

## **ABSTRACT**

Edward L. Hicks, DESIGN OF NOVICE PRINCIPAL INDUCTION FOR A CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT (Under the direction of Dr. Martin Reardon). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2017.

School districts across the nation are grappling with the issue of high principal turnover coupled with a decrease in number of experienced applicants to fill vacancies (Guterman, 2007; Hall, 2008; Johnson, 2005; United States Department of Education, 2010; Villani, 2008). In addition, college preparation programs are being called into question as to whether they are producing educational leadership graduates prepared for the multifaceted rigors of the principalship (Hudson, 2009). As a result, local districts are discovering that being licensed as a principal provides little surety that a new inductee will be able to perform optimally in his or her leadership role. Central District (a pseudonym for the school district that is the focus of this study) is not immune to the trend of increased numbers of novice principals assuming leadership positions within schools with more than half of its principals being identified as novice (defined in this study as having fewer than three years of experience in the principalship).

The central purpose in this problem of practice study was to design a professional development program for the induction of novice principals that would suit best the needs of novice principals within Central District and contribute to breaking the cycle of principals becoming discouraged or failing within their first few years and leaving the principalship.

The research process within this study involved both quantitative and qualitative phases in order to gather both numerical and perceptual data. Data was gathered from three primary sources; novice principals (those with less than three years of experience), principals categorized as experienced (greater than three years of experience), and district assigned mentors. Through analysis of numerical data from surveys and the development of grounded theory, I identified

what existing supports are working well within the district and where gaps exist. These data-collection and analysis phases informed a synthesis of best practices distilled from a review of the professional development literature, and culminated in a professional development program design for induction tailored to the needs of Central District.



DESIGN OF NOVICE PRINCIPAL INDUCTION  
FOR A CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership  
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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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FOR A CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this research to the amazing principals of Central District. They have bravely accepted the mantle of school leader and raise their swords and shields daily to fight in the battle against ignorance. Few will ever understand the enormous weight and complexity of responsibility that come with the principalship. The investment of emotion, time, and energy that each of these amazing principals sacrifices every day can never be recognized or praised enough. It is my hope that this research and professional development design will aide those newest to the profession by helping them to transition quickly from the status of novice principal to that of effective leader.

I also wish to dedicate this research to my wife Charlotte. I am thankful to her for the constant support provided over the last five years. I could not have asked for a better partner as I traveled this arduous road. I'm not sure which of us will be more excited to cross the finish line.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this research to my father and mother, Bobby and Julia Hicks, who have always supported my career and who instilled in me, at an early age, the value and importance of education. Their constant guidance and support have always been an inspiration.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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I also wish to thank my former supervisor and mentor, Mr. Jimmy Tillman. Mr. Tillman taught through example, providing an exceptional model of “students first” leadership. I often reflect upon the sound advice he provided early in my administrative career that helped me to believe in myself and to pursue the goal of obtaining my doctorate of education.

Special thanks goes to the seventeen principal and mentor participants of Central District who generously contributed their time in order to provide feedback for the research portion of my study. I wish I could name each of them, but will maintain their confidentiality. I additionally wish to thank both superintendents that served in Central District during my course of study. Each encouraged me to do whatever was necessary to complete this research.



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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Naming and Framing the Problem of Practice**

The last twenty years have produced a tidal wave of changes washing over our nation's educational system, affecting multiple aspects including the role of public school principal. The initial ripple of this wave can be tracked to 1996 and the inception of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1996) Standards. As the wave continued to gain momentum across the nation, states were swept up in the movement and also modified state-level leadership standards for principals in order to align with the rapidly changing educational expectations. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1996), a nationwide organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education within states and that backed the work of ISLLC, identified a variety of rapidly changing social and economic structures that demanded changes to our educational system and thus performance expectations of school leaders. Increased racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity, increasing poverty, decrease in social capital, and increases in physical and mental health issues were all factors the CCSSO identified as contributing to a swiftly changing social framework surrounding schools.

