Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities.	5.6804	194	**Formal and informal meetings with teacher regarding curriculum and instruction.**	4.8264	193

Table 6 Continued

Task Category Preferred	*Mean	N	Task Category Actual	*Mean	N
Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	4.0078	193	Budget and personnel management.	4.4663	193
Personal professional development.	3.9741	193	** *Building professional development, planning and facilitation.*	4.4115	192
Budget and personnel management.	3.7694	193	Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	4.2240	192
Student discipline attendance	3.8376	194	Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	3.8497	193
Building maintenance and school safety	3.5233	193	Building maintenance and school safety	3.8394	193
Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	3.3516	192	Personal professional development.	2.4741	192

 * Unit of measure for mean is hours
** Instructional leadership tasks

Research Question 4

4. How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and

    school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial

    and instructional leadership tasks?

Participants were asked to report the actual hours they dedicated to 12 administrative

tasks during a week in October. In only two of the 12 task categories did responses vary by

greater than an hour and they were—*review and respond to e-mail, internal and external* and

meetings, district office meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal

meetings with staff. In *review and respond to e-mail, internal and external,* female principals

devoted a mean of 1.2832 more hours per week than did male principals, (female n=52, male

n=140). Female principals averaged allocating 1.8931 more hours per week than did their male

counterparts, (female n=52, male n=140) to *Meetings, district office meetings, parent meetings,*

IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff. Only the task category, *meetings,*

district office meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings

with staff, yielded statistical significance with a *p* = .024. The full results are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Female vs. Male Time on Task

Task Category		*Mean	N	**Sig. (2-tailed)
Student discipline attendance	Female	6.3019	53	.753
	Male	6.5500	140	
Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities.	Female	7.0189	53	.385
	Male	6.2929	140	
Classroom walk through/ observations.	Female	5.2264	53	.327
	Male	5.9964	140	
Formal and informal meetings with teacher regarding curriculum and instruction.	Female	4.6538	52	.669
	Male	4.9036	140	
Budget and personnel management.	Female	4.5577	52	.858
	Male	4.4643	140	
Review and respond to e-mail, external and internal.	Female	10.7596	52	.166
	Male	9.5214	140	
Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	Female	4.2885	52	.173
	Male	3.6929	40	
Building maintenance and school safety.	Female	3.7596	52	.779
	Male	3.8750	140	
Building professional development, planning and facilitation.	Female	4.4231	52	.992
	Male	4.4173	139	
Personal professional development.	Female	2.5385	52	.838
	Male	2.4679	140	
Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff	Female	10.2788	52	.024
	Male	8.3857	140	
Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	Female	4.3942	52	.692
	Male	4.1906	139	

*Unit of measure for mean is hours
** Equal variances assumed

Comparisons were made between respondents' years of experience and the time they reported devoting to the 12 administrative tasks contained in the survey instrument. Upon analysis, using a One-Way ANOVA test, only *communications with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles)* yielded a statistical difference, (p = .013). In order to ascertain which group or groups were represented in this difference, a Post Hoc test was used. Principals with 10-12 years of experience compared to the remaining groups had a p> .05 with all groups except principals with 4-6 years of experience (Table 8). Principals with 10-12 years of experience committed an average of 5.4355 hours per week communicating with external stakeholders, (n=31). This represented 1.54745 hours more than the next highest group, principals with 4-6 years of experience, (n=39) (Table 9).

Table 8

Communication with External Stakeholders, (Phone, Social Media, Newsletter Articles)

