Mentorship of Select African American School Administrators

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Mentorship of Select African American School Administrators

by

Michael L. Favor

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, American governmental and educational leaders have publically recognized the existence of a substantial achievement gap between Caucasian students and students of color, most notably African American students; according to United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, “the persistence, and even the recent expansion, of the opportunity gap, should be an urgent wake-up call that American is still not a color-blind society that provides equal educational opportunity” (Duncan, 2012). It is not that the achievement gap had not previously existed; it is that it had not been given the public attention it is receiving today, and it was not apparently seen as a state or national imperative. That has changed. There is an outcry today to address and “fix” the achievement disparity and do so in a hurry (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). Indeed, Public Law PL107-110, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind, has asserted that addressing and closing the achievement gap among all students is and will continue to be a national priority for all public schools (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2008).

The difficulty faced by educational leaders is in identifying and implementing effective strategies to increase student achievement levels for all students while, simultaneously, further elevating achievement outcomes for African American students.

One such effective strategy is mentoring. Erickson, McDonald, and Elder stated that, “Results from a nationally representative sample of students show a powerful net influence of mentors on the educational success of youth” (2009, p. 344). Their study
illustrated that all students benefit from access to mentors, but poor students benefitted to a higher degree than even advantaged students (Erickson, McDonald, & Elder, 2009).

Another proven strategy is role modeling. Research from a number of sources strongly support the concept that African American students benefit substantially from mentoring relations with adults, most particularly African American adults. (Jeynes, 2015; Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Miller, 2008) W. E. B. Dubois affirmed this in 1903 when he stated, “The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men” (DuBois, 1903). That position was supported by the Urban Leadership Institute in its publication, “MAN UP: Recruiting and Retaining African American Male Mentors,” that while we struggle to reform fragmented systems like the public schools, juvenile justice, police, and other vital entities within the community, the most logical solution to improve the life chances of African American males lies within our commitment as adults to serve. This service to young Black males would include increasing efforts to recruit and retain African American males as mentors.” (Miller, 2008, p. 13)

Given the research findings on the effectiveness of role modeling and mentoring for all students, including those who are African American, it would appear logical to conclude that enhancing the number of African American educators in school districts in order to further incorporate those mentoring and/or role modeling strategies for African American students would hold some promise for increasing those students’ achievement and reducing – if not ultimately eliminating – the achievement gap. Toward that end, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated, “The country needs to increase the diversity
of its teacher workforce to match the diversity of school children.” “A more diverse group of teachers – including more teachers of color and male teachers – better serves all students.” (Bloom & Davis, 2014).

Matching the diversity of the school workforce to the diversity of students is a goal that has not been successfully achieved in the State of Minnesota. Based on data provided by the Minnesota Department of Education, the K-12 African American student population increased from 76,073 in 2006-07 to 93,898 in 2013-14, a gain of 23.4%, while the total Minnesota K-12 student population grew from 840,562 in 2006-07 to 850,763 in 2013-14, a mere 1.2% (Minnesota Department of Education, 2007; Minnesota Department of Education, 2014).

During the same seven-year span of time, Minnesota’s African American professional licensed teachers decreased from 551.25 in 2006-07 to 538.49 in 2013-14, a loss of 2.31%, while the total number of Minnesota licensed teachers increased from 52,795.99 in 2006-07 to 54,252.59 in 2013-14, a net increase of 2.76%. (MDE, 2007; MDE, 2014)

The employment/development of African American school administrators – typically elevated like most school leaders from the ranks of school district teaching staffs – in Minnesota has lagged significantly behind the 10.1% average rate of African American school administrators found in the United States public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). Minnesota K-12 public school districts employed 113.73 African American school administrators in 2006-07, 4.2% of the 2,704.66 school administrators’ total. In 2013-14, African American administrators numbered 119.15 or
4.1% of the 2,876.79 Minnesota school administrators’ total. Thus, while the number of
Minnesota African American school administrators increased by 4.8% from 2006-07 to
2013-14 – all Minnesota school administrators increased by 6.4% during that same time
span – data reveal that, when compared to the total of all Minnesota school administrators,
the percentage of African American administrators decreased from 4.2% to 4.1%.

Statement of the Problem

While the percentage of African American students in the state of Minnesota
increased by more than 23% over the span of seven years from 2006-07 to 2013-14, the
percentage of African American school administrators in the state decreased by one-tenth
of one percent (0.1%) during the same time period (MDE 2007; MDE, 2014). This trend is
troublesome in that numerous researchers have asserted the importance of African
American role models and mentors to same-race students. Karunanayake and Nauta
(2004) asserted that across racial groups, the majority of students surveyed about their
career models identified a same-race role model.

If school districts in Minnesota and throughout the United States are to address the
achievement gap disparities that exist among African American and non-African American
students, it would appear essential that educators employ multiple strategies that have
been identified as meritorious in educating students of color (and other students).
Providing access to greater numbers of African American school administrators –
educators in power positions in school districts – to furnish role modeling and mentoring
have been suggested as effective strategies. Toward that end, this study is focused on
determining the degree and quality of mentoring that a sampling of current African
American school administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure and achieving positions as school administrators in Minnesota.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to identify those mentorship experiences that were supportive of a select group of African American administrators in pursuing and completing administrative licensure and in securing an administrative position in K-12 school districts in the State of Minnesota.

**Questions of the Study**

The following are the primary questions of the study:

1. Did select Minnesota African American school administrators receive mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position and, if so, how many?

2. How important did select Minnesota African American administrators perceive the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

3. What was the perceived quality of the mentoring that select Minnesota African American administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

4. What types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators receive in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?
What mentorship advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American teachers who aspire to become school administrators?

**Delimitations**

According to Roberts’ definition, delimitations are factors that are controlled by the researcher (Roberts, 2010, p. 129).

For the purposes of the study, delimitations were established by the researcher:

- The sample group included only African American school administrators who were serving in K-12 public school districts Hennepin and Ramsey counties and the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts in the state of Minnesota.
- Members of the sample group individually interviewed by the researcher numbered ten, based on the perceived time constraints.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of the study, the following definitions are provided to enhance clarity for the reader:

Administrative Licensure: in Minnesota, any superintendent, director, or school principal license issued to an individual by the Minnesota Board of School Administrators upon completion of an accredited administrative licensure program (Minn. R. 3512.0100, 2008).

African American: a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

Administrator, School Administrator: an administrator or school administrator “means
elementary, secondary, and kindergarten through grade 12 school principals and assistant principals who perform duties consisting of 50 percent or more in administration, personnel, supervision, evaluation, and curriculum” (Minn. R. 3512.0100, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, administrator will refer to any person holding an administrative licensure whose position is consisting of 50 percent or more in administration, personnel, supervision, evaluation, and curriculum.

Mentoring: a relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the protégé’s career (Kram, 1985)

Role Model, Role Modeling: an individual who provides “An example of the kind of success that one may achieve” or “a template of the behaviors that are needed to achieve such success” (Lockwood, 2006).

**Organization of the Study**

The study is organized in a five-chapter format. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study, purpose of the study, questions of the study, delimitations, definition of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter two includes related literature, including prominent references to mentoring, role modeling, and African American school administrators. Chapter three furnishes the study’s research methodology, instrumentation, and an explanation of the processes and procedures for data collection and analysis. Chapter four provides data gathered in the study and an analysis of those data, organized in a manner that coincides with the questions of the study. Chapter five
contains a presentation of the study’s results, findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for further study.
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Data reveal there is a substantial achievement gap between Caucasian students and students of color, most notably African American student (Ravitch, 2010). The Education Commission of the States (2015) reported that efforts have been documented in several states to reduce the achievement gap by creating programs to recruit and retain teachers and administrators of color.

No known or recorded efforts to enhance the recruitment and retention of African American school administrators have been identified in the state of Minnesota. In fact, data reported by the Minnesota Department of Education affirm that the percentage of African American school administrators declined from 4.2% to 4.1% between 2006-07 and 2013-14, while the African American student population in Minnesota school districts grew by 23.4%.

Multiple studies provide substantive evidence of the values of role modeling and mentoring as vehicles for addressing the achievement gap that has greatly impacted the school performances of African American students.

The study's literature examines three themes which would appear to hold promise for strengthening the focus ensuring that African American children are not "left behind": achievement gap; role modeling; and mentoring.

Achievement Gap

The term “achievement gap” is commonly used to describe the disparity between groups of students on measures of academic performance, such as standardized test
scores, grades, course selection, and graduation rates, among other measures ("Achievement Gap," 2011). For many years, the term was singularly focused on racial and ethnic group performance, though in recent years, that focus has broadened to include gender, socioeconomic status, and English language learner status. Nevertheless, the racial achievement gap, particularly between black and white students, continues to receive the most attention, as this gap remains one of the most pronounced and persistent on various measures of academic success (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

The achievement gap between black and white students has persisted as a national problem for the past several decades, dating back to at least the middle of the 20th century. Prior to the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision on May 17, 1954, which resulted in the integration of public schools and was intended to grant black students access to the same educational opportunities as white students, black students were at a significant disadvantage. Despite the intent of the Supreme Court decision, black children faced “tracking, lowered expectations,” outright discrimination, and did not have access to the same educational resources as white students (Foster, 1990, p. 132).

In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law by then-President George W. Bush. This reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 sought to close the achievement gap “between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1001, 2008). Despite the intent of NCLB, it has been widely criticized as ineffective; “little improvement in academic achievement or gap-closing came after NCLB” (Hewitt, 2011, p. 177).
Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that a racial/ethnic achievement gap in reading and mathematics has existed since that assessment was first administered in 1971 and 1973, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). In 1971, average scores on the NAEP reading assessment for black 9-year-olds were 44 points lower than scores for like-aged white students; for 13-year-olds, average scores for black students were 39 points lower than scores for white students; and for 17-year-olds, the average score for black students trailed those of white students by 53 points (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Although data from the 2012 Nation’s Report Card showed that the differences in reading scores on the NAEP for black and white students had decreased by approximately half for all age groups, a gap in achievement continued to persist (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Similar discrepancies in achievement have been documented by NCES in mathematics. In 1973, the difference in average scores between black and white students on the NAEP mathematics test was 35 points for 9-year-olds, 46 points for 13-year-olds, and 40 points for 17-year-olds, with black students trailing white students at all age levels. While the achievement gap in NAEP mathematics test scores has narrowed, black students at all ages scored at least 25 points less than white students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

NAEP data from Minnesota depicts a similar picture of the achievement gap. Although the average NAEP score for Minnesota students has tended to be at or above the national average, black fourth graders scored 30 points lower than white students in mathematics and 37 points lower in reading in 2015. As an illustration of the persistence
of this gap, the difference in scores in mathematics and reading were not significantly different from those in 2000 and 1998, respectively (NAEP, 2015).

In Minnesota, the persistence of the achievement gap and its ramifications for black students was so troubling to both educators and government officials that legislation was drafted and enacted requiring school districts to implement initiatives to close the achievement gap. Minnesota Statute 120B.11 (2014), commonly referred to as the World’s Best Workforce statute, required all Minnesota school districts to work toward achieving five main goals:

- meet school readiness goals;
- have all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy;
- close the achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and students not living in poverty;
- have all students attain career and college readiness before graduating from high school;
- and have all students graduate from high school.

Evidence suggests that the achievement gap between black and white students begins even before students enter the classroom. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), Chapin (2006) found that for science and social studies, “black students, on average, were far below the General Knowledge Test scores of white children, both before they entered kindergarten and at the end of first grade” (p. 236). More recent findings from the ECLS indicated that black first-time kindergartners in 2010-2011 scored lower than white first-time kindergartners on reading and mathematics
assessments (Mulligan, Hastedt, & McCarroll, 2012). Yeung and Pfeiffer (2009), using test data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), a national longitudinal study begun in 1968, reported that on average, black children’s scores were lower than those of white children on all achievement tests.

The achievement gap also appears to increase over time, resulting in black children significantly performing at an academic disadvantage compared to their white peers. Data from the ECLS revealed that for the cohort of children starting kindergarten in 2010-2011, black students’ scores in reading, math and science in second grade continued to trail those of white students in the 2012-2013 school year (Mulligan, McCarroll, Flanagan, & Potter, 2015). Similarly, Yeung and Pfeiffer (2009) found that from preschool through fifth grade, the gap in black and white children’s test scores increased.

Although the last NAEP report indicated that the racial/ethnic achievement gap had narrowed – by 21 points when comparing white-black achievement since 1971 and by 13 points when comparing white-Latino achievement scores since 1975 – due to gains achieved primarily by black and Latino students, the achievement gap has persisted. The persistence of the achievement gap suggests that leaders in research, education, and school administration examine further interventions that may address the myriad root causes of this discrepancy in achievement levels between primarily black and white students ((Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

Researchers have pointed to various factors that may contribute to the achievement gap (Cowan Pitre, 2014; Williams, 2011). Family- and neighborhood-related factors, such as poverty and socioeconomic status (Jeynes, 2015), parental educational attainment
level (Geoffroy et al., 2010; Kim, Mazza, Zwanziger, & Henry, 2014), parent involvement in school (Desimone, 1999; Lee & Bowen, 2006), and school-related factors, such as curriculum (Jeynes, 2015) have all been investigated as potential causes affecting the racial achievement gap.

According to Pringle, Lyons, and Booker (2010), “research indicates that teacher expectations are one of many factors that strongly influence students’ academic success…it is important to understand that the teacher can be the most influential factor in a student’s academic success” (p. 38-39). Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Osborne, and Sibley (2016) define teacher expectations as “beliefs teachers hold about their students’ academic capabilities and subsequent levels of achievement. They are thought to be largely influenced by factors such as students’ prior achievement, but also by ethnicity, SES, gender, and student diagnostic labeling” (p. 124). Several researchers have demonstrated that teachers’ expectations of minority students contribute to student achievement and success or - in the case of black students - student underachievement.