In addition, the CCSSO (1996) recognized that the economic framework was transforming from a nationally driven postindustrial economy to a world market steered by advancements in technology. As a result of rapid and continuous societal changes affecting schools, today's principals face a unique set of challenges unlike those experienced by their predecessors. What was considered modern or current only a few years ago quickly becomes obsolete. In the last seven years, a multitude of innovative business, informational, and educational products have grown from the communications revolution and are daily finding their



way into our schools and classrooms. In fulfilling their multifaceted role, today's principals have to deal not only with technological advancements, but also with changes affecting culture, business, politics, and the home (Murphy, 2003). CCSSO recognizes the evolving roles of principals and, as a result, the ISSLC Standards have become a living document adapting with the changing roles of school leaders. As such, the ISSLC Standards were updated in 2008 and 2015.

The force of this wave of change has continued to gain momentum and scope, intensifying the demand that we produce high school graduates who can successfully navigate adult life in the twenty-first century. The challenge for our schools to keep pace is greater than ever (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). As such, the Public Schools of North Carolina, like corresponding instrumentalities in so many other states, responded to the challenge of change by initiating a closer examination of school leadership. At the heart of the examination process were North Carolina public school principals and the roles they must execute in order to ensure success. In 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE) issued a call for a new type of school leader by issuing the call to develop the "North Carolina Standards for School Executives." However, in developing the framework that details roles and the evaluation process for public school principals, the NCSBE did not also develop a corresponding framework of training or induction to assist experienced or new principals in the fulfillment of the increased demands of the principalship. The development of training and induction in North Carolina has been left to local school districts, and presents a problem of practice for districts statewide, including Central District.

## **District Context**

Central District lies on the border of both the central and eastern regions of North Carolina but is considered to be a part of the central region. As indicated by Table 1, Central District is made up of both traditional and nontraditional school settings.

Approximately sixteen thousand students residing in both rural and urban settings attend the schools in Central District, which is considered a low wealth district containing 19 Title I schools. Central District includes one city with the approximate population of 57,000 inhabitants, several small townships, and many agriculturally-based communities. Schools are somewhat racially segregated de facto, with the highest percentage of minority students attending either the city schools or rural schools in the southern portion of the district. African-American students make up 50 % of the student population followed by 35 % White, 10 % Hispanic, and five percent from other racial groups. The overall performance of the district as measured by proficiency in tested courses falls approximately 15 percentage points below the state average (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2013).

Three years of data from 2010-2013 details the experience level of principals across Central District. The percentage of novice principals (those from zero to three years of experience) has grown from 39% to 52% of principals, while the state average has held steady at 42%. The percentage of district principals with four to 10 years of experience has dropped from 59% to 44%, but most noteworthy is the fact that the percentage of Central District principals with more than 10 years of experience has dropped from 15% to 4%. The corresponding state percentages in the preceding categories are 44% and 14% respectively (NCDPI, 2013). Figure 1 shows the 2013 data for Central District compared to the North Carolina state data.