Please indicate how many years you have been a head principal	*Please indicate how many years you have been a head principal*	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
0-3	4-6	-.26595	.57756	.997
	7-9	.10969	.62133	1.000
	10-12	-1.8426*	.61540	.036
	13-15	.51408	.71952	.980
	16+	.15754	.61540	1.000
4-6	0-3	.26595	.57756	.997
	7-9	.37564	.63429	.991
	10-12	-1.57651	.62848	.127
	13-15	.78003	.73074	.894
	16+	.42349	.62848	.985
7-9	0-3	-.10969	.62133	1.000
	4-6	-.37564	.63429	.991
	10-12	-1.95215*	.66893	.045
	13-15	.40439	.76580	.995
	16+	.04785	.66893	1.000
10-12	0-3	1.84246*	.61540	.036
	4-6	1.57651	.62848	.127
	7-9	1.95215*	.66893	.045
	13-15	2.35654*	.76100	.027
	16+	2.00000*	.66342	.034
13-15	0-3	-.51408	.71952	.980
	4-6	-.78003	.73074	.894
	7-9	-.40439	.76580	.995
	10-12	-2.35654*	.76100	.027
	16+	-.35654	.76100	.997
16+	0-3	-.15754	.61540	1.000
	4-6	-.42349	.62848	.985
	7-9	-.04785	.66893	1.000
	10-12	-2.00000*	.66342	.034
	13-15	.35654	.76100	.997

*The mean difference is significant at $p < .05$.

Table 9

Communication with External Stakeholders, (Phone, Social Media, Newsletter Articles)

Years of Experience	N	*Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
0-3	43	3.5930	1.85567	.28299
4-6	39	3.8590	2.70221	.43720
7-9	30	3.4833	2.49649	.45579
10-12	31	5.4355	4.16882	.74874
13-15	19	3.0789	1.27217	.29186
16+	31	3.4355	2.01966	.36274
Total	193	3.8497	2.67817	.19278

*Unit of measure for mean is hours

No valid conclusion was drawn on whether or not the grade configuration of the school in which principals served influences the time they devoted to managerial and instructional leadership tasks. Fifty-seven respondents or 24.3% listed their schools grade configurations as other, (Table 10). Grade configurations labeled other are reported in Table 11.

Table 10

Grades Served

Please Indicate the Grades Served in Your Building	N	Percent
6 through 8	62	26.4
7 through 9	8	3.4
7 through 12	51	21.7
9 through 12	85	36.2
10 through 12	5	2.1
Other	57	24.3

Table 11

Other (Grades Served)

Please Indicate the Grades Served in Your Building	Frequency	Percent
11-12	2	.9
4, 5, 7 and 8	1	.4
5 through 12	1	.4
5-12	2	.9
5-6	1	.4
5-8	16	6.8
5/8	1	.4
5th	1	.4
6 and 7	1	.4
6-12	4	1.7
7 and 8 only	1	.4
7-8	1	.4
8 through 12	1	.4
8-12	1	.4
8th grade also	1	.4
8th grade as well	1	.4
Daycare through 12th grade	1	.4
Grade 5-Grade 8	1	.4
K-12	1	.4
K-12	8	3.4
K-5	1	.4
K-8 Building	1	.4
PK-12	1	.4
Pre-K-12	1	.4
Pre-K thru 12	1	.4
PreK-12	1	.4
PrK-12	1	.4
split campus	1	.4
Transition age 18-21	1	.4
Transition services	1	.4
Total	57	24.3

Summary

"Critics now assert that this conception of the principal as the school's instructional leader is ill-suited to long-term needs for institutional development in schools" (Hallinger, 2003, p.39). Public school principals in Minnesota reported their desire to devote more time to being instructional leaders. When surveyed, principals reported that they would prefer to devote 37% of their work week on instructional leadership-related activities. When responding to actual time devoted weekly to instructional leadership tasks, principals reported that they were only able to allocate 23.9% of their work time to these tasks each week. Responding to e-mails, non-curricular meetings and general supervision consumed 38.5% more of the respondents' time than instructional leadership tasks. Gender and years of experience appeared to have minimal impact on the time respondents devoted to various administrative tasks. "Finally, it appears that management still occupies more time and energy than leadership" (Cooley & Shen, 2003, p. 20).

Chapter V: Conclusion

Purpose

Limited research exists illustrating these administrative tasks which consume the majority of secondary school principals time compared to those tasks principals believe should consume the majority of their time. Furthermore, few studies have been published specifically comparing the time secondary school principals spend on instructional leadership tasks and managerial leadership tasks. "Contemporary educational leaders function in complex local contexts" (Lugg et al., 2002, p. 6). "This intricate system has all of the attractive and clumsy features that are inherent in our form of democracy; yet it also creates conflicting demands on schools and educational professionals, for which we sometimes unjustifiably hold them responsible" (Louis, 1998, p. 14). Literature has noted that there are a multitude of factors that contribute to what principals spend their time doing (Portin & Jianping, 1999).