In their meta-analysis, Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) found that teachers held higher expectations for white and Asian students compared to Latino and black students, suggesting that teacher expectations differed depending on the race or ethnicity of the student. There is evidence to suggest that teachers form expectations of students’ motivations and achievement based on students’ first names. Anderson-Clark, Green, and Henley (2008) found that teachers gave lower achievement ratings to students whose names sounded more stereotypically black than to students whose names sounded more stereotypically white. On the other hand, Love and Kruger (2005) found that teachers who
try to build relationships with all students, believe that all students are capable of success, and recognize the importance of culturally relevant curriculum are more likely to elicit higher performance from their students on assessments of academic achievement.

Similar results have been found internationally. Rubie-Davies, Hattie and Hamilton (2006) documented the effects of teacher expectations on student achievement among New Zealand European, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Maori students in New Zealand. Maori are an ethnic minority in New Zealand, and along with Pacific Islanders, are of lower socioeconomic status. Though Maori students performed at the same level as New Zealand European, Asian, and Pacific Islander students at the beginning of the year, teachers held lower expectations for Maori student achievement and consequently, Maori students significantly underperformed in reading at year's end compared to their peers, in line with teachers' expectations and judgments of Maori students' academic performance. The authors concluded that the minimal gains made by Maori students, but not Pacific Islander students, resulted from teacher expectations based on ethnicity. Similar results were found in the Netherlands. Teachers' expectations differed for ethnic majority and minority students; these differing expectations manifested themselves in an achievement gap within the classroom. In addition, teachers who held more negative prejudices were more likely to expect less from their minority students and to rate them as less intelligent and academically successful (Van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010).
Reducing the Achievement Gap

Desimone (1999) suggested that schools make efforts to identify role models with similar socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds as its students to “provide vision and meaning to expectations for at-risk children” (p. 23). As Vilson (2016) explained, “children can’t be what they can’t see. By hiring more teachers of color…students of color can form relationships with professionals who may share their cultural background and possess powerful narratives for success (p. 21). The importance of providing a positive role model for black students is shared by some aspiring school administrators; in interviews with African American female aspiring administrators, Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) found that almost one-third of the women had entered educational administration to serve as a role model to minority students.

A report by the Education Commission of the States (2015) documented the efforts of Massachusetts and Washington, among other states, to reduce the achievement gap by creating programs to recruit and retain teachers and administrators of color. In Minnesota, “state education leaders believe hiring more teachers, reserve teachers and other professionals of color might be one way to budge the persistent achievement gap between white and minority students” (McGuire, 2015, para. 5).

It has long been suggested that recruiting more black teachers should result in more positive academic outcomes for black students. Dee (2004) reported that black students who had a black teacher made gains of 3-5 percentile points in mathematics and 3-6 percentile points in reading on the Stanford Achievement Test. Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015) also found statistically significant positive effects in math and reading
achievement for black students in elementary, middle, and high school assigned to black teachers. A study by Oates (2003) provided one explanation for this phenomenon, suggesting that black students paired with black teachers “appear to be ‘shielded’ from negative [teacher] perceptions”, whereas black students paired with white teachers “appear especially vulnerable to negative [teacher] perceptions” (p. 516).

The decline of the ranks of black teachers can be traced to the mid-1960s. The ruling by the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education, that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, had the unintended consequence of widespread dismissals or demotions of black administrators and teachers (Karpinski, 2006; Vilson, 2016). Many schools led by black principals were shuttered or their students were integrated into formerly segregated public schools, creating employment uncertainty for black principals and teachers. Black principals were commonly revered as community leaders; the lack of visible examples of black leadership in education added insult to injury by creating feelings of discouragement and alienation among black principals, teachers and students (Karpinski, 2006).

Gardiner, Canfield-Davis, and Anderson (2009), in their study of urban school principals, conclude that recruitment and retention of ethnically diverse teachers…into the ranks of educational administrators has the potential to improve leadership in schools…School districts need to find ways to recruit and retain diverse faculty and administrators perhaps through funded grow-your-own programs that support personnel in their rise from paraprofessional to teacher to administrator. (p. 157)
Role Modeling

A role model is an individual who provides “an example of the kind of success that one may achieve” and “a template of the behaviors that are needed to achieve such success” (Lockwood, 2006). The presence of a role model for children and adolescents may positively influence health-promoting behaviors (Yancey, Grant, Kurosky, Kravitz-Wirtz, & Mistry, 2011), increase resilience (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012), and improve academic achievement (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001).

Role models are most inspiring to learners when they are demographically similar to learners (Moberg, 2000). Across racial groups, the majority of students surveyed about their career role models identified a same-race role model (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004). Black children are also more likely to choose role models of the same race and gender (Anderson & Cavallaro, 2002).

Vilson (2016) wrote that it is “important for children of color, especially male children of color, to see teachers of color, especially male teachers of color, as role models” (p. 22). In her historical research on black teachers during the mid-20th century, Siddle Walker (2001) described black teachers’ beliefs that they should be role models to their students; “they modeled for students the kinds of adults they expected them to become” (p. 770). Students of color, in particular African American students, benefit the most from the presence of a positive role model (Vilson, 2016). African Americans must contend with negative stereotypes about their intellectual capabilities and achievement (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Further research by Steele and Aronson (1995) demonstrated a decline in performance for underrepresented groups, such as African Americans and women,
compared to the majority group when race or gender is made salient prior to a purportedly evaluative test. If a member of the underrepresented group is presented with an example of a successful in-group role model, however, their performance is not significantly different than the performance of the majority. Similar research by Brewer and Weber (1994) found that members of a minority group rated themselves more positively after being exposed to a successful rather than unsuccessful in-group member. Bryant and Zimmerman (2003) found that African American adolescents who had at least one role model exhibited fewer problem behaviors, held more positive attitudes about school, and had greater psychological well-being than African American adolescents without an identified role model.

The presence of a role model for African American youth may also translate into higher academic performance by eliminating stereotype threat. Marx and Ko (2012) studied a random sample of African American and Caucasian students during President Barack Obama’s first presidential campaign. They found that after exposure to instances in which the President’s successes were celebrated and highly publicized (e.g. securing the Democratic Party’s nomination and winning the presidential election), stereotype threat was eliminated for African Americans on a test.

The benefits of having a role model continue into adulthood. Brown and Treviño (2014) found that managers who had an ethical role model at some point during their careers were more likely to be identified by their direct reports as being an ethical leader.

An ethical role model possesses good interpersonal skills and holds themselves and others to high moral expectations. Survey respondents described their role models as
demonstrating caring and compassion for others, valuing relationships, and displaying a willingness to help others. Respondents listed characteristics such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, humility, and fairness; role models demonstrated behaviors such as conveying high standards and holding others accountable (Weaver, Treviño, & Agle, 2005).

**Mentoring**

Multiple definitions of mentoring abound in the research literature. Mentoring is commonly defined in the literature as the relationship between an older, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a younger, less experienced individual (the protégé) for the purpose of advancing the protégé’s career (Kram, 1985). Chao, Walz, and Gardner (1992) define mentorship as “an intense work relationship between senior (mentor) and junior (protégé) organizational members” (p. 624). Lipscomb and An (2010) define a mentor as an individual who “provides guidance and counsel to someone who has less experience in a field” (p. 1002). Gibson (2004) describes a mentor as a person who provides “advice and support to a protégé through an interactive relationship” (p. 137). Collins, Kamya, and Tourse (1997) defined mentoring as an interpersonal ‘helping relationship’ between two individuals who are at different stages in their professional development. The mentor – the more professionally advanced of the two – becomes involved in fostering the development and facilitating the advancement of the protégé – the junior professional – by serving as a source of support beyond what is required solely on the basis of their formal role relationship.
From her review of the mentoring literature, Reyes (2003) defined mentoring as “a career development opportunity that socializes new members of the profession while developing the skills and behaviors of dynamic leaders” (p. 46). Lasley (1996) describes mentors as “positive enablers,” in that they “provide support, even tacit ‘handholding,’ but they do so in a way that encourages personal responsibility within the context of free choice” (p. 67).

Researchers have distinguished between formal and informal mentoring relationships. Informal mentoring relationships typically develop through a friendship, collegial, or coaching relationship between mentor and protégé. Chao et al. (1992) described informal mentoring relationships as “spontaneous relationships that occur without external involvement from the organization” (p. 620). Formal mentoring is often a structured program offered through an organization that selects and pairs mentors and protégés using a systematized process.

Protégés in informal mentoring relationships reported receiving more career-related functions from their mentors than protégés in formal mentoring relationships; there was no difference in receipt of psychosocial functions (Chao et al., 1992). Ragins and Cotton (1999) found similar results, with the exception that protégés with informal mentors reported more psychosocial support for four out of six identified psychosocial functions: friendship, social support, role modeling, and acceptance. Protégés in informal relationships also reported more satisfaction with their mentor and greater compensation than protégés with formal mentors (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Fagenson-Eland, Marks, and Amendola (1997) found that protégés in informal mentoring relationships reported greater
psychosocial functions and no difference in the amount of career functions received compared to protégés in formal mentoring relationships.

Mentors in formal mentoring relationships were more likely to report communicating less frequently with their protégés than mentors in informal relationships (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997). In a review of formal mentoring research in education, business, and medicine, the most frequently cited mentor outcomes were collegiality, reflection, professional development, and personal satisfaction (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004).

Common issues reported by both mentors and mentees in formal mentoring relationships were a lack of time and a mismatch between mentor and mentee (Ehrich et al., 2004).

One example of a formal mentoring program is known as “Grow Your Own.” These programs often use mentoring to develop teachers for promotion to administrative positions within the district. The Aspiring Leaders Academy in Ohio, a year-long leader preparation program in Ohio, uses mentoring as one of its core program components. The program provides opportunities for minority school leader candidates to learn more about school leadership and, upon completion of the Academy, enroll in a graduate program leading to principal licensure (Tracy & Weaver, 2000).

Principal protégés in formal mentoring programs like the reported greater feelings of competence and belonging in their new position, as well as the benefits of more effective collegial communication, coaching, and increased opportunities to put theory into practice (Daresh, 2004). Protégés describe feeling less isolated, especially if they are a beginning principal (Bush & Chew, 1999). The most frequently cited outcomes for mentees included
more support, counseling, and friendship, increased contact and discussion with others, and feedback. Like mentors, mentees also reported increased reflection and professional development (Ehrich et al., 2004).

Mentors who voluntarily participated in a formal mentoring program were more likely to describe their mentoring experience as rewarding, report improved job performance, and less likely to view the experience as burdensome than mentors who did not volunteer to participate in the program (Parise and Forret, 2008). The study also demonstrated the importance of perceived support for the program by senior management; mentors who believed that the program was supported by upper management were more likely to report a rewarding experience and greater job recognition (Parise and Forret, 2008).

Mentors are expected to provide two types of functions to their protégés: career and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1985). Career functions are intended to help the protégé develop the behaviors necessary for career advancement. These behaviors include increasing the protégé’s exposure and visibility, coaching, sponsoring, protecting, and challenging the protégé. Psychosocial functions stem from the relationship between the mentor and protégé and rely on a foundation of trust and respect. In serving a psychosocial function, the mentor helps to enhance the protégé’s personal growth by providing counsel and friendship and role modeling. McBurney (2015) identifies several roles a mentor may assume in a mentoring relationship:

- **Advisor**: The mentor offers advice based on experience.
• **Sponsor**: The mentor opens doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed.

• **Coach**: The mentor teaches and provides feedback while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing the mentee to stretch his or her capabilities.

• **Goal Focuser**: This includes helping the protégé create both short-and long-term goals and the plan to accomplish them.

• **Confidant**: Mentor and mentee share a confidential relationship, where the mentee is safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes.

• **Promoter**: The mentor steers the mentee into assignments that make him or her known to superiors.

• **Role Model**: The mentor demonstrates the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success.

• **Affirmer**: The mentor supports the mentee and shows respect and personal caring that goes beyond business requirements. (p. 257-258)

In order for a mentoring relationship to be successful and mutually beneficial to both mentor and protégé, they must both possess certain characteristics. Based on feedback from protégés, Hall (2008) found that good mentors do the following: ask probing questions; provide honest feedback; listen; analyze decisions; proposed alternative viewpoints; encourage independence; foster lifelong learning; and offer caring support. Good mentors are active listeners; set goals; build trust; encourage and inspire their
protégés; give feedback; open doors; instruct and develop protégés’ capabilities; and most importantly, develop protégés’ personal and professional potential (Lipscomb & An, 2010). Maloney (2012) states that it is critical for mentors to possess certain skills in order to be effective. They include confidentiality, trustworthiness, acceptance and respect for others, strong listening skills, time management (which allows the mentor to both be available and keep in touch), emotional intelligence (which includes self-awareness and self-control as well as awareness of the emotional makeup of others), role modeling, and the ability to keep learning about the mentoring process. (p. 211)

The mentor and protégé must both devote a significant amount of time and commitment to the development of a strong mentoring relationship (Maloney, 2012; McBurley, 2015). A good mentor is committed to his or her role as a mentor (Rowley, 1999). The correlation between time spent with a mentor and the resulting benefit to the protégé has been documented in research ranging from youth mentoring programs to adult professional mentoring programs (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Checking in regularly was often mentioned by new principals as an important support (Boerema, 2011).