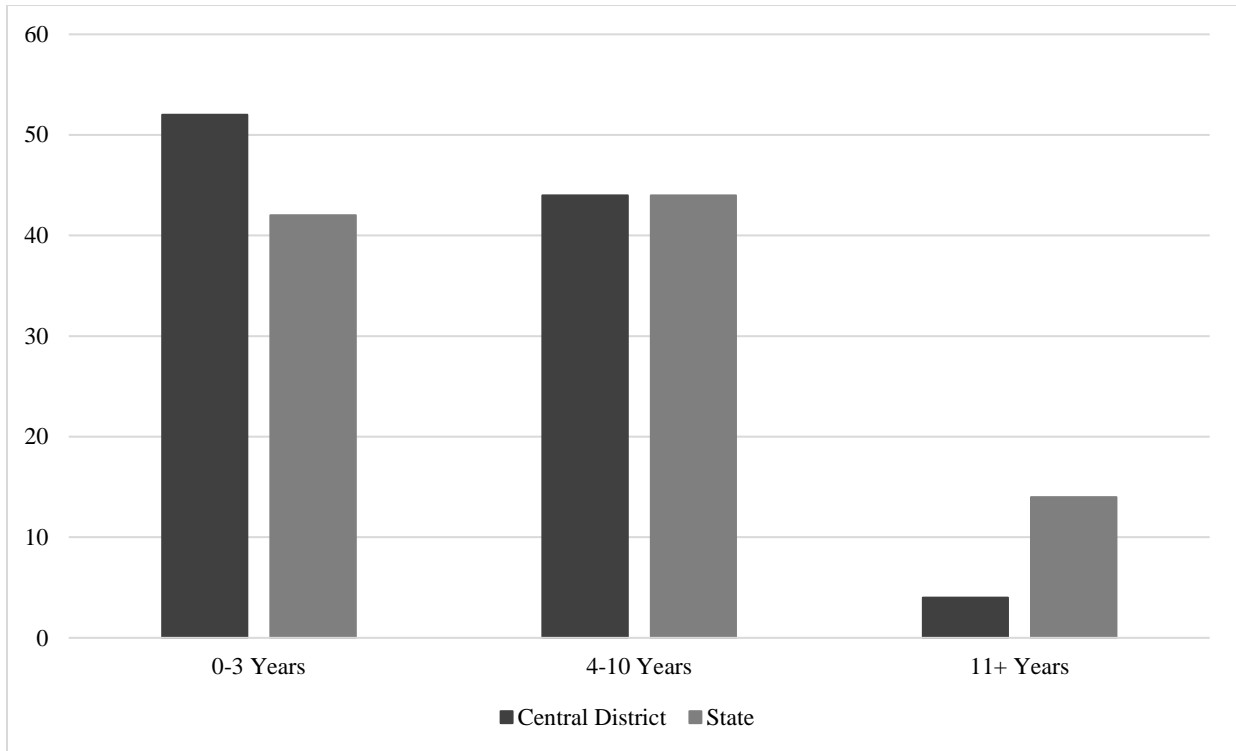
Table 1

*Schools by Type in Central District 2013*

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Type	Number
Elementary	17
Middle	6
High	4
Early College	1
Alternative	1
Total	29

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*Note.* Vertical bars represent percent of principals as they fall into experience level groups over a three year period. Adapted from North Carolina School Report Card (NCDPI, 2013).

*Figure 1.* Central District as compared to North Carolina 2013.

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As with many districts, in Central District, when a principal resigns, retires, or accepts a central office position a vacuum is created due to the diminished size of the applicant pools (United States Department of Education, 2010). As a result, Central District's solution has frequently been to move principals between schools, and to fill vacancies with assistant principals creating a dual problem by increasing the number of novice principals while simultaneously increasing the number of novice assistant principals. Additionally, instructional programming at multiple schools has a tendency to stagnate while newly assigned principals go through a socialization process and subsequently implement their own brand of leadership within their new settings (Aiken, 2002; Lovely, 2004; Villani, 2006). Compounding the problems associated with the percentage of novice principals is the percentage of principals who are effectively "novice" within their current school setting. For example, at the start of the 2013-14 school year, 17 of the 29 schools were led by principals with two or fewer years in their present school totaling nearly 59% of schools with principals who are effectively novice (principals with three or fewer years) within their current setting.