The purpose of the study was to determine those leadership tasks that consumed the majority of Minnesota secondary school principals' time. This study examined Minnesota secondary school principals' perceptions of those tasks they believed should consume the majority of their time. Those perceptions were compared to Minnesota secondary school principals' reported time on job-related tasks. The study ascertained whether or not Minnesota secondary school principals' perceived priority tasks paralleled actual time on task and determined if the principals devoted more time to providing instructional leadership or providing managerial leadership. "The usual debate has involved the questions of whether a good principal is a bureaucrat or an instructional leader" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 313).

The survey instrument was comprised of four demographic questions and 12 questions related to common tasks performed by secondary school principals. Of the 12 tasks, three were classified as instructional leadership tasks and nine as managerial leadership tasks (Cooley & Shen, 2003; Horng et al., 2010; Pollock, 2014; Spillane & Hunt, 2010).

The survey instrument was intended to gather data related to the study's four research questions. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time? What did Minnesota secondary school principals' report as the actual time they devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks? How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership tasks? How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial and instructional leadership tasks?

The research data was gathered by surveying current, head, secondary school principals in the State of Minnesota who were members of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School principals, (MASSP). The survey instrument was distributed to 552 MASSP member. Those MASSP members who agreed to participate in the study totaled 237, or 42.9%. Principals were asked to respond to questions about the number of hours in an average week they would prefer devoting to 12 administrative tasks and then, the number of hours they actually devoted to those 12 tasks. Closed-ended responses were collected. The data were examined using t-tests, paired t-tests and analyses of variance (ANOVA).

Chapter V presents the findings of the research, conclusions, discussion, limitations, recommendations for further research, and recommendations for practice. The conclusions presented in the chapter are derived from the data presented in Chapter IV.

Researchers and authors provided social descriptions of the principalship throughout history, but there has been little written about the tasks principals actually perform (Kafka, 2009). "The principal's role in delivering quality education has long been recognized as an important organizational characteristic of schools. How principals should perform their roles, however, has been the subject of debate" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 21). Four central research questions were used to analyze time spent on task by Minnesota secondary school principals. Each research question is presented individually with accompanying conclusions.

Research Questions

1. What do secondary school principals in Minnesota report as the priority administrative tasks that should consume the majority of their time?

Study respondents reported allocating a preferred average of 63.88 hours per week to 12 administrative tasks. They reported that they preferred to allocate the majority of their weekly work hours to instructional leadership tasks. The three questions relating to instructional leadership tasks were ranked as the highest three tasks principals preferred allocating their time, totaling 23.96 hours per week. At 23.96 hours, the instructional leadership tasks would consume 37.5% of the principal's work week.

Previous research on the subject support the findings that principals prefer devoting their time to instructional leadership tasks. "The evidence drawn from these and other studies document that principals have spent most of their time on non-instructional tasks. Yet

professional beliefs and training are (and have been since the 1920s) geared to the image of the principal as an instructional leader" (Cuban, 1988, p. 61).

Classroom walk through/observations was the highest rated instructional leadership task on which principals preferred committing their time, devoting 10.19 hours a week or 16% of a principal's desired work week. *Formal and informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum and instruction* was rated as second highest by respondents with 7.7 hours a week preferred while *Building professional development, planning and facilitation* was rated third highest by respondents with an allocation of 6 hours per week. The leadership task to which principals had the least desire to devote time was *budget and personnel management* with a desired allocation of 3.35 hours per week.

2. What did Minnesota secondary school principal's report as the actual time they devoted to priority tasks compared to their preferred time on priority tasks?

Comparing actual time to preferred time devoted to each administrative task yielded statistically significant differences. *Reviewing and responding to e-mail, external and interna*l consumed the greatest amount of a principal's time when compared to the other 11 administrative tasks. Based on their responses, study respondents reported an actual average work week of 65.53 hours.