Frequent and meaningful communication is integral to a successful relationship between the mentor and protégé. The mentor must also be a good listener (Bailey, 2010); according to McBurney (2015), active listening on the part of the mentor requires “truly listening with the intent to understand the other person’s perspective rather than listening with the intent of formulating one’s own response (p. 259). Listening and communication skills were the most frequently identified characteristics of an ideal mentor in a study by
Allen and Poteet (1999). Almost all of the principals interviewed by Boerema (2011) indicated that having someone who was willing to listen made them feel more supported in their first years as principal.

Results of a meta-analysis by Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, and Lima (2004) show that compared to non-mentored individuals, mentored individuals reported a greater number of promotions, compensation, salary growth, and job satisfaction. Using data from a longitudinal study on career development, Chao et al. (1992) reported similar results; protégés in informal and formal mentorships reported higher levels of organizational socialization and job satisfaction than non-mentored individuals, and protégés in informal mentorships reported the highest salaries. Mentored individuals were also more likely to report greater job and career satisfaction, career commitment, stronger intentions to stay with their current company, and to believe that they would advance in their career (Allen, Lentz, & Day, 2006; Baranik, Roling, & Eby, 2010). Protégés reported greater perceived organizational support – feeling as though their organization cares about them and their development – from receiving certain types of career and psychosocial mentoring functions (Baranik et al., 2010). It is important to note that both career and psychosocial mentoring were associated with these positive outcomes.

Mentors also benefit from a strong mentoring relationship. Mentors self-report that mentoring experiences help expand their support networks, result in greater self-satisfaction, and increase their visibility within the organization (Allen, Poteet & Burroughs, 1997). Like protégés, mentors also report greater job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2006). Mentors also report higher salaries,
receiving a greater number of promotions, and greater career success than non-mentors (Allen et al., 2006).

Mentoring has an extensive and influential history in the African American community, particularly in education. Pre-segregation, African American children's mentors were usually parents or extended family members (Ensher and Murphy, 1997). After desegregation, there were far fewer mentors available to African American children, as extended family members often moved away from each other and children more frequently interacted with White adults who were either unwilling or unable to mentor them (Brown & Beckett, 2007). Out of this vacuum came mentoring programs aimed at helping African Americans create more positive social and academic identities (Egalite, Kisida & Winters, 2015). Many of these programs paired African American youth with African American community leaders (Bailey, 2010).

Formal protégé and mentor pairings studied by Ensher and Murphy (1997) reported that protégés paired with a same-race mentor perceived more career-related support than protégés paired with different-race mentors. Mentors were also more likely to provide greater psychosocial support to same-race protégés than to different-race protégés.

Summary

The literature review examined a theme related to the achievement gap that exists among African American and other race students in the state of Minnesota and strategies for reducing that achievement gap. The second and third literature themes probed two of the strategies for addressing the achievement gap, role modeling and mentoring. Chapter III examines the methodological procedures employed in the conduct of the study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In a 2002 survey conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 66 percent of all responding principals indicated they would retire in the next 6-10 years (NAESP, 2004). In Minnesota, approximately 75 percent of principals reported that by 2010 they would either retire or leave their positions (Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). Educational Research Service (1998) – in surveying superintendents – reported a shortage of qualified principal candidates at all levels and in all types of communities. (p. 31)

The seemingly pervasive departure of administrators and, in particular, principals from the field of school administration through retirement or for other reasons in the United States would suggest real possibilities for enhanced job opportunities for minority school administrators, including those of African American background. Yet, despite the fact that the African American student population increased in Minnesota by 23.4 percent from 76,073 students in 2006-07 to 93,898 students in 2013-14, the number of African American school administrators grew by less than six positions (from 113.73 to 119.15) and, in fact, as a percentage of all Minnesota school administrators declined by one-tenth of one percent over the seven-year span of time from 2006-07 to 2013-14. While African American students represented 11.0 percent of Minnesota’s total school population in 2013-14, African American school administrators comprised only 4.1 percent of the Minnesota school administrators’ population in that same year (MDE).

This study was designed to examine the presence, types, and importance of mentoring experiences that were offered to/received by select Minnesota African American
principals, encouraging them to pursue advanced training for licensure in school administration and, then, seeking and securing a position as a school administrator.

**Research Questions**

The following are the primary questions of the study conducted during the fall of 2016:

1. Did select Minnesota African American school administrators receive mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position and, if so, from how many?
2. How important did select Minnesota African American administrators perceive the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?
3. What was the perceived quality of the mentoring that select Minnesota African American administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?
4. What types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators receive in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?
5. What mentorship advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American teachers who aspire to become school administrators?

**Research Design**

The research methodology employed in the study was a mixed method design. According to Roberts (2010), “qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study
complement each other by providing results with greater breadth and depth. Combining what with possible why adds power and richness to your explanation of the data” (p. 145).

The researcher gathered quantitative data from all responding members of the sample group, employing a Survey Monkey-based instrument. As stated by Haq (2014), “quantitative social research is about collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical methods to explain a phenomenon” (p. 5).

Further, the researcher gathered qualitative data from a small subset of the sample group to provide depth of understanding about the quantitative responses of sample group members, consistent with Slavin’s (2007) observation that “qualitative research seeks primarily to describe a situation,” yielding a “thick description of social settings…” (p. 8)

**Participants**

The study secured the participation of at least 50 African American administrators employed in Minnesota public school districts in Sterns, Olmstead, Ramsey and Hennepin counties during the 2016-17 school year.

The names of study participants were identified through the cooperation of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minneapolis Public Schools, the St. Paul Public Schools, and networking with active school superintendents.

The participant sample was a sample of convenience in that the largest number of African American school administrators were employed in Ramsey County, Hennepin County, Minneapolis, and St. Paul school districts at the time of the conduct of the study
and, further, the researcher’s employment location and residence was in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, providing ease of access to the sample members.

The criteria for selecting study participants were established as follows:

1. The race of the study participants was to be African American.
2. The study participants were to be active school administrators.
3. The study participants were to be licensed as public school administrators.

**Human Subject Approval**

Following completion of the preliminary examination and authorization by the doctoral committee, the researcher submitted a protocol application to St. Cloud State University’s Institutional Review Board to secure authorization for conducting research involving human subjects. Following authorization from the IRB, the researcher proceeded to undertake surveying study participants, having first distributed to study participants a copy of the study’s Survey Cover Letter.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The study proposed to employ two instruments for the purpose of data gathering. The first data collection instrument was a SurveyMonkey internet-based survey tool which was used to gather information, on-line, from study participants. The instrument included nineteen questions. Six of the survey instrument questions were focused on gathering demographic information about the participants. Eleven questions were formulated to secure information from study participants about whether or not they had been offered licensure and/or administrative job-related mentoring and, if so, the types of mentoring they received and the importance of the mentoring they received in pursuing licensure.
and/or an administrative position. One question solicited advice from participants to those who aspire to become school administrators and two questions related to volunteering for a follow up phone interview to expand on the survey responses.

It was estimated that the completion of the online data collection instrument by study participants would be 15 to 20 minutes. Results were obtained from the internet-based Survey Monkey program and compiled by the Center for Statistics at St. Cloud State University.

The second data collection instrument was comprised of an opportunity given to a subset of ten study respondents out of the 30 respondents who volunteered to expand on survey questions with the researcher in person. The ten respondents to be interviewed were selected based on their location and access for the researcher. The follow-up interviews sought from the study participants’ further specifics about the types, frequency, quality, and importance of the mentoring they had been offered by their mentors prior to their (the mentees’) pursuit of administrative licenses and securing administrative positions; further specifics, if any, of study participants’ current involvement in mentoring other prospective school administrators; and further specifics about advice that study participants would offer (or have offered) African American educators who aspired to become school assistant principals or principals.

Validity and reliability of the data collection instruments were established through an initial review by a panel of experts, comprised of two St. Cloud State University professors of educational administration and one superintendent of schools, all holding doctoral degrees in school administration. The Center for Statistics at St Cloud State University
prepared the survey, provided the informed consent agreement, and electronic survey link sent to participants by email.

Using two instruments in the research study was purposefully undertaken to enhance instrument validity through triangulation. Slavin (2007) defined triangulation as “…supporting conclusions using evidence from different sources” (p. 133). In summary, the researcher intended to achieve instrument validation through review by an expert panel, instrument field testing, and member checks, a verification of the researcher’s understanding of the feedback provided by respondents to ensure the researcher’s accuracy.

**Procedures and Timelines**

Following approval by the St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board for the researcher to proceed in data collection, the data collection process for the study was initiated in mid-October and concluded in the beginning of November 2016.

With the assistance of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minneapolis Public Schools, and the St. Paul Public Schools, the researcher secured email addresses of potential respondent Minnesota African American principals and assistant principals.

The researcher electronically mailed (emailed) potential study respondents a brief description of the study’s purpose and an invitation for participation in the study (Appendix A). Following agreement to participate by study respondents, the researcher distributed the SurveyMonkey instrument, requested respondents to complete their surveys and,
additionally if interested, to acknowledge their willingness to participate in a second facet of the study, a personalized face-to-face interview, by including on the survey form their name and telephone number (Appendix B).

One week following the distribution of the Survey Monkey instrument, the researcher distributed a first reminder email to study respondents which encouraged them to complete and transmit their survey instruments. A second reminder email was distributed to all study respondents one week after the first reminder email as final encouragement to respondents to complete and transmit their survey instruments.

**Data Analysis**

Following closure of the survey window, all responses from the Survey Money instrument were downloaded and the data was analyzed employing the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted. According to Knupfer and McLellan (1996), such statistics are important in education studies in that they reveal the human nature of the research. Frequency data was analyzed and compared to determine the prevalence, importance, quality, and type of mentoring received by study respondents; the type of mentoring offered by study respondents to mentees; and the demographics of those who mentored respondents (Appendix C).

Having employed the mixed method research design, the researcher augmented the Survey Monkey data with data secured from ten study respondents who agreed to individual interviews (Appendix D).
Summary

Chapter three provided the research methodology employed in the mixed method study, including an introduction, research questions, research design, participants, human subject approval, instrumentation and data collection, procedures and timeline, and data analysis.

Chapter four furnished the study’s findings, including data gathered through both quantitative and qualitative means.

Chapter five provided an introduction, discussion and conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for professional practice, and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 4 - Results

Introduction

There is a significant achievement gap in Minnesota between African American and non-African American students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). While the number of African American students in Minnesota has increased, the number of African American administrators has decreased (MDE 2007; MDE, 2014). It is essential that school districts employ effective strategies to raise the achievement of all students, especially African American students. One such proposed strategy is to provide access to greater numbers of African American school administrators to serve as role models and mentors for school-aged African American youth.

Research Questions

1. Did select Minnesota African American school administrators receive mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position and, if so, from how many?

2. How important did select Minnesota African American administrators perceive the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

3. What was the perceived quality of the mentoring that select Minnesota African American administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?
4. What types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators receive in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

5. What mentorship advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators?

In the conduct of the study, an electronic survey link was emailed to African American administrators who had earned an administrative license in Minnesota to collect quantitative data regarding whether or not the respondents had received mentoring, the numbers of mentors, the perceived importance of their mentoring, the perceived quality of the mentoring, and the type(s) of mentoring these administrators had received prior to earning their administrative licensure and prior to their having obtained their first administrative position.

The electronic survey link collected data from 58 respondents. The composition of the respondents was comprised of 64% males and 36% females who had held administrative positions ranging from 0 to 30 years of experience with an average of 9.2 years’ experience for all respondents. Prior to becoming school administrators, the respondents’ roles were as follows: teacher 47.2%, dean 20.8%, counselor 5.7%, other 22.6%, and not previously employed by a school 3.8%.

Additional qualitative data were collected from participants who volunteered to be interviewed during the electronic survey to expand on survey questions. Out of the 58 respondents on the electronic survey, 30 volunteered to be interviewed to expand on survey questions. The researcher selected 10 of the volunteers based on their location.
and access to the researcher and performed 10 interviews with 5 male and 5 female volunteers. The results of this mixed method study are presented below, with first the quantitative data from the electronic survey followed by the qualitative data from interviews. The data are presented in the order that they apply to the research questions stated above.

**Research Question One**

Did select Minnesota African American school administrators receive mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position and, if so, from how many?

To address the first question of this study, four survey questions were employed. Two of the survey questions addressed mentorship received before the respondents earned their administrative licensure, and the other two survey questions addressed mentorship the respondents received after earning their administrative licensure and pursuing their first administrative position.