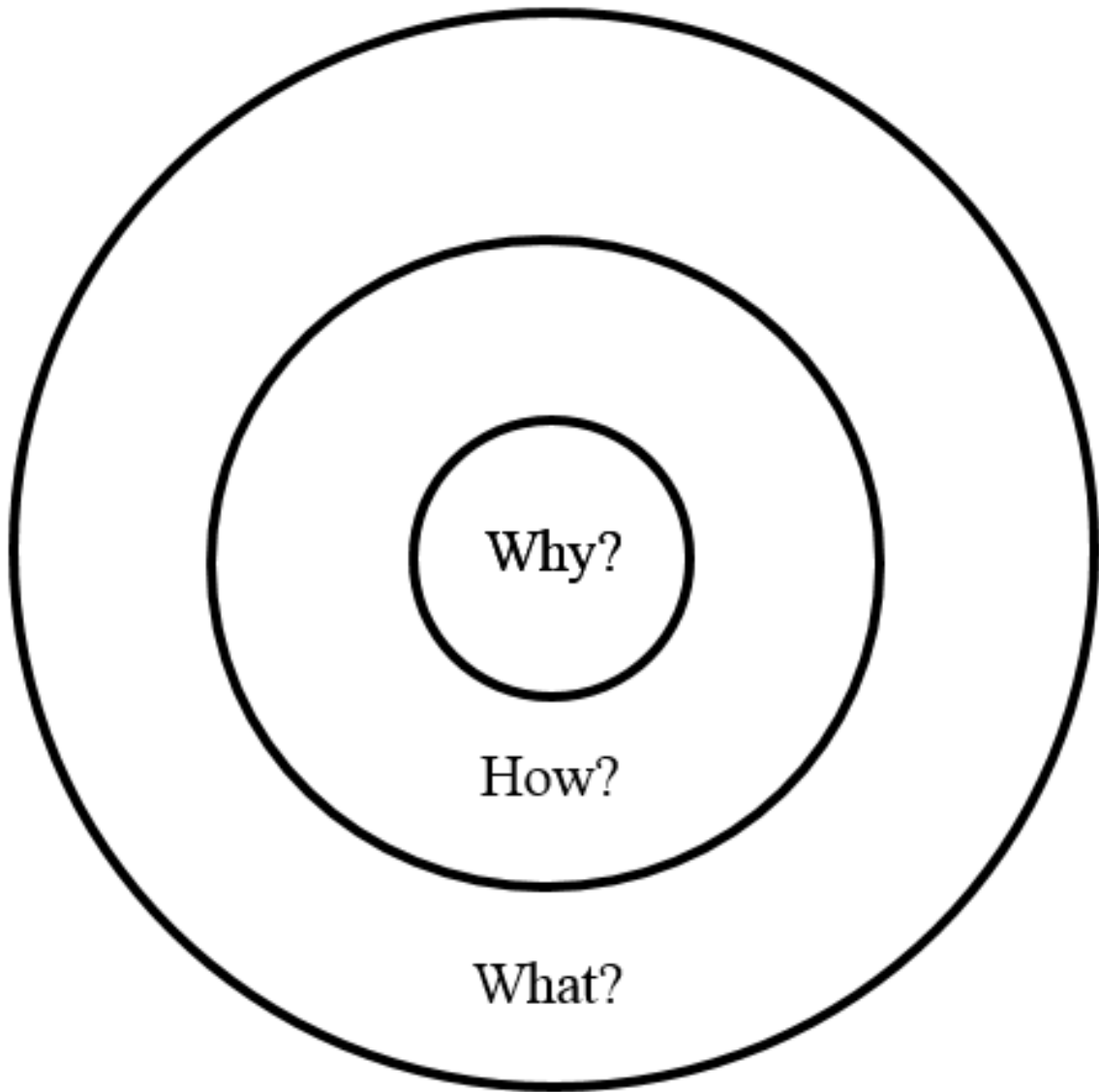
Central District's context mirrors the situation confronted by many other districts nationwide. There is a crisis of veteran principal leadership within Central District as indicated by a total of only four percent of principals with ten or more years of experience. The problem of practice addressed in this study is also born from the lack of experienced school leadership in Central District, those with four to ten years of experience. The aim of this study is to design a best-practice, professional development program for induction that will facilitate the development of leadership skills among novice principals. Although the purpose of this study is the design of an effective professional development program for inductees tailored to the specific context of Central District, over the long term, through the implementation of this program, the

anticipated, potential outcome would be an increase in the number of principals who remain in leadership roles within Central District and achieve career level status of 10 or more years in the principalship.