Principals reported averaging 9.82 hours a week responding to e-mails, or 15% of the respondents' work week. Those results correlated closely with a study of principals in the Canadian providence of Ontario conducted by Katrina Pollock. The average principal in the Pollock study committed 11 hours a week to reading and responding to e-mails, 18.2% of their week, (Pollack, 2014). When responding to the number of hours a week they would prefer

devoting to answering e-mails, this question ranked fifth among Minnesota secondary school principals' priorities. Principals cited that they would prefer allocating an average of 5.72 hours responding to e-mails, (9% of their work week).

   Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff was the second most time-consuming task category respondents identified averaging 8.9 hours per week. "More than one principal noted that the least productive portion of the day was spent dealing with a barrage of e-mail and other correspondence from "downtown" (Portin, 2004, p. 18).

   Supervision of hallways/ common spaces/activities was rated as the third highest time consuming tasks with principals averaging 6.58 hours a week on supervision duties. Secondary school principals in the study devoted 38.5% of their time each week to the three most highly ranked time consuming managerial tasks. The amount of time secondary school principals committed to the three administrative tasks (25.3871 hours) compared unfavorably to the time respondents preferred devoting to these tasks (17.4498), a variance of 10%. Secondary school principals in Minnesota were found to be devoting 7 hours a week, on average, more time to the three highest administrative tasks than they would have preferred to allocate to those tasks. On 7 of the 12 administrative tasks examined, the respondents preferred time on task compared to actual time on task varied by a mean difference of more than one hour. Thus, the data revealed that on 58% of the administrative tasks, principals were not able to allocate their time as they desired.

3. How did Minnesota secondary school principals report the time they devoted to managerial leadership tasks compare to the time devoted to instructional leadership tasks?

Study respondents preferred devoting their time to instructional leadership tasks but in reality, management tasks took precedent. *Classroom walk through/observations* was rated by respondents as their highest priority preferred task, but it was rated fifth for actual time spent on task. Daily management tasks such as e-mail and meetings were found to take precedence over instructional leadership tasks. "Too often, carrying out necessary management and support tasks leads to the distortion of the goals of the job of the principal. The management tasks become the main goal, and the instructional improvement is worked in wherever there is time." (Drake & Roe, 1994, p. 187). On the list of tasks on which respondents actually devoted their time, instructional leadership tasks ranked 5, 6, and 8, respectively, with principals devoting 15 hours a week on instructional leadership responsibilities. This number represented 23% of the principal's work week and compared favorably to the respondent's desire to devote 37.5% to instructional leadership tasks. Comparing the amount of time secondary school principals preferred devoting to the three instructional leadership tasks (37.5%) and the amount of time they actually devoted to the highest rated managerial leadership tasks (38.7%), it was evident that the time principals desired devoting to instructional leadership tasks was being replaced by managerial tasks. "Finally, it appears that management still occupies more time and energy than leadership", (Cooley & Shen, 2003, p. 20).

Building maintenance and school safety was the only task category in which principals reported that their preferred time on task correlated closely with their actual time on task.

Principals reported spending an average of 3.89 hours a week on *building maintenance and school safety*, and when asked how much time they preferred allocating to this task, their mean response 3.52. This task ranked eleventh among the 12 tasks in the preferred and actual time devoted by respondents. "This incongruence between how principals actually spend time and how they believe they should spend time has been fairly consistent over the past 20 years." (Petzko et al., 2002, p. 8).

4. How did Minnesota secondary school principals gender, years of experience, and school grade configurations affect the time they devoted to performing managerial and instructional leadership tasks?

When comparing the differences in time spent on leadership tasks by genders, the study revealed that female and male administrators time differed minimally. Female principals spent slightly more time per week than their male colleagues *reviewing and responding to e-mails, and in meetings, district office, parents, IEP's etc.*

The only task on which data revealed a statistical difference was with regard to meetings, ($p = .025$). Female principals responded that they committed 1.9 more hours a week to *meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff* than their male counterparts. This task had been ranked second on the list of those tasks that consumed a principal's time. Principals devoted on average, 2.84 more hours a week to this task than their desired time allotment. A principal's years of experience did not yield any significant difference in time on task except in the area of *communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles)*. Principals with 10-12 years of experience expended at least 1.55 hours more time on this task than any other group.