In Table 1, the results on the pie chart depict that 47 out 58 respondents or 81.0% received mentorship before earning their administrative licensure.
During the interviews, four respondents chose to expand on the question of how many select Minnesota African American school administrators received mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure and, if so, how many people mentored them. Select interview data emphasized the importance of this mentoring to respondents in deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license. The interview data were as follows:

Yes, and without that encouragement from a mentor I don’t think I would have taken the time to pursue an administrative license. (Female #1)

I was in my second year of teaching and I had a teacher who, she was in the business 30 years, and she was in Minneapolis and they cut teachers. She had a special education license which was where I was in my 2nd year as a special
education teacher. She said she would not do regular education so a regular education teacher could get a job and then she became a special education teacher. So we ended up building a relationship because she was a first year special education teacher and then I was a new teacher overall. She was the one who initially encouraged me to go on to be a principal because she saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself. Because all of the paperwork and stuff that I helped her. But then there were incidences that the union had to get involved, and I would always go to her because I didn’t know what to do as a new teacher. So we are still friends, you know, 16 years later. She is retired as a teacher, but she is still my supporter. (Female #4)

The answer that I had was a very quick answer and that was yes. In elaboration, as I reflected on that question, as a person of color, a black male, it was extremely important for me to have a mentor that pushed me, supported me and guided me, not only through the administrative license program, but even prior to that, getting me prepared for what it would take not only complete the program, but then secure a job and move on in a career. One of the things that I noticed, is that there aren’t a lot of people of color that are pushing or reaching back I should say, to be that supportive mentor to other people of color to help them prior to even getting to the application for the license program. I think there is a mental piece that you have to be prepared in moving into administrative work in education. That preparation can’t and should not come while you are in the administrative program. It is not an easy leap professionally to move even higher in the ranks, and I think mentally you have to be prepared and have someone you can lean on even before you start the process. For me, I had mentors that were the same ethnicity and also mentors that I had a very good relationship with a different ethnic background, and what I found was moving past surface level and more emotional, and I’ll say questions or issues that could lead to vulnerability it was a lot easier to speak with those of same ethnic background. (Male #4)

Yes, many mentors, I was encouraged to pursue a license, often times from different races. I was strongly supported by mentors. They often opened doors and kept the belief in me so I would continue to work forward. (Male #5)

Table 2 reports that the majority of the 47 respondents who cited receiving encouragement by a mentor or mentors also reported having multiple mentors who encouraged them to pursue training to secure an administrative license. The respondents who reported having one mentor were 9 out of 47 or 19.1%, while respondents who
reported having two mentors were 16 out 47 or 34.0%, and respondents reported having three or more mentors were 22 out of 47 or 46.8%.

Table 2.

*Number of mentors reported by respondents in pursuit of administrative license.*

![Pie chart showing the number of mentors reported by respondents.](image)

During the interviews, three respondents expanded on the number of mentors they had in seeking their first administrative position and, if so, the number of individuals who mentored them. The data revealed how mentoring impacted the respondents’ decisions to pursue training to secure administrative licenses at various stages of the process. The responses were as follows:

I can think of 2 people who encouraged me to get a license, but more so to stick with it once I made the decision. (Female #3)

Because prior to becoming a school administrator, I was highly influenced by the people around me, specifically the administrator around me. It motivated me and encouraged me to pursue and secure my administrative license. (Female #5)
Prior to becoming a school administrator, for me only one mentor that encouraged me to become a principal or see myself as supervising others in that capacity. For me, some of the things that were similar in our relationships that got me thinking about being a principal, meeting people and doing what’s right by kids. Some of the common values that we share. A couple of sayings that I will say “Each one, Reach one, Teach one” “If I got, you got.” Those statements became natural for us, so it was a connection that showed me that I could become a good leader from that perspective. (Male #1).

Table 3.

*Percentage of respondents who were encouraged by a mentor to seek an administrative position.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 depicts the number of mentors who respondents reported had encouraged them to seek an administrative position after earning their license. The number of respondents who reported having one mentor totaled 4 or 7.8%, the respondents who reported having two mentors were 17 or 33.3%, and the respondents who reported having three or more mentors were 30 or 58.8%.
In summary, the percentage of Minnesota African American respondents who reported having received mentoring to pursue training to secure an administrative license was 47 out of 58 or 81.0%, while the percentage for respondents who reported receiving mentoring to seek their first administrative position increased to 53 out of 58 or 91.4%. The percentage of respondents who revealed having been mentored by two or more individuals in the pursuit of training to secure an administrative license was 38 out of 47 or 80.8%, while the percentage of respondents to report being mentored by two or more in seeking their first administrative position rose to 47 out of 51 or 92.1%.
Research Question Two

How important did select Minnesota African American administrators perceive the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

Initially the researcher inquired of the respondents the perceived importance of the mentorship they received before earning their administrative licensure. Subsequently, respondents were asked to cite the perceived importance of the mentorship they received after earning their administrative licensure and pursuing their first administrative position.

The perceived importance of having received mentorship before earning their administrative licensure was cited as very unimportant by 7 out 47 or 14.9%, while 2 out of 47 or 4.3% rated mentorship as fairly important. Respondents who believed mentorship was important totaled 15 out of 47 or 31.9% and those who cited mentorship as very important totaled 23 out of 47 or 48.9%. As such, 38 out of 47 or 80.8% of respondents perceived receiving mentoring as being important or very important to their having pursued an administrative licensure.

Table 5 depicts the perceived importance cited by respondents in pursuing training to secure administrative licensure.
During the interviews, three respondents expanded on the perceived importance of the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure. The participants’ responses illustrated the forms by which mentoring impacted their pursuit of administrative licensure. The interview data are as follows:

That question was very significant for me. I actually was able to see my mentor in a principal role which was - if he can do it, I can do it. I had that mentality. But he also worked with me as far as showing me that these are the steps that you have to do things, - it wasn't like throwing all of it on me at once, that I didn't have to know all of these things, I could learn gradually. That just showed that that being a principal was not out of reach for me. (Male #1)

It was very very important that I received those tools. If I am going to a place that someone has already been, I am always going to take their advice. Because they have been there. I'm trying to walk in their shoes - that was very important because you can't reinvent the wheel. There are things in place as an administrator that you have to do, but you can put your own twist on it as a leader. (Male #2)
I would not be in the position I am today without mentoring. The mentoring to me, if you tell people your dreams and goals, people often want to help you accomplish them. I wouldn’t be where I am today without mentoring and I still continue to get mentoring as I continue to grow. (Male #5)

When respondents were requested to state their perception of the importance of the mentorship they received after earning their administrative license and and before securing their first administrative position, 25 out of out of 52 or 48.1% stated that the mentorship was very important and 16 out of 52 or 30.8% was important. The respondents who believed mentorship was fairly important totaled 4 out of 52 or 7.7%.

Table 6 depicts the respondents perceived importance of the mentorship received in pursue a position as a school administrator.

Table 6.

*Perceived importance of mentoring received in seeking a position as a school administrator.*

![Perceived importance of mentoring received in seeking a position as a school administrator](image)
During the interviews, one respondent commented on their perceptions of the importance of the mentoring they received in seeking their first administrative position. The interview data are as follows:

I think mentoring is very important to pursuing of positions in school administration. If you don’t have a mentor, you don’t quite know how to go about doing it. You don’t know exactly how to get yourself there. I believe you should work on your weaknesses; you will always be weak at something, and no one is perfect at every level. I think people need to be honest about that. Administration is supposed to be a team, and sometime we don’t get that team effort that we need. You have to be good at everything. I think it hurts the school because I think there should be a variety of people in different levels of different expertise. And then we come together so our students can get the best education that they can get. So you do need to have mentors, and they don’t necessarily need to be in the same strength that you are in, but you do need them and it does make a difference. You move faster when you have people who really care about you, and you feel good - vested, that’s the word, they were vested in you. (Female #2)

In summary, the percentage of respondents who reported mentoring to have been fairly important, important and very important to them in pursuing training to secure an administrative license totaled 40 out of 47 or 85.1%, while the percentage of respondents reporting mentoring to have been fairly important, important and very important in seeking their first administrative position totaled 45 out of 52 or 86.6%. These findings were supported by the qualitative data collected during interviews of select respondents.

Research Question Three

What was the perceived quality of the mentoring that select Minnesota African American administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

Initially, the researcher inquired of the respondents their perceptions of the quality of the mentorship they received before earning their administrative licensure and,
subsequently their perceptions of the quality of the mentorship they received after earning their administrative licensure and pursuing their first administrative position.

Respondents who perceived that the perceived quality of the mentorship they received before earning their administrative licensure was excellent totaled 31 out of 47 or 66.0%, while 13 out of 47 or 27.7% reported the quality of their mentorship was good.

Table 7 depicts the respondents’ perceived quality of the mentorship received in pursuing training to secure an administrative license.

Table 7.

*Perceived quality of mentoring received in pursuing training to secure an administrative license.*

![Pie chart showing perceived quality of mentoring received in pursuing training to secure an administrative license.](chart.png)
Three respondents expanded on their perceptions of the quality of the mentoring that was be them in pursuing training to secure their administrative license. The interview data are as follows:

I realized the importance of the mentoring I had after the fact. When I got into my first administrative position and saw the areas I was well versed and skilled at and seeing where others in the same position were not. It just affirmed the quality of mentorship that I received. (Female #5)

I think whenever you receive any type of mentoring and quest for being able to get into something you’re interested in - particularly to become an administrator - I think the level of interaction, expertise and support really helps provide some clarity in where you may want to go and some depth in regards to making sure that this is the right direction that I want go to. And then also making sure that all my questions are answered because a lot of times when you are pursuing a different field or a position an administrative license or position, you want to make sure you have everything covered. It is important for me to receive high quality mentoring, and conversation so that you can have a very good viewpoint of what the job entails, and what your expectations are when you get your license. (Male #3)

The quality of mentoring I received was excellent. I have excellent leaders, people who were very specific along the lines of race, who were very specific about what they call “The Joe Clark Syndrome” how you are hired to deal with behavior, but you always have to continue transform as an instructional leader. And once you get there as an instructional leader, you have to continue to transform and to grow. (Male #5)

Respondents’ perceptions of the quality of the mentorship the obtained after earning their administrative licensure and first administrative position revealed that 4 out of 50 or 8.0% received average quality mentorship, 17 out of 50 or 34.0% received good quality mentorship and 29 out of 50 or 58.0% received excellent quality mentorship. No respondent reported the quality of mentorship they received was poor.

Table 8 depicts the respondents’ perceived quality of the mentorship received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator.
Table 8.

Perceived quality of mentoring received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator.

During the interviews, one respondent spoke about her perception of the quality of the mentorship they received in seeking their first administrative position. Their comment was follows:

The mentoring I received was definitely a 10. I don’t think it could be replicated. (Female #3)

In summary, the respondents who reported that the quality of mentoring received was good or excellent in pursuing training to secure an administrative license was 44 out of 47 or 93.7%, while the respondents who reported their mentoring was good or excellent in seeking their first administrative position was 46 out of 50 or 92.0%.
Research Question Four

What types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators receive in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?

Respondents were presented with a list of eight types or forms of mentoring roles. Initially, they were requested to record the type or types of mentoring the received prior to earning their administrative licensure. Subsequently, they were requested to record the type or types of mentoring they received after earning their administrative licensure and in the process of seeking their first administrative position.

The eight types of mentoring roles identified and defined by McBurney (2015) are listed below. Respondents were also provided an opportunity to enter a type of mentoring they experienced which was not included in the McBurney list. Participants were instructed to select all roles that applied to their mentoring experience.

- **Advisor**: The mentor offers advice based on experience.
- **Sponsor**: The mentor opens doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed.
- **Coach**: The mentor teaches and provides feedback while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing the mentee to stretch his or her capabilities.
- **Goal Focuser**: This includes helping the protégé create both short-and long-term goals and the plan to accomplish them.
• **Confidant**: Mentor and mentee share a confidential relationship, where the mentee is safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes.

• **Promoter**: The mentor steers the mentee into assignments that make him or her known to superiors.

• **Role Model**: The mentor demonstrates the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success.

• **Affirmer**: The mentor supports the mentee and shows respect and personal caring that goes beyond business requirements. (p. 257-258)

The bar graph illustrated that the most frequent mentorship roles that were provided to the 47 respondents were as follows: Advisor (42 or 89.4%); Role Model (37 or 78.7%); Confidant (35 or 74.5%); Affirmer (34 or 72.3%); and Coach (34 or 72.3%). Respondents reported Promoter (31 or 66.0%); Sponsor (22 or 68.0%); and Goal Focuser (16 or 34.0%) mentorship roles as least frequently received.
Eight respondents commented on the type or types of mentoring they received prior to becoming a licensed administrator. The interview data are as follows:

Coach and Goal Focuser - Helping me to create both what I wanted to do in the short term, and where I wanted to see my long term career to be headed in the educational system. (Female #1)

Prior to becoming licensed, I really was kind of coaching myself. I worked in two districts, I want to clarify that and verify that. I am currently in district, but I started at another district. I didn’t get the mentoring that I am getting here. So because of that, I want to talk about that a little bit because I think it makes a big difference. When I was in the other district, I was told I would be a good administrator, licensed person, but that was it. I had to go find my own mentors and stuff like that to get myself ready. And because of that reason I left that district and came to a different district so I could get the mentoring I needed. I even went for a job that was lower paying so I could get the skills that I needed to work my way up. (Female #2)
Most of those would fit my mentorship process as I decided to become an administrator, predominantly the sponsor. I feel like my mentor was able to give me experiences that I wouldn’t have had otherwise to get the knowledge that I needed to become an administrator. Confidant - I know that I felt comfortable talking about things as they would arise, that I hadn’t experiences before, hadn’t come across before and I was able to process through with my mentor. Affirmer - Constantly giving me the confidence to know that I am able to be an administrator. Work with my skills to build upon the skills that I needed to build upon. (Female #3)

That is an area that I didn’t really have any mentors; I had people encouraging me, but I was just going to school on my own. I would have been nice to have someone to connect to, that I could say what do you think about this or that so I could have get more experience. (Female #4)

Sponsor - my mentor opened doors for me, allowed others see me in a different light which that changed the conversation, instead of being looked upon as just security guard; they are looking at me more as an intellectual and professional. That piece as a mentor was great. Confident - There are things that I have learned through my mentor; there are certain things that I share in privacy, not everyone should hear your thoughts at all times. So you need to have someone that you can bounce things off of. Something that came across, a good rule of thumb has been the 2 hour, 4 hour, 24 hour, and 48 hour rule. That one needs to do the process before responding to certain situations. This has kept me from getting into trouble with my colleagues. Role Model and Affirmer - It is very important to be affirmed that I can do this job. I think that was one of the main points of my mentor. (Male #1)

I did receive a lot of mentoring from 3 different principals and a curriculum specialist, all African Americans, in a public school district. They did open doors for me, with formal and informal assessments, teaching me how to be social, how to work with parents, how to be an instructional leader. Coaching wise, I got tremendous feedback all the time. I’m the type of person who can take constructive criticism very positively to inform me on how I can get better. (Male #2)

All those different aspects are very important, and I think seeing and getting multiple perspectives are important, And again, high quality conversations, I remember when I was looking at my license, being able to talk to different people who all had different roles based on the relationship I had with them, really kind of factored into A - taking their feedback in the conversation, B- being able to utilize it in your best interest and make sure A- what school / licensure program do I want to get into, what’s their success rate and how do they support you as a student and how they facilitate that transition to get you into an administrative position (Male #3)
Advisors - I had a lot of advisors within my mentoring. Coaching - Coaching me in the belief that it can be done and will be done. Coaching was pretty significant. Goal focuser - There are a lot of programs out there that provide principal leadership and getting in the right program is essential and having a specific goal was essential as well. (Male #5)

The bar graph illustrates that the most frequent mentorship roles that were provided to the 50 respondents after they earned their administrative licensure and prior to securing their first administrative position were as follows: Advisor (46 or 88.5%); Affirmer (41 or 78.8%); Role Model (40 or 76.9%); and Coach (38 or 73.1%). Respondents reported Confidant (35 or 67.3%); Promoter (34 or 65.4%); Sponsor (26 or 52.0%); and Goal Focuser (8 or 34.6%).

Table 10.

*Types of mentoring received prior to securing a school administrative position.*
Two respondents commented on the type or types of mentoring they received in seeking their first administrative position. The interview data are as follows:

Sponsor - opening doors and introducing me to people who I can network with to further my long-term career goals. (Female #1)

A lot of time was spent; I used to get either a text message or phone call that said “I need you in the office, and I knew that meant I needed to stop doing what I was doing to get there. That time was valuable because I was brought into the office to participate, be exposed and experience meetings and different situations that I know I wouldn’t have gotten anywhere else. The kinds of situations that open your eyes to all facets of education. (Male #4)

In summary, the types of mentoring select Minnesota African American administrators received in securing their administrative licensure or in pursuing their first administrative position showed only a one-percentage point difference, except in the three mentorship roles or types of Confidant, Affirmer, and Sponsor when comparing respondents’ selections before receiving their administrative license to after receiving their administrative license. The percentage of respondents selecting Confidant as a type of mentoring they received declined from 35 out of 47 or 74.5% before receiving their administrative license to 35 out of 52 or 67.3% after receiving their license. The percentage of respondents selecting Affirmer as a type of mentoring they received increased from 34 out of 47 or 72.3% before receiving their administrative license to 41 out of 52 or 78.8% after receiving their license. Finally, the percentage of respondents selecting Sponsor as a type of mentoring they received increased from 22 out of 47 or 46.8% before receiving their administrative license to 26 out of 52 or 50.0% after receiving their license.
Research Question Five

What mentorship advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators?

Fifty-four of the 58 respondents or 93.1% offered advice to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators. The open-ended responses were analyzed and categorized by themes.

The advice offered by study respondents were categorized into three themes: “seeking a mentor”; “becoming a leader”; and ‘being true to self”. Respondents offered advice on “seeking a mentor” and “being true to self” equally at 22 or 40.7% each, while aspiring administrators were offered advice from 10 or 18.5% respondents on “becoming a leader”. A complete list of advice responses, sorted by theme, can be located in the appendix.

Table 11 depicts the respondents’ advice to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators by theme frequency.
The data collected that aligned to the question what advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators revealed that the theme ‘seek a mentor’ equaled the frequency of the theme ‘be true to self’ at 22 or 40.7% each. The theme ‘become a leader’ was significantly less at 10 or 18.5%.

Additional Demographic Data Collected

The researcher collected following demographic data from study respondents: total years the respondent had served as administrators; their gender; and the positions respondents held just prior to becoming school administrators. Demographic information was also collected to determine whether or not mentors had similar race/ethnicity to the
respondent, had similar gender to the respondent, and number of members of their staff
the respondents were currently mentoring.

Regarding the race/ethnicity of mentors, the 50 respondents who answered
reported that 4 or 8.0% of the time they never had a mentor who was the same
race/ethnicity, 18 or 36.0% reported that they sometimes did, 24 or 48.0% reported that
they mostly did, and 4 or 8% reported that they always had a mentor of the same
race/ethnicity.

Table 12 depicts the frequency of the mentor having similar race/ethnicity as the
respondent.

Table 12.

*Frequency of mentors having the same race/ethnicity as the respondent.*
During the interviews, ten respondents commented on the frequency with which their mentors were of the same race/ethnicity as their own. The interview data are as follows:

Never - not at all. (Female #1)

Not same nationality, ethnicity or culture, and like I said I went and found those mentors myself. No one was volunteering. They didn’t mind helping me when I asked, but no one that came and said let me help you. Here, my mentors are African American descent, Latino descent, and Caucasians. And we help each other. Just because someone is mentoring you, doesn’t mean that you don’t help them. I think people need to understand that, mentors need help too. I’m just saying but you help each other. So I think to be a good administrator you need to be open to all that. But you also have to remember that you have to be a mentor as well, when it is your turn. (Female #2)

Both mentors I spoke about have the same race that I do. (Female #3)

None of my mentors or advisors looked like me. They were all different races. That would have been something too. Because the experience might have been different. They were guiding me through their lenses. Even though the goals are for all kids, the experience to me, when we have dialogue, it’s a different experience. I think that the struggles that I go through being a person of color in a leadership position looks different than what it looks like for a Caucasian person. So it would have been nice. So I would say things to my mentors, and they would help guide me, but they knew the experience would be different. So they really couldn’t tell me how to navigate it, only through their lenses. My principal 2 years ago, Caucasian male, he created a position for me to keep me in the building. He was very conscious of me being a person of color, and just knowing that it looks different from when he leads that building than if I were to. He created it because he had an all-white staff, and he wanted to make sure he had other perspectives in his building. (Female #4)

Speaks to success that I have had, in my areas so far as an administrator, the mentor that I had happened to be a person of color, black, actually to be more specific, a black male was the mentor so that had huge benefits because of the population and demographics of our students we were serving and the students concentrating on to raise achievement. To change a lot of the data, a lot of the
behavior things. So there were things that he contributed to my learning largely because he was an African American male. (Female #5)

In my life, I have had several mentors, and they have always been black men. This latest mentor was a black male as well, that put me on the path to becoming a principal is a black male. That similarity actually enabled me to be affirmed it was okay to be who I am. That is because that this is tough business to be in, and you don’t always get affirmations from other individuals outside of your own little circle, your mentoring circle. So it is imperative that we stay together as black men and support each other because this business is tough. (Male #1)

All mentors were African American, 3 males and 1 female, very very supportive to pushing me into administration because they know that we need more people of color in this position to serve the students that are starting to flood the district. They need to see our faces. Know that there are people in these positions to know that they can be successful as well, and instead of just being athletes. Being able to give our kids motivation, a face to look at, give them something positive as they walk into the school each morning. Knowing that I have been in their shoes before. I can really help those kids. (Male #2)

For me, I had mentors that were the same ethnicity and also mentors that I had a very good relationship with a different ethnic background, and what I found was moving past surface level and more emotional, and I'll say questions or issues that could lead to vulnerability it was a lot easier to speak with those of same ethnic background. (Male #4)

Definitely different races. (Male #5)

Regarding the gender of the respondents’ mentors, 8 or 16.0% related their mentors were always of the same gender, while 4 or 8.0% responded that their mentors were never of the same gender. In excess of three in four respondents (38 or 76.0%) reported that they have had mentors of both genders.

Table 13 depicts the frequency of the mentor having similar gender as the respondent.
During the interviews, three respondents commented on the frequency with which mentors had the same gender as their gender. The interview data are as follows:

Never - not at all. (Female #1)

I am a woman of color. Most of my mentors have been males of color. For other people. It could look like something negative, for me it was an opportunity to balance out a situation and provide support in other areas, a different perspective, same but similar. Being mentored by a black male helped me understand a lot of things. And then also another benefit by being mentored by a black male and servicing children of color, is that you see the passion and the personal connections, and the motivation to make those personal connections. It is
something that you automatically culturally connect with, and it is something that the students that I’ve worked with automatically feel a sense of belonging, a sense of home. (Female #5)

Often different genders. (Male #5)

In response to the question how many members of your staff are you currently mentoring, the 50 respondents reported that 7 or 14.0% were mentoring 0, 24 or 48.0% were mentoring one to two, 9 or 18.0% were mentoring three to four, and 10 or 20.0% were mentoring 5 or more members of their staff.

Table 13 depicts the number of staff members the respondents are currently mentoring.

Table 14.

*Number of staff respondents are currently mentoring.*
During the interviews, one respondent expanded on the question related to the number of members of their staff you are currently mentoring. The interview response was as follows:

I am currently mentoring five to seven, probably seven people into the profession. As a school administrator, people come to you seeking mentoring, and it just continues to grow. (Male #5)

Summary

The analysis of the data collected in this mixed-method study revealed that select African American school administrators regarded mentorship as beneficial in both pursuing training to earn an administrative license and in seeking their first administrative position. The implication of these results for school districts with highly diverse populations and low diversity in school leadership and increasing the numbers of African Americans enrolling administrative licensure programs will be discussed in Chapter 5. Also, the implications of increasing African Americans in school leadership positions to provide role models and mentorship for African American students and its potential impact on their academic achievement will be discussed.
Chapter 5 - Discussion

Introduction

If school districts in Minnesota and throughout the United States are to address the achievement gap disparities that exist among African American and non-African American students, it would appear essential that educators employ multiple strategies that have been identified as meritorious in educating all students, particularly students of color. Providing access to greater numbers of African American school administrators – educators who can have influence on instruction in school districts – to furnish role modeling and mentoring have been suggested as effective strategies.

The purpose of the study was to identify those mentorship experiences that were supportive of a select group of African American administrators in pursuing and completing administrative licensure and securing administrative positions in K-12 school districts in the State of Minnesota. Once identified, mentorship experiences could be promoted in school districts and infused into administrative licensure programs as vehicles to increase the number of African American administrators and, as well, the number of African American role models and mentors for same-race students with the desired goal of increasing the academic progress of African American students and addressing the achievement gap.

The data collected, both quantitative and qualitative, supported the literatures’ claim that role modeling and mentoring are effective strategies for encouraging African Americans educators to pursue training to secure an administrative license and seek an administrative position. Trends that appeared visible in the data analysis were that the majority of the respondents had been mentored; mentorship was provided by more than
one person; the recipients of the mentoring experiences perceived them to be important and of high quality in pursuing training to secure their administrative licenses and in seeking their first administrative positions.

In the chapter, the data analysis will be explored further in relationship to the research questions, implications for further research, implications for theory, and implications for practice.

Discussion and Conclusions

The research confirmed that mentoring has an extensive and influential history in the African American community. In that same vein, protégés with same-race mentors perceived they received more career-related support than did those protégés paired with different-race mentors and were also more likely to provide greater psychosocial support to same-race protégés than to different-race protégés (Ensher and Murphy, 1997). These phenomena were reflected in multiple ways in the study.

The study involved the distribution of an electronic survey to 60 Minnesota African American school administrators from which 58 usable responses or 96.7% were secured. The survey response rate was significantly greater than the average for both internal and external surveys. Response rates for internal surveys generally average 30 to 40%, compared to an average response rate of 10 to 15% on external surveys. Response rates can exceed 85% when the respondent population is motivated and the survey is well-executed. (Frynear, 2015). Since there was no external incentive, such as prizes or rewards attached to the study survey, it is assumed the respondents were intrinsically motivated to initiate change in the educational system.
As a component of the survey, respondents were provided an opportunity to volunteer to be interviewed by the researcher to expand upon their survey responses. Thirty respondents (or 51.7%) volunteered to be interviewed which may have reflected the respondents’ desires to have their stories and experiences revealed to promote systemic change in education. This reflects the African American culture which values relationships and is verbally expressive. “An important participation incentive to survey respondents is that their opinions will be heard and that action will be taken based on their feedback. If respondents believe that participating in a survey will result in real improvements, response rates may increase, as will the quality of the feedback” (Fryrear, 2015).

**Research question #1: Did select Minnesota African American school administrators receive mentoring in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position and, if so, from how many?** The percentage of respondents reporting having received mentoring to pursue training to secure an administrative license was 81.0%, while the percentage of respondents who report receiving mentoring to seek their first administrative position increased to 91.4%. The percentage of respondents reported being mentored by two or more persons in the pursuit of training to secure an administrative license was 81.0%, while the percentage of respondents who reported being mentored by two or more persons in seeking their first administrative position rose to 92.1%.

Select statements offered during respondents’ interviews confirmed that they had been mentored:
“Yes, and without that encouragement from a mentor I don’t think I would have taken the time to pursue an administrative license.” (Female #1)

“She was the one who initially encouraged me to go on to be a principal because she saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself.” (Female #2)

“It was extremely important for me to have a mentor that pushed me, supported me and guided me, not only through the administrative license program, but even prior to that, getting me prepared for what it would take not only to complete the program, but then secure a job and move on in a career.” (Male #4)

“I can think of two people who encouraged me to get a license, but more so to stick with it once I made the decision.” (Female #3)

“Because prior to becoming a school administrator, I was highly influenced by the people around me, specifically the administrator around me. It motivated me and encouraged me to pursue and secure my administrative license.” (Female #5)

“For me only one mentor that encouraged me to become a principal or see myself as supervising others in that capacity. For me, some of the things that were similar in our relationships that got me thinking about being a principal, meeting people and doing what’s right by kids.” (Male #1)

**Research question #2: How important did select Minnesota African American administrators perceive the mentoring they received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?** The percentage of respondents reporting mentoring to have been fairly important, important and very important in pursuing training to secure an administrative license was 85.1%, while the
percentage of respondents reporting mentoring to have been fairly important, important and very important in seeking their first administrative position was 86.6%.