Due to the variety of respondent answers, no conclusions could be drawn regarding the impact of school grade configuration on time devoted to administrative tasks. Fifty-seven of the respondents or 24.3% of those completing the survey listed 32 written "other" grade configurations.

Discussion

In reviewing the history of the principalship, each decade has resulted in additional responsibilities added to the principal's role to expanded societal expectations. Management of schools became secondary to instructional leadership. "In sum, the evolution from manager to instructional leader resulted in a new and considerable set of demands on principals" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 45). Literature has related that principals are to prioritize those tasks which are focused on instructional leadership and devote the majority of their time accordingly. Numerous studies have been conducted in the United States and Canada, and those studies have indicated that principals would prefer to commit the majority of their time to instructional leadership responsibilities, but at reality has consistently illustrated that management tasks have taken priority. "In this little drama, the eternal struggle takes place and in the end, the strong instructional leadership role is set aside because of the immediacy and press of everyday administrative duties" (Roe & Drake, 1980, p. 11).

As revealed in research question one, the findings of the study conducted with Minnesota secondary principals mirrors the findings of other studies. Secondary school principals in Minnesota prefer to allocate their time to instructional leadership. Three of the study's 12 survey questions focused on instructional leadership tasks and all were reported by respondents as their highest three priority tasks. Minnesota secondary school principals stated they preferred devoting

their time as instructional leaders, but their actual work priorities did not match their preferred priorities. Since the 1960s, society has added responsibilities to the principalship that have been aimed at improving the United States status as a scientific and fiscal leader of the world. Schools have been tasked with solving poverty, segregation and numerous social emotional issues. Additionally, expectations for greater accountability were situated though national legislation in the form of NCLB which not only had curricular implications, but also established test score benchmarks which lent itself to school to school comparisons. Program evaluation unintentionally encouraged management over leadership due to compliance criteria rather than programming for student outcomes (Hallinger, 1992).

Research Question 2 compared principals' priorities to realities. Instructional leadership tasks were rated highest on the list of principals' priorities. Never the less, principals devoted the greatest amount of their time to answering e-mails. E-mails, which were not a principals'' task 30 years ago, now consumed 15% of a Minnesota secondary school principal's time, (9.82 hours). This additional 15% weekly time consumption means that principals have less time to devote to other management and/or instructional leadership duties. Principals expressed a desire to devote 10.81 hours per week on the instructional leadership task of *classroom walk through/observations* as their number one priority. When answering how many hours they actually devoted to *classroom walk through/observations* ranks fifth with an average of 5.77 hours per week. Principals are devoting half the number of hours they prefer to in classrooms guiding instruction. On 11 of the 12 survey tasks, only building maintenance and safety ranked the same on the list of priorities and realities, it ranked eleven on both lists.

Research Question 3 specifically compared instructional leadership tasks to management tasks. The three highest ranked instructional leadership tasks on principals, priorities ranked fifth, sixth and eighth on the list of actual time spent on task.

Principals value instructional leadership as a highly important part of their duties, I however do not feel that instructional leadership can be ranked as more important than the numerous activities that encompass a principal's weekly responsibilities. I have found that, despite a myriad of books written stating instructional leadership is the most important task principals perform, there is a lack of statistical proof for that assertion. Goldring and Greenfield (2002) believed that the effects of administrative action on teaching and learning are difficult to measure, and there is no conclusive evidence that intervention by administration has a positive correlation on student learning. There are too many variables among schools, students and teachers for anything to be conclusive (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002). I believe this to be true and consistent with what has been gathered through my research. Management tasks have always taken precedent and I believe always will. Instructional leadership will never take the place of management, if the school does not operate effectively, teachers cannot do their jobs; the district office is not satisfied and the principal fails to perform adequately his/her duties. "That most districts place a higher priority on managerial efficiency and political stability than on instructional leadership is reflected in norms implicitly understood by both principals and district office administrators" (Hallinger & Murphy,1987, p. 56). At the conclusion of the day, the principal is a middle manager, and upper management will always place a higher priority on a safe and orderly school. "The Managerial role, on the other hand, encompasses the work necessary to maintain organizational stability, including tasks such as planning, gathering and

dispersing information, budgeting, hiring, scheduling, and maintaining the building" (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 295). I believe to prioritize one set of administrative tasks over another will always place principals at odds with many of the groups of stakeholders who are involved in schools. All tasks are important in providing a quality education for all students.