These quantitative data were supported by the qualitative data collected during select respondent, as follows:

“I would not be in the position I am today without mentoring. The mentoring to me, if you tell people your dreams and goals, people often want to help you accomplish them. I wouldn’t be where I am today without mentoring and I still continue to get mentoring as I continue to grow.” (Male #5)

“It was very very important that I received those tools. If I am going to a place that someone has already been, I am always going to take their advice. Because they have been there. I’m trying to walk in their shoes - that was very important because you can’t reinvent the wheel; there are things in place as an administrator that you have to do, but you can put your own twist on it as a leader.” (Male #2)

“I actually was able to see my mentor in a principal role which was - if he can do it, I can do it. I had that mentality. But he also worked with me as far as showing me that these are the steps that you have to do things. It wasn’t like throwing all of it on me at once, that I didn’t have to know all of these things, I could learn gradually. That just showed that that being a principal was not out of reach for me.” (Male #1)

A statement collected in the interview from a respondent, who was not mentored, also illustrated its importance. Female respondent #2 said, “Prior to becoming licensed, I really was kind of coaching myself. I was told I would be a good administrator, licensed person, but that was it. Because of that reason, I left that district and went to a different
district so I could get the mentoring I needed. I even went for a job that was lower paying, so I could get the skills that I needed to work my way up.” This statement significantly highlighted the need and desire to have mentoring when securing an administrative license and seeking an administrative position.

**Research question #3: What was the perceived quality of the mentoring that select Minnesota African American administrators received in pursuing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?** The percentage of respondents reporting the quality of mentoring received to have been good or excellent in pursuing training to secure an administrative license was 93.7%, while the percentage of respondents reporting mentoring to have been good or excellent in seeking their first administrative position was 92.0%.

The quantitative data were supported by qualitative data collected in interviews with respondents’ statements as follows:

“I realized the importance of the mentoring I had after the fact. When I got into my first administrative position and saw the areas I was well versed and skilled at and seeing where others in the same position were not. It just affirmed the quality of mentorship that I received.” (Female #5)

“It is important for me to receive high quality mentoring, and conversation so that you can have a very good viewpoint of what the job entails and what your expectations are when you get your license.” (Male #3)

“I have excellent leaders, people who were very specific along the lines of race, who were very specific about what they call “The Joe Clark Syndrome”, how you are hired
to deal with behavior, but you always have to continue transform as an instructional leader. And once you get there as an instructional leader, you have to continue to transform and to grow.” (Male #5)

Collectively, the quantitative data from the survey and the qualitative data from the interviews with respondents related to the first three research questions reflected the cultural history and importance of mentoring within the African American community. Additional support for this phenomenon was verified when survey participants reported that 86.0% of them were actively mentoring at least one person on their staff, while 38.0% of them reported mentoring three or more members of their staff. The data supported the research which asserted that protégés received more career-related functions from their mentors than in formal mentoring relationships (Chao et al., 1992), that informal mentors reported providing greater psychosocial support to protégés in the following psychosocial functions: friendship, social support, role modeling, and acceptance. Respondents also reported more satisfaction with their informal mentors and greater compensation than protégés experienced with formal mentors (Ragins & Cotton, 1999)

**Research question #4: What types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators receive in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position?** Respondents were provided a list of identified roles from which they were to identify the types of mentoring did select Minnesota African American administrators received in securing their administrative licensure or their first administrative position. Respondents also were provided the option to report a form of
mentoring they received which was not listed on the survey instrument. Participants were instructed to choose as many types of mentoring roles as applied to them.

Among the eight mentorship roles ranked by respondents, 42 out of 47 or 89.4% cited Advisor as the most frequently received mentoring in the pursuit of administrative licensure. The second and third most frequently identified roles were Role Model at 37 out of 42 or 78.7% and Confident at 35 out of 42 or 74.5%. The most frequently cited mentoring received after earning their administrative licensure and prior to securing their first administrative position was Advisor at 46 out of 50 or 88.5%. The second and third most identified mentoring roles for this group were Affirmer at 41 out of 50 or 78.8% and Role Model at 40 out of 50 or 76.9%.

The results showed only a one-percentage point difference, except in three categories when comparing before the types of mentoring receiving while pursuing their administrative license to after receiving their administrative license. The percentage of respondents selecting Confidant as a type of mentoring they received declined from 74.5% before receiving their administrative license to 67.3% after receiving their license. The percentage of respondents selecting Affirmer as a type of mentoring they received increased from 72.3% before receiving their administrative license to 78.8% after receiving their license. Also, the percentage of respondents selecting Sponsor as a type of mentoring they received increased from 46.8% before receiving their administrative license to 50.0% after receiving their license.

In responding to the question correlating types of mentoring they received before securing their administrative license, the 47 respondents chose 251 types. In responding
to the question of the types of mentoring they received in seeking their first administrative, the 52 respondents selected 278 types. In both sets of data collected, an average 5.3 different types of mentoring were reported per respondent. This average supports that most of the respondents were mentored by one than one person and that each mentor served multiple roles during the experience.

The interview data revealed that participants experienced multiple types of mentoring from each mentor and that the mentoring relationships remain in place many years later.

Respondents’ interview statements provided insights about the mentoring roles provided by mentors as follows:

“Coach and Goal Focuser - Helping me to create both what I wanted to do in the short term, and where I wanted to see my long term career be headed in the educational system” (Female #1)

“Most of those would fit my mentorship process as I decided to become an administrator; predominantly the sponsor who was able to give me experiences that I wouldn’t have had otherwise to get the knowledge that I needed to become an administrator. Confidant as I knew that I felt comfortable talking about things as they would arise, that I hadn’t experienced before, hadn’t come across before and I was able to process through with my mentor. Affirmer who constantly was giving me the confidence to know that I am able to be an administrator and work with my skills to build upon the skills that I needed to build upon” (Female #3)
“I had a lot of advisors within my mentoring. Coaching me in the belief that it can be done and will be done. Coaching was pretty significant. Also, goal focuser. There are a lot programs out there that provide principal leadership and getting in the right program is essential and having a specific goal was essential as well. I wouldn’t be where I am today without mentoring and I still continue to get mentoring as I continue to grow,” (Male #5)

“So we are still friends, you know, 16 years later. She is retired as a teacher but she is still my supporter.” (Female #4)

Also when respondents who were interviewed spoke about their mentors, they used present tense. This affirmed for the researcher that those mentoring relationships were still continuing.

**Research question #5: What mentorship advice did select Minnesota African American administrators offer to African American educators who aspire to become school administrators?** The research question was open-ended and provided respondents with an opportunity to offer mentorship advice to African American educators who aspire to become administrators. The results were analyzed and categorized into the themes of ‘seeking a mentor’, ‘becoming a leader’ and ‘being true to self’. The percentage of advice responses that aligned with the theme of ‘seeking a mentor’ was 40.7%. The percentage of advice responses that aligned with the theme of ‘becoming a leader’ was 18.5%. The percentage of advice responses that aligned with the theme of ‘being true to self’ was 40.7%.

The high percentage of advice related to “seeking a mentor” supported the importance of mentorship for African Americans who earned their administrative license
and, subsequently, secured an administrative position. The number of responses that were aligned with the theme of “being true to self” suggested to the researcher that African American administrators may be assigned roles, responsibilities or directives that were contrary to their cultural and personal beliefs. In the commentary provided by the interviewees, and supported by the opinion of the researcher, it could be possible that African American administrators are instructed to complete assignments which may have caused a significant imbalance within their Moral Imperative and perpetuated the systematic racism in educational environments that they were striving to eliminate.

The last recurring theme of “becoming a leader” reiterated the importance of becoming actively engaged in committees that are focused on increasing the academic rigor and strategies being delivered in classrooms and being viewed as an effective, informed instructional leader who is dedicated to increasing the achievement of all students.

**Limitations**

The limitation of this study align with the locationality and sample size.

1. This study was conducted with African American who held administrative licenses in Minnesota, primarily in the Minneapolis / St. Paul metropolitan area. As a result of data having been gathered from urban and suburban Minneapolis and St. Paul, the findings may not be generalizable to African American school administrators throughout the state of Minnesota.

2. The numbers of male respondents in the study exceeded by two-fold the number of female respondents. As a result of the mix of respondents, the
findings may not be generalizable to female African American school
administrators throughout the state of Minnesota.

Recommendations

After analysis of the quantitative frequency data and the qualitative interview data, the researcher offers the following recommendations based on the illustrated trends.

- Departments of Education throughout the United States, universities, school districts and current administrators are encouraged to collaboratively design quality systematic and intentional mentorship opportunities for African American educators in order to enhance their responsibilities in academic leadership and exposure to the role of administration. This may be accomplished by making a concerted effort to ensure the affordability and accessibility of school administrator licensure programs.

- Creation of well-planned and designed networks of educators, those pursuing their administrative licensure and those currently licensed as administrators within the African American community may encourage aspiring African American educators to pursue licensure for and positions in school administration.

- Greater articulation of the academic and achievement benefits of providing like-race role models and mentors to African American students should be conveyed to legislative policymakers to assist in understand the importance of these methodologies in addressing and eliminating the achievement gap.
• Greater outreach to school districts and the surrounding business communities is encouraged to provide like-race role models beyond the confines of the school and school district to African American students on the abundance of career possibilities and opportunities available to them.

The study’s findings may impact the work of educational foundations, teacher preparation programs, and administrative licensure programs.

• As educational foundations are discussing programs and initiatives that would encourage more African Americans and other ethnic groups to consider education as their career choice, the findings suggest that increasing the opportunities for effective mentorship relationships would be an excellent investment.

• The findings suggest that the roles, responsibilities and directives African American administrators are given at times create significant discourse within their Moral Imperative and cultural beliefs, perpetuating rather than eliminating educational systemic racism.

• As school boards are establishing policies and setting budgetary priorities, it is suggested they consider placing a greater emphasis on encouraging African Americans staff members to pursue and obtain administrative licenses as a strategy for improving the academic achievement of their diverse student population.
• It is suggested school boards review policies that negate or prohibit the likelihood of the district’s African American educators from being promoted to academic and instructional leadership positions.

Further Research

Given the findings of the research and its potential for contributing to the literature, the following future research studies are suggested:

• Undertake a study investigating methodologies for exposing African American educators to systematic mentoring and intentionality in seeking quality mentorship.

• Undertake a study exploring the differences in mentoring experiences by gender as African Americans rise to the ranks of administration.

• Undertake a study to assess the effectiveness of district programs paralleling “Grow Your Own” philosophies to encourage and mentor African Americans to secure their administrative licenses.

• Undertake a study to examine the phenomenon of the “Joe Clark Syndrome” where African American administrators are hired to ‘clean-up the problems” and deal specifically with unwanted behaviors rather than to be instructional leaders.

• Undertake a study to examine the relationship between a diverse administrative team and the academic achievement of students of color.
● Undertake a study to examine the benefits of mentoring ethnic groups represented within school populations to build administrative teams that truly reflect the diversity of the students served.

● Undertake a study focused on how intentional inclusion of Critical Race Theory and the Moral Imperative in administrative licensure programs and as training for current administrators could strengthen the administrative experience, not only for African Americans, but for all ethnic groups seeking to improve the educational culture and achievement for all students.

● Undertake a study focused on the unique challenges of being a woman of color in administration to understand the phenomenon that two-thirds of the respondents were male.

● Undertake a study that focuses on investigating what role the 22.7% of respondents that selected ‘other’ held within the school before becoming licensed administrators.

Summary

In this mixed method study, both the quantitative frequency analysis and the qualitative interview data was supported by the literature review and reinforced that the majority of African American administrators in Minnesota had been mentored and that mentoring was an important factor for the participants in securing training to earn an administrative license and in securing a position a school administrator. It illustrated through the advice provided by survey participants that being an African American administrator in an environment that is not only unkind to African American children, but
damaging to their sense of self, can be a very daunting task. This causes a rift between their cultural beliefs and the professional responsibilities they must perform. This imbalance of their Moral Imperative causes great discomfort and job dissatisfaction that can be explored with the guidance of a same-race mentor.

For the ranks of African American administrators to increase with any significant numbers, several changes must occur. First, the role of mentorship within African American culture should be honored and encouraged in the profession of education. Second, the due to the suggested imbalance caused in African American administrators’ Moral Imperative and cultural beliefs, the professional responsibilities they are assigned should be addressed to increase job satisfaction and decrease the systemic racism with the educational system. Finally, if the closure of the achievement gap is to be realized, all educational training programs should include the study of Critical Race Theory, Cultural Beliefs, and the Moral Imperative.
References


Duncan, A.  (2010, June). *Changing the HBCU narrative: From corrective action to creative investment*. Remarks by Secretary Arne Duncan at the HBCU symposium at the North Carolina Central University Centennial, Durham, NC.


Ensher, E. A. & Murphy, S. E.  (1997). Effects of race, gender, perceived similarity, and
contact on mentor relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 50*, 460-481. doi:10.1006/jvbe.1996.1547


doi:10.1177/0013124514529155


program design and support to mentors’ perceptions of benefits and costs.


Peterson, E. R., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers’ explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement: Relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. *Learning and Instruction, 42*, 123-140. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.010


doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2005.08.001


doi:10.1080/00098655.2010.511308


doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2008.11.004


doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.08.009
Appendix A

June 1, 2016
Dear Colleagues:
I would like to enlist your help. I am a doctoral student at St. Cloud State University. I am conducting a survey on the role that mentorship played in African American educators pursuing an administrative license and securing their first administrative position.
This survey is designed to examine the presence, types, and importance of mentoring experiences that were offered to or received by select Minnesota African American administrators, encouraging them to pursue advanced training or licensure in school administration, and then, seeking and securing a position as a school administrator.
The survey should only take about 5 -10 minutes of your time. Your answers are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Only group results will be presented or documented, not individual answers unless you volunteer to take part in the additional phone interview to expand upon the answers given on the survey. Your help with this research is strictly voluntary. Data will be presented in aggregate form with no more than one or two descriptors presented together. You do not have to answer any questions you don’t that you are not comfortable answering. There are no inherent risks to participating in the study. The benefit would be to identify if mentorship can be promoted as a way to increase the African American population in leadership roles in educational settings, therefore providing role models for African American students. Submission of a completed survey will indicate your consent to participate in this study.
The results of this survey will be presented publicly at St. Cloud State University. If you would like a copy of the study results, you will have an opportunity to make that request once the survey is completed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (763) 504-8025, michael_favor@rdale.org. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Roger Worner, at (320) 308-4265, rbworner@stcloudstate.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact St. Cloud State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (320)308-3290 or ri@stcloudstate.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michael Favor
Student Researcher
Appendix B

Informed Consent

Procedures
The research project is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Administration and Leadership through St Cloud State University. The survey should only take about 5 -10 minutes of your time.

Research Use and Results
The survey is designed to examine the presence, types, and importance of mentoring experiences that were offered to or received by select Minnesota African American administrators, encouraging them to pursue advanced training or licensure in school administration, and then, seeking and securing a position as a school administrator.

Benefit
To identify if mentorship can be promoted as a way to increase the African American population in leadership roles in educational settings, therefore providing role models for African American students.

Contact Information
The results of this survey will be presented publicly at St. Cloud State University. If you would like a copy of the study results, you will have an opportunity to make that request once the survey is completed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Michael Favor at (763) 504-8025, michael_favor@rdale.org. You may also contact the faculty advisor, Roger Worner, at (320) 308-4265, rbworner@stcloudstate.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact St. Cloud State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (320) 308-3290 or ri@stcloudstate.edu.

Confidentiality
The confidentiality of the information gathered during your participation in this study will be maintained. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. Only group results will be presented or documented, not individual answers unless you volunteer to take part in the additional phone interview to expand upon the answers given on the survey. The results of the study will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept on a password protected computer. Your help with this research is strictly voluntary.
Risk
There are no serious risks associated with this evaluation/research study. I will carefully maintain the confidentiality of your responses and will not release any information that would allow any individual to be identified.

1. I agree to participate in this study having read and understood the above consent form.
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal
Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason.

* 2. Prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to pursue training **to secure an administrative license**?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

3. Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue training **to secure an administrative license**?
   1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 or more [ ]

4. How important was the mentoring you received to your deciding to pursue training **to secure an administrative license**?
   Very Unimportant [ ] Unimportant [ ] Fairly Important [ ] Important [ ] Very Important [ ]

5. **Prior to becoming licensed** as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)
   Advisor: the mentor offered advice based on experience
   Sponsor: the mentor opened doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed
   Coach: the mentor taught me and provided feedback to me while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing to stretch my capabilities
   Goal Focuser: the mentor helped me to create both short- and long-term goals and plan to accomplish them
   Other (please specify):
   Confidant: the mentor and I shared a confidential relationship, where I felt safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes
   Promoter: the mentor steered me into assignments that made me known to superiors
   Role Model: the mentor demonstrated the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success
   Affirmer: the mentor supported me and showed respect and personal caring to me that goes beyond business requirements
6. Please rate the quality of the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

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<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* 7. After receiving your administrative license but prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to seek an administrative position?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

8. Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue a position as a school administrator?

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3 or more

9. How important was the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator?

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<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. Prior to securing your school administrator position, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

- **Advisor**: the mentor offered advice based on experience
- **Sponsor**: the mentor opened doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed
- **Coach**: the mentor taught me and provided feedback to me while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing to stretch my capabilities
- **Goal Focuser**: the mentor helped me to create both short-and long-term goals and plan to accomplish them
- **Confidant**: the mentor and I shared a confidential relationship, where I felt safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes
- **Promoter**: the mentor steered me into assignments that made me known to superiors
- **Role Model**: the mentor demonstrated the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success
- **Affirmer**: the mentor supported me and showed respect and personal caring to me that goes beyond business requirements

Other (please specify):
11. Please rate the quality of the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. How often did your mentors have similar race/ethnicity to you?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always

13. How often did your mentors have similar gender to you?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always

14. How many members of your staff are you currently mentoring?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

15. What mentorship advice would you offer to African American educators who are aspiring to become school administrators?

16. How many (total) years have you served as a school administrator?

17. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

18. Just prior to becoming a school administrator, which position did you hold in the school district?

- Teacher
- Counselor
- Dean
- Other
- None; not employed in the school district

If you are willing to be contacted for a brief phone interview to expand on the answers given on this survey, please click on the link below.

Interview Link

Thank you for participating in the survey.
Appendix C

*Frequencies of all variables, 8-17-2016.
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Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue training to secure an administrative license?  

How important was the mentoring you received to your deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?  

Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? 

(Please select all that apply)  

Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? 

(Please select all that apply)  

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### Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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How many (total) years have you served as a school administrator?

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### Frequency Table

Prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

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Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

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How important was the mentoring you received to your deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

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Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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Other (please specify):

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<td>Encouraged me that, as a teacher and leader, I had so much more to offer all students, just not the ones in my classroom (I was reluctant to pursue a school administrator role, wanted to stay in the classroom).</td>
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Please rate the quality of the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

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After receiving your administrative license but prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to seek an administrative position?

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Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue a position as a school administrator?

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How important was the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator?

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Prior to securing your school administrator position, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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Prior to securing your school administrator position, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply)

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How many members of your staff are you currently mentoring?

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What mentorship advice would you offer to African American educators who are aspiring to become school administrators?

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1) Door is open 2) Must be better than others 3) Talk with person in position that you are interested 4) you CAN do it
Actively seek and maintain mentors in your career.
Ask question-not having the answer is a part of the process
Attention to detail, stay the course and stay focused on your goals. Never allow negative thoughts to creap into your mind from those who really dont want you to succeed.
Be honest about what it takes to succeed in a diverse society.  
Be intentional and deliberate in connecting your networks.  
Be persistent, real and don't let anyone steal your joy.  
Be true to yourself. Understand your moral imperative. Seek advice from another Black Leader and don't be afraid to asked for help!  
become the expert in your field, (know your stuff)!  
Become well rounded.  
Believe in yourself, speak your truth and recognize the impact you can have on others.  
Develop relationships with decision makers and take advantage off opportunities (district level teams, committees, etc) so that you can get your name out there. I would also encourage leaders not to be afraid to leave the district they are currently working in to pursue opportunities in other districts. I have learned that sometimes you have to leave in order to get the experience that is needed.  
Education is very political and can be discouraging at time; remember why you are here. Do what's best for kids and make a difference!  
Find a great support system of African American educators and leaders. Remember not to lose your family while gaining your leadership!  
Find allies to help you open doors and learn the system.  
Find an "inner circle" in order to have real and safe conversations.  
Find an advocate and don't take shortcuts - twice as good to get 1/2 as much  
find someone who will be honest and support you in your administrative pursuit.  
Find that person that you fell you can trust and respect and if they can be the same ethnicity as you that would be great. I fell the most important thing is that you have a trusting friendship.  
Follow your dreams - always put students first when making decisions - tell positive things about your school  
Get involved with many departmets within the school and find a great mentor that will support to.  
Have a mentor that has success as an administrator  
Have informal interviews with people who are currently administrators and be clearly focused on
Having a mentor to talk with and provide encouragement is beneficial in this career.

I am cautious in sharing general advice as I believe that the advice should be specific to the individual candidate. However, if I had to share one specific tip it would be related to developing a clear mission (personal/professional purpose) as to why you want to pursue educational leadership. As an African-American educator, I have to be anchored in my personal and professional purpose when leading in a variety of roles and responsibilities.

I have a couple former colleagues that are looking to create change on a larger scale. We talk regularly, I provide feedback, insight and listen to any concerns they may have about current situations (Mainly SPPS employees that I have worked with in previous positions).

I would advise mentees to learn the political aspect of the job. There are lots of roadblocks that Black principals need to navigate.

I would advise them to find a couple of people that they could talk to about being an administrator. What are the areas that they should focus on in order to be successful. I would also tell them to find people with different perspectives so they get different ways of looking at a situation (multiple perspectives).

I would recommend seeking out a practicing and respected administrator to mentor you.

I would tell AA educators to stay the course. Grit and perseverance will make all the difference in whether you reach your goal or not.

Keep students at the center of what you do while being authentic and true to self. Learning is a life-long process. Surround yourself with people who you can learn from and model the skills you want to exhibit.

Know thyself and if you are to air, always air on the side of what is right for kids.

Know yourself; Know your purpose.

Lead by example and make sure that you are thorough in your work.

Listen, be patient and persistent. You may not get what you want immediately but it comes.

Networking is important. Try to apply the things you learn in class to your job as soon as possible.
never give up your dream because there will be a lot of rejections before a
yes.
One needs to know that everyone's voice is important in educational
conversations.
Persevere through all of the B.S. that the process brings and remember the
kids that you will make a difference for as your motivation.
Personally, I would advise African American educators to pursue
administration because our students need to see more of us leading
schools. Also, as administrators, we are in position to actually be
courageous and make necessary changes to a system that was not built for
African American students.
Rely on your faith and intuition! Don't measure someone else's promotion
by your yardstick. Your time will come.
Seek out a mentor. Find and seek out other af/am educators in adm
positions.
seek out mentorship from a cross sectional of educators
Seek those who have been able to succeed in education
Set down with someone and discuss the program and then if decided you
wanted to be a administrator. Come up with a plan
Set short term and long term goals. Stay focused on obtaining your license,
then take time to reflect on where and in what position you want to use your
administrative license. Make connections with successful administrators
already on the job. Take advantage of opportunities to gain administrative
experience.
Stay true to yourself, you do not have to have the same ideas and ways of
accomplishing closing the belief gap
The children need more people that look like them in an educational setting.
The work is worth your investment to make school better for all students.
You can make a difference if you put your heart into it.
Understand that no matter where they choose to work; race will always be a
factor until you can demonstrate credibility in the eyes of school systems that
made up of mostly white educator. Stay true to yourself and you will be fine.
Actively seek out a mentor of color.
Volunteer and become a part of the Instructional Leadership Team, and
other vital comitees that are associated with school operations and
infrastructue.
You belong in leadership roles and to mentor others along the way. Also others will learn from you and your leadership.

You do not have to do this alone there's a network of people who are willing to share and help you attain the goals that you were trying to reach.

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### Just prior to becoming a school administrator, which position did you hold in the school district?

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Appendix D

Interview Data by Question

1. Prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to pursue training **to secure an administrative license**?

   #1 - Yes, and without that encouragement from a mentor I don’t think I would have taken the time to pursue an administrative license. (Female #1)

   #1 - I was in my second year of teaching and I had a teacher who, she was in the business 30 years, and she was in Minneapolis and they cut teachers. She had a special education license which was where I was in my 2nd year as a special education teacher. She said she would not do regular education so a regular education teacher could get a job and then she became a special education teacher. So we ended up building a relationship because she was a first year special education teacher and then I was a new teacher overall. She was the one who initially encouraged me to go on to be a principal because she saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. Because all of the paperwork and stuff that I helped her. But then there were incidences that the union had to get involved, and I would always go to her because I didn’t know what to do as a new teacher. So we are still friends, you know, 16 years later. She is retired as a teacher but she is still my supporter. (Female #4)

   #1 - The answer that I had was a very quick answer and that was yes. In elaboration, as I reflected on that question, as a person of color, a black male, it was extremely important for me to have a mentor that pushed me, supported me and guided me, not only through the administrative license program, but even prior to that, getting me prepared for what it would take not only complete the program, but then secure a job and move on in a career. One of the things that I noticed, is that there aren’t a lot of people of color that are pushing or reaching back I should say, to be that supportive mentor to other people of color to help them prior to even getting to the application for the license program. I think there is a mental piece, that you have to be prepared in moving into administrative work in education. That preparation can’t and should not come while you are in the administrative program. It is not an easy leap professionally to move even higher in the ranks and I think mentally you have to be prepared and have someone you can lean on even before you start the process. For me, I had mentors that were the same ethnicity and also mentors that I had a very good relationship with a different ethnic background, and what I found was moving past surface level and more emotional, and I’ll say questions or issues that could lead to vulnerability it was a lot easier to speak with those of same ethnic background. (Male #4)

   #1 - Yes, many mentors, I was encouraged to pursue a license, often times from different races. I was strongly supported by mentors. They often opened doors and kept the belief in me so I would continue to work forward (AA Male #5)
2. Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

#2 - I can think of 2 people who encouraged me to get a license, but more so to stick with it once I made the decision. (Female #3)

#2 - Because prior to becoming a school administrator, I was highly influenced by the people around me, specifically the administrator around me. It motivated me and encouraged me to pursue and secure my administrative license. (Female #5)