"The distinction between instructional leadership and management could be artificial. Effective principals must wear two hats: as both instructional leaders and efficient manager" (Richardson, 1991, p. 18). Is the term "instructional leadership" too narrowly defined and thus the failure is not in the amount of time principals devote to instructional leadership but through a failure of definition? "The reality is that principals exert leadership that affects instruction numerous ways, both directly and indirectly" (Bartell, 1998, p. 119).

One could rationalize that every task in which a principal engages has some effect on instruction. Tasks not considered instructional leadership tasks by literary definition could, in fact, have equal or greater positive effects on student achievement. "However new research indicates that neither of these task areas may be as important to principal effectiveness in raising student achievement as management tasks like hiring teachers of setting budgets" (White & Agarwal, 2011, p. 12). This speculative statement was found in a 2011 study of Illinois principals which attempted to discover the reason for the high turnover rate of principals in the state of Illinois. The study revealed that Illinois principals desired being instructional leaders, yet over two-thirds of them felt they were not very effective (White & Agarwal, 2011). The lack of "perceived" principal effectiveness in the White and Agarwal study was due to lack of time those administrators were able to devote to defined instructional leadership duties.

This study did not ask principals' their perceptions of their effectiveness but one could conclude that if principals' priorities did not match desired expectations, their satisfaction and effectiveness could be questioned.

If the definitions of instructional leadership remain as they currently are, and if the secondary principal is truly going to perform by definition, as the instructional leader for her/his school, select tasks must be removed from their job responsibilities. "That the principal's workday comprises many brief, fragmented interactions with different actors is well documented. It is difficult for principals to schedule the uninterrupted blocks of time necessary for planning and assessing curriculum, observing lessons, and conferencing with teachers" (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987, p. 57).

It seems likely principals will not be in a position to remove the e-mail communications that are inherent in the position expected to be addressed by stakeholders. As revealed in Research Question 2, if 15% of a principals' work week is devoted to e-mail correspondence, they are devoting as much time to e-mail responses as they would prefer devoting to classroom walkthroughs and observations, (16%). Administrators would do well to examine closely those other duties that could be removed delegated to other positions.

Removing or minimizing district office meetings, IEP meetings, non-curricular meetings, and committee meetings would be worthy of evaluation by principals. Research Question 2 revealed that Minnesota secondary school principals commit an average of 8.89 hours each week to these meeting. If greater numbers of these meetings were to be performed by administrative subordinates, this would allow building principals additional time for instructional leadership tasks.

Supervision of common spaces, hallways, and activities is another traditional task that could be removed from the principal's responsibilities. The findings of the study revealed that removing these two task categories from the principal's responsibilities would free an additional 15.5 hours of work per week that could then be devoted to instructional leadership tasks. This is a solution and not a new one, though I do not believe it to be an effective one. Valentine and Prater (2011) studied the duties of Missouri principals and concluded that all principal's leadership behaviors impacted a student's education. "However, results of the study indicate that no single set of leadership behaviors can be discerned to be effective to the exclusion of others" (Valentine & Prater, 2011, p. 20). Indeed, there are principal duties that could be eliminated and performed by non-administrative staff, but are districts willing to expend the fiscal resources to do so.

"While it is widely understood that principals play a pivotal role in the improvement of teaching and learning, many districts have given little attention to creating the necessary conditions for principal success" (Fink & Silverman, 2014, p. 24). One solution may be to view differently what instructional leadership encompasses, or consider every principal duty a component of his/her instructional leadership. A second solution may consider a major restructuring of the principal's job responsibilities, though this redesign would also involve additional fiscal expenditures by the school district in hiring personnel to perform principal duties which have been reassigned. "When one ponders the extensive responsibilities of the secondary school principal, it becomes apparent that the task may well be beyond the physical capacity of any one person" (Melton, 1970, p. 10).

Limitations

Every study experiences limitations that could not be controlled or were not originally taken into account by the researcher. These limitations may impact the outcomes of the research and/or its interpretations. Limitations of the study were as follows:

1. The wording of the grade configuration question resulted in a range of disparate responses. Those responses prohibited the researcher from answering the question on whether or not grade configuration or grade level had an impact on time devoted to the principals' administrative duties.

2. Respondents were not asked to verify the sizes of their schools in order to preserve anonymity. Therefore, correlations based on school size and time devoted to administrative tasks were not conducted. This could be raise crucial question regarding how principals spend their time. Since larger schools have assistant principals, does this provide principals more time to be instructional leaders?

3. Principals were asked to respond to closed-ended survey questions in 12 administrative categories. Those categories may not completely represent the all of the duties performed by the principals surveyed. More administrative categories with greater specificity could lead to a more specific understanding of the tasks principals actually perform and how those tasks compare in time allocated to them.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, further research is recommended on the following topics:

- A follow-up study may be conducted in which principals are directly observed to examine the exact amount of time they devoted to specific tasks during a 5-day work week.

- A qualitative study may be conducted in which principals are equally observed representing small, medium and large secondary schools to ascertain whether or not the size of the student body and the size of staff affect the amount of time spent on managerial leadership tasks.

- A follow-up study could be conducted in which building administrative structures are compared to determine whether or not principals with assistant principals spend more time on instructional leadership duties than principals without assistant principals.

- A qualitative study may be conducted with a random sampling of secondary school principals to ascertain why they prioritize instructional leadership tasks at a higher level than managerial tasks.

- A qualitative study may be conducted to determine if those tasks identified as focused on instructional leadership actually have a higher impact on student achievement than those tasks identified as focused managerial issues.

Recommendations for Practice

"The principal must be held responsible for the impact the school has on the students coming to its door, whether that impact be positive of negative" (Melton, 1970, p. 5) The principal is ultimately responsible for every aspect of the school they oversee, instructional and managerial.

The study revealed that there is a conflict among Minnesota secondary school principals between their desire to allocate their time to instructional leadership tasks and the reality that managerial tasks consume the majority of their time. If school leaders are to view instructional leadership tasks through the narrow definitions that literature provides and believe that instructional leadership is the most important task of a building principal, it would seem there is a then need to remove tasks assigned to principals to provide them with additional time to serve as instructional leaders.

> If we want principals to be instructional leaders, we must develop job descriptions that are compatible with fulfilling such a role, evaluate the performance of the principals on these job dimensions, educate teacher and parents on the value of such roles and buffer the school from environmental or community forces that would press for a different kind of principal behavior" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 6).

To effect this, it would require that principal duties which currently are considered management duties would be assigned to someone other than the building principal.

- Remove from building principals such managerial administrative tasks as scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting, building maintenance and school safety, student discipline attendance, supervision of hallways/common

spaces/activities. According to the findings of the study, this task realignment would free up an average of 21.1252 hours per week for the principal to devote to instructional leadership.

If removing managerial administrative tasks from the principals' job description is not an option, there then is a need to re-distribute instructional leadership duties to school personnel other than the building principal.

- Train, support, and provide time for lead teachers to provide instructional leadership to teaching personnel in their buildings. This would involve selected teachers who would be provided abbreviated teaching schedules so they could spend time in classrooms providing instructional leadership

- Train and develop a core team of certified staff to provide instructional leadership in individual buildings. The team members would have no classroom teaching responsibilities; their function would be to provide direct instructional leadership to teachers and building staffs. This team would be subordinate to the building principal.

Summary

The duties of secondary principals have expanded over the past 100 years in response to the needs of American society and the stakeholders they serve. It is inconceivable that adding duties to the principalship can continue as it has, along with amending the priorities of the role without redefining duties. The principalship is at a crossroads and even though there have been investments in principals, there is a concern that the resources to help these growing expectations become a reality are not going to be available (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). "The result is a job that looks too many to be impossible and many of those from whose ranks principals

have traditionally come are not pursuing the position" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 48). Are instructional leadership duties more important than managerial duties? If so, how do we relieve principals of traditional managerial duties so they can focus on instructional leadership? Is our definition of instructional leadership duties too narrowly defined and, therefore, the problem is definitional and not operational? "Rather, effective instructional leadership combines and understanding of the instructional needs of the school with an ability to target resources where they are needed, hire the best available teachers, provide teachers with the opportunities they need to improve, and keep the school running smoothly" (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p. 32). Under this definition, all tasks performed by principals constitute instructional leadership.