#2 - Prior to becoming a school admin, for me only 1 mentor that encouraged me to become a principal or see myself as supervising others in that capacity. For me, some of the things that were similar in our relationships that got me thinking about being a principal, meeting people and doing what’s right by kids. Some of the common values that we share. A couple of sayings that I will say “Each one, Reach one, Teach one” “If I got, you got.” Those statements became natural for us, so it was a connection that showed me that I could become a good leader from that perspective. (Male#1)

3. How important was the mentoring you received to your deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?

#3 - That question was very significant for me. I actually was able to see my mentor in a principal role which was - if he can do it, I can do it. I had that mentality. But he also worked with me as far as showing me that these are the steps that you have to do things, - it wasn’t like throwing all of it on me at once, that I didn’t have to know all of these things, I could learn gradually. That just showed that that being a principal was not out of reach for me. (Male #1)

#3 to pursue admin position - It was very very important that I received those tools. If I am going to a place that someone has already been, I am always going to take their advice. Because they have been there. I’m trying to walk in their shoes - that was very important because you can’t reinvent the wheel. There are things in place as an administrator that you have to do, but you can put your own twist on it as a leader. (Male #2)

#3 - I would not be in the position I am today without mentoring. The mentoring to me, if you tell people your dreams and goals, people often want to help you accomplish them. I wouldn’t be where I am today without mentoring and I still continue to get mentoring as I continue to grow. (Male #5)

4. Please rate the quality of the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue training to secure an administrative license?
#4 - I realized the importance of the mentoring I had after the fact. When I got into my first administrative position and saw the areas I was well versed and skilled at and seeing where others in the same position were not. It just affirmed the quality of mentorship that I received. (Female #5)

#4 - In looking at question #4, I think whenever you receive any type of mentoring and quest for being able to get into something you’re interested in - particularly to become an administrator - I think the level of interaction, expertise and support really helps provide some clarity in where you may want to go and some depth in regards to making sure that this is the right direction that I want go to. And then also making sure that all my questions are answered because a lot of times when you are pursuing a different field or a position an administrative license or position, you want to make sure you have everything covered. It is important for me to receive high quality mentoring, and conversation so that you can have a very good viewpoint of what the job entails and what your expectations are when you get your license. (Male #3)

#4 - Quality of mentoring - excellent. I have excellent leaders, people who were very specific along the lines of race, who were very specific about what they call “The Joe Clark Syndrome” how you are hired to deal with behavior, but you always have to continue transform as an instructional leader. And once you get there as an instructional leader, you have to continue to transform and to grow. (Male #5)

5. Prior to becoming licensed as a school administrator, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply.)

- Advisor: the mentor offered advice based on experience
- Sponsor: the mentor opened doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed
- Coach: the mentor taught me and provided feedback to me while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing to stretch my capabilities
- Goal Focuser: the mentor helped me to create both short- and long-term goals and plan to accomplish them
- Confidant: the mentor and I shared a confidential relationship, where I felt safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes
- Promoter: the mentor steered me into assignments that made me known to superiors
- Role Model: the mentor demonstrated the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success
- Affirmer: the mentor supported me and showed respect and personal caring to me that goes beyond business requirements
- Other ________________________________________________________________

#5 - Coach and Goal Focuser - Helping me to create both what I wanted to do in the short term, and where I wanted to see my long term career be headed in the educational system (Female #1)
Prior to becoming licensed, I really was kind of coaching myself. I worked in two districts, I want to clarify that and verify that. I am currently in xxxxxxxx, but I started at xxxxxxxxxxx. I didn’t get the mentoring that I am getting here. So because of that, I want to talk about that a little bit because I think it makes a big difference. When I was in xxxxxxxx, I was told I would be a good administrator, licensed person, but that was it. I had to go find my own mentors and stuff like that to get myself ready. And because of that reason I left that district and came to xxxxxxxx so I could get the mentoring I needed. I even went for a job that was lower paying so I could get the skills that I needed to work my way up. (Female #2)

Most of those would fit my mentorship process as I decided to become an administrator, predominantly the sponsor. I feel like my mentor was able to give me experiences that I wouldn’t have had otherwise to get the knowledge that I needed to become an administrator.

Confidant - I know that I felt comfortable talking about things as they would arise, that I hadn’t experiences before, hadn’t come across before and I was able to process through with my mentor

Affirmer - Constantly giving me the confidence to know that I am able to be an administrator. Work with my skills to build upon the skills that I needed to build upon. (Female #3)

That is an area that I didn’t really have any mentors, I had people encouraging me, but I was just going to school on my own. I would have been nice to have someone to connect to, that I could say what do you think about this or that so I could have get more experience. (Female #4)

Sponsor - my mentor opened doors for me, allowed others see me in a different light which that changed the conversation, instead of being looked upon as just security guard, they are looking at me more as an intellectual and professional. That piece as a mentor was great.

Confident - There are things that I have learned through my mentor, there are certain things that I share in privacy, not everyone should hear your thoughts at all times. So you need to have someone that you can bounce things off of. Something that came across, a good rule of thumb has been the 2 hour, 4 hour, 24 hour, 48 hour rule, that one needs to do the process before responding to certain to certain situations. This has kept me from getting into trouble with my colleagues.

Role Model -

Affirmer - It is very important to be affirmed that I can do this job. I think that was one of the main points of my mentor. (Male #1)

I did receive a lot of mentoring from 3 different principals and a curriculum specialist, all African American, in ZZZZZZZZZ - public school district. They did open doors for me, with formal and informal assessments, teaching me how to be social, how to work with parents, how to be an instructional leader. Coaching wise - I got tremendous feedback all the time. I’m the type of person who can take constructive criticism very positively to inform me on how I can get better. (Male #2)

I think question 5 fits into question 4. All those different aspects are very important, and I think seeing and getting multiple perspectives are important, And again, high quality
conversations, I remember when I was looking at my license, being able to talk to different people who all had different roles based on the relationship I had with them, really kind of factored into A - taking their feedback in the conversation, B - being able to utilize it in your best interest and make sure A- what school / licensure program do I want to get into, what’s their success rate and how do they support you as a student and how they facilitate that transition to get you into an administrative position. (Male #3)

#5 - Advisors - I had a lot of advisors within my mentoring.
Coaching - Coaching me in the belief that it can be done and will be done. Coaching was pretty significant.
Goal focuser - There are a lot programs out there that provide principal leadership and getting in the right program is essential and having a specific goal was essential as well. (Male #5)

6. After receiving your administrative license but prior to becoming a school administrator, were you encouraged by a mentor or mentors to seek an administrative position?

7. Prior to becoming a school administrator, how many mentors encouraged you to pursue a position as a school administrator?

#7 - I’m going to say.... It was a lot. I kind of let my work speak for itself, and then the district administrators would come in building time after time and ask me about getting my administrative license. A lot = roughly 15-20 different administrators or people in the district office, all black. Being in zzzzzzzzz, our demographics are not as widespread as MN. We mostly deal with white, black, Latinos, and maybe some Hmong. In Milwaukee our population is not very diverse. (Male #2)

8. How important was the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator?

#8 - I think mentoring is very important to pursuing of positions in school administration. If you don’t have a mentor, you don’t quite know how to go about doing it. You don’t know exactly how to get yourself there. I believe you should work on your weaknesses, you will always be weak at something and no one is perfect at every level. I think people need to be honest about that. Administration is supposed to be a team and sometime we don’t get that team effort that we need. You have to be good at everything. I think it hurts the school because I think there should be a variety of people in different levels of different expertise. And then we come together so our students can get the best education that they can get. So you do need to have mentors, and they don’t necessarily need to be in the same strength that you are in, but you do need them and it does make a difference. You move faster when you have people who really care about you and you feel good - vested, that’s the word, they were vested in you. (Female #2)
9. Prior to securing your school administrator position, what types of mentoring did you receive from one or more mentors? (Please select all that apply.)

___ Advisor: the mentor offered advice based on experience
___ Sponsor: the mentor opened doors to formal and informal societies that would otherwise be closed
___ Coach: the mentor taught me and provided feedback to me while encouraging new ways of thinking, acting, and pushing to stretch my capabilities
___ Goal Focuser: the mentor helped me to create both short- and long-term goals and plan to accomplish them
___ Confidant: the mentor and I shared a confidential relationship, where I felt safe to share inner thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule, gossip, or other negative outcomes
___ Promoter: the mentor steered me into assignments that made me known to superiors
___ Role Model: the mentor demonstrated the kinds of behaviors, attitudes, and values that lead to success
___ Affirmer: the mentor supported me and showed respect and personal caring to me that goes beyond business requirements
___ Other ____________________________

#9 - Sponsor - opening doors and introducing me to people who I can network with to further my long-term career goals. (AA Female #1)

#9 - A lot of time was spent, I used to get either a text message or phone call that said “I need you in the office” and I knew that meant I needed to stop doing what I was doing to get there. That time was valuable because I was brought into the office to participate, be exposed and experience meetings and different situations that I know I wouldn’t have gotten anywhere else. (Different situations?) The kinds of situations that open your eyes to all facets of education. (Male #4)

10. Please rate the quality of the mentoring you received in deciding to pursue a position as a school administrator?

#10 - The mentoring I received was definitely a 10. I don’t think it could be replicated. (AA Female #3)

11. How often did your mentors have similar race/ethnicity to you?

#11 - Never - not at all. (Female #1)

#11 - Not same nationality, ethnicity or culture in xxxxxxx and like I said I went and found those mentors myself. No one was volunteering. They didn’t mind helping me when I asked, but no one that came and said let me help you. In xxxxxxx, my mentors are AA descent, Latino descent, and Caucasians. And we help each other. Just because someone is mentoring you, doesn’t mean that you don’t help them. I think people need to understand that, mentors need help too. I’m
just saying but you help each other. So I think to be a good administrator you need to be open to all that. But you also have to remember that you have to be a mentor as well, when it is your turn. (Female #2)

#11 - Both mentors I spoke about have the same race that I do. (Female #3)

#11 - None of my mentors or advisors looked like me. They were all different races. That would have been something too. Because the experience might have been different. They were guiding me through their lenses. Even though the goals are for all kids, the experience to me, when we have dialogue, it’s a different experience. I think that the struggles that I go through being a person of color in a leadership position looks different than what it looks like for a Caucasian person. So it would have been nice. So I would say things to my mentors, and they would help guide me, but they knew the experience would be different. So they really couldn’t tell me how to navigate it, only through their lenses. My principal 2 years ago, Caucasian male, he created a position for me to keep me in the building. He was very conscious of me being a person of color, and just knowing that it looks different from when he leads that building than if I were to. He created it because he had an all-white staff and he wanted to make sure he had other perspectives in his building. (Female #4)

#11 - Speaks to success that I have had, in my areas so far as an administrator, the mentor that I had happened to be a person of color, black, actually to be more specific, a black male was the mentor so that had huge benefits because of the population and demographics of our students we were serving and the students concentrating on to raise achievement. To change a lot of the data, a lot of the behavior things. So there were things that he contributed to my learning largely because he was an AA male. (Female #5)

#11 - In my life, I have had several mentors, and they have always been black men. This latest mentor was a black male as well, that put me on the path to becoming a principal is a black male. That similarity actually enabled me to be affirmed it was ok to be who I am. That is because that this is tough business to be in, and you don’t always get affirmations from other individuals outside of your own little circle, your mentoring circle. So it is imperative that we stay together as black men and support each other because this business is tough. (Male #1)

#11 - All mentors were African American, 3 males and 1 female, very very supportive to pushing me into administration because they know that we need more people of color in this position to serve the students that are starting to flood the district. They need to see our faces. Know that there are people in these positions to know that they can be successful as well, and instead of just being athletes. Being able to give our kids motivation, a face to look at, give them something positive as they walk into the school each morning. Knowing that I have been in their shoes before. I can really help those kids (Male #2)

#11 - For me, I had mentors that were the same ethnicity and also mentors that I had a very good relationship with a different ethnic background, and what I found was moving past surface
level and more emotional, and I’ll say questions or issues that could lead to vulnerability it was a lot easier to speak with those of same ethnic background. (Male #4)

#11 - definitely different races (Male #5)

12. How often did your mentors have similar gender to you?

#12 Never - not at all. (Female #1)

#12 - I am a woman of color. I received most of my, most of my mentors have been males of color. For other people, it could look like something negative, for me it was an opportunity to balance out a situation and provide support in other areas, a different perspective, Same but similar. Being mentored by a black male helped me understand a lot of things. And then also another benefit by being mentored by a black male and servicing children of color, is that you see the passion and the personal connections, and the motivation to make those personal connections. It is something that you automatically culturally connect with and it is something that the students that I’ve worked with automatically feel a sense of belonging, a sense of home. (Female #5)

#12 - often different genders (Male #5)

13. How many members of your staff are you currently mentoring?

#13 - I am currently mentoring 5-7, probably 7 people into the profession. As a school administrator, people come to you seeking mentoring and it just continues to grow. (Male #5)

14. How many (total) years have you served as a school administrator?

15. Just prior to becoming a school administrator, which position did you hold in the school district?

#15 - Prior to becoming an administrator, I was a teacher and I think that background helped me to form the decision. (Female #3)

Other thoughts by interviewees:

I just think it very important, I hope that this really makes a difference to help other people. That doors are open for people, and people get a chance to be on committees to get the jargon down. That’s another thing, get the jargon down. Learning what words are expected. Because I think a lot of the time when you are not in it, you don’t get all the jargon and all the acronyms, and sometimes that goes against you. (Female #2)
As an administrator, especially any time we are servicing children, that it is important to always be in a growth mindset and constantly reach out to mentors and other people to enhance your own learning and deepen your understanding of how to better service our children. (Female #5)