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Appendix A: Initial Invitation to Participate in Survey

Dear MASSP member,

The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, (MASSP) has agreed to sponsor the research being conducted by David O. Lund as part of the requirements for his Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Dave will be conducting a survey of head middle school and high school principals who are members of the MASSP to ascertain those tasks which secondary principals believe should consume the majority of their time as compared to actual time on task. Results of this survey will be made available to participants once Dave has completed his degree. We hope that these results will help principals examine their priorities and tasks as they relate to their everyday work.

The link to the survey is listed below. All responses are anonymous and the survey will take ten minutes or less.

Survey Link
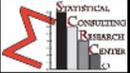https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SecPriSur

Sincerely,

David Adney
Executive Director

--
Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
1667 Snelling Avenue N, Suite C-100
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-999-7333 phone

Appendix B: Survey Instrument, Survey Monkey

STATISTICAL CONSULTING RESEARCH CENTER

Secondary Principal Survey

Demographics

1. Please indicate your gender.

○ Female   ○ Male

2. Please indicate how many years you have been a head principal

○ 0-3   ○ 7-9   ○ 13-15

○ 4-6   ○ 10-12   ○ 16+

Next

STATISTICAL CONSULTING RESEARCH CENTER

Secondary Principal Survey

3. Please indicate how many students are enrolled in your building.

○ 0-499   ○ 1000-1499   ○ 2000-plus

○ 500-999   ○ 1500-1999

4. Please indicate the grades served in your building, (check all that apply).

☐ 6 through 8   ☐ 7 through 12   ☐ 10 through 12

☐ 7 through 9   ☐ 9 through 12

☐ Other (please specify):

[   ]

Prev   **Next**

Secondary Principal Survey

5. Consider an average five day school week in October. How many hours:

	do you **believe you should** be devoting to the following duties?	**do you** devote to the following duties?
Student discipline/attendance.	⬍	⬍
Supervision of hallways/common spaces/activities.	⬍	⬍
Classroom walk-through/observations.	⬍	⬍
Formal and informal meetings with teachers regarding curriculum and instruction.	⬍	⬍
Budget and personnel management.	⬍	⬍
Review and respond to e-mail, internal and external.	⬍	⬍
Communication with external stakeholders, (phone, social media, newsletter articles).	⬍	⬍
Building maintenance and school safety.	⬍	⬍
Building professional development, planning and facilitation.	⬍	⬍
Personal professional development.	⬍	⬍
Meetings, district office meetings, committee meetings, parent meetings, IEP's, non-curricular formal and informal meetings with staff.	⬍	⬍
Scheduling, maintaining school records, district and state reporting.	⬍	⬍

Prev   Done

Appendix C: Second Request

Hello,

I hope that your school year is off to a great start. Two weeks ago, October 3rd, David Adney sent you a letter requesting your participation in a survey I am conducting as part of my doctoral research. I am conducting a task analysis of secondary principals in the State of Minnesota. The survey is comprised of 4 demographic questions and 12 task related questions and should take 7 to 10 minutes to complete. If you have completed the survey I thank you. If you have not completed the survey I am hoping you will take the time to do so, your response is critical to the accuracy of the data. I have included the link to the survey below, you will have access to the data once my degree is completed.

Survey Link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SecPriSur

Sincerely,
David O. Lund, Principal
Prior Lake High School

--
Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals
1667 Snelling Avenue N, Suite C-100
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-999-7333 phone
651-999-7331 fax

Appendix D: Third and Final Request

Dear MASSP member,

This is my 3ʳᵈ and final request enlisting your help in gathering information as to those tasks which Minnesota lead principals consider priorities compared to those tasks which consume their time. If you have already filled out this survey, thank you. If you have not, the link to the survey is listed below and I hope you will take time to complete it. **The survey window will close this Friday, October 28ᵗʰ**.

Survey Link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SecPriSur

With much appreciation,
David O. Lund, Principal
Prior Lake High School

--
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