### **Purpose of Study**

Sinek (2009) presented a conceptual theory of why successful organizations are able to maintain their success. His theory is represented by a graphic depiction he has coined as the Golden Circle. The Golden Circle, similar in design to a target, is created with a center and two rings encircling the center (see Figure 2). Each part represents a step in the organizational process with emphasis placed upon the center which displays “why,” drawing attention to the motivating purpose for an organization. Subsequent rings around the center, and naturally flowing out from the center, represent an understanding of “how” the organizational process is performed and “what” an organization creates as its final product. Sinek intentionally stresses that there is an appropriate order in any successful process in that it always starts with the “why” before proceeding to the “how,” and finally to the “what.”

In applying Sinek’s (2009) conceptual theory to this study, it is important to first identify the “why” or the motivating purpose for the study. The “why,” in this case, is influenced by three important factors. The first factor is that the school culture envisioned and led by the principal is a key component to the overall success of the school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The second factor is that developing an effective school culture requires skilled leadership more easily facilitated by an experienced principal (Villani, 2006). The third factor is that a novice principal, devoid of appropriate induction and support, runs a greater risk of failure in developing an effective school culture and, in turn, is more likely to become frustrated and leave the position of principal early in his or her tenure (Hudson, 2009).



*Figure 2. The Golden Circle (Sinek, 2009).*

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Therefore, the motivating purpose for this study is to design a professional development program for novice principal induction that, over the long term, will positively impact Central District's schools through development of career level principal leadership. Along the way I hope to develop a clear understanding of the skill development needed by novice principals to be successful in the challenging position of school leader.

In fulfilling the motivating purpose of the study, it is my intent to create a professional development program design for induction of novice principals tailored to the needs of novice principals in Central District. The design of this induction program will be based upon researched principles and best practices detailed in literature focused upon better preparing novice principals as they enter the rapidly changing world of the principalship. This study will be limited in scope to Central District in North Carolina, and will consist of (a) a review of current literature focused on the roles and responsibilities of principals, and (b) both quantitative and qualitative study of Central District as it pertains to the quality of support systems currently provided to novice principals. The synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative data will inform the findings from the literature with respect to best practices in professional development, and empower the design of a professional development program that supports the induction of novice principals in Central District.

### **Process of Study**

The second layer of the Golden Circle (Sinek, 2009) is represented by the word "how" which represents the process by which the final product is created while adhering to the motivating purpose. As previously mentioned, the how of this study will involve review of literature, and a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data surrounding the topics of principal leadership and principal induction.



In order to address the first part of the study process involving the review of the relevant literature, the review of literature will focus upon the impact of the principal as it relates to the success of schools, as well as the current issue of principal retention. Linked directly to the topics of principal impact and principal retention are leadership standards that detail performance expectations for principals, as well as informing domains for evaluation. Therefore, this review of the literature will also include an historical element concerning the development of leadership standards for principals, as well as how these standards are currently being utilized to evaluate principal performance. The standards-based approach for principal evaluation, presently utilized by Central District, is likely to have an impact upon the design of a program that features induction inclusive of professional development. Therefore, this review of the literature will also explore current research surrounding program design as well as effective professional development practices.

Upon completion of the literature review this study will focus on a process of gathering research data directly from study participants. Hence, the concluding sections of this literature review will address an understanding of what this data collection process will entail by reviewing relevant literature surrounding the grounded theory process and, in particular, the concept of theoretical sampling.

### **Impact of the Principal and High Turnover Rate**

The importance of an effective induction process for novice principals in Central District cannot be underestimated as this problem of practice represents a microcosm of a much larger, nation-wide issue. Locally, state-wide, and nationally districts are facing dual issues; the issue of career-level principals rapidly retiring from the profession, and the simultaneous issue of high turnover rates of novice principals early in their careers (Guterman, 2007; Hall, 2008; Johnson,

2005; United States Department of Education, 2010; Villani, 2008). The urgency in addressing the phenomenon of principal inexperience becomes apparent when examining the impact of principals upon student learning. Second only to teachers, the principal has significant impact upon student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). The principal is crucial in developing the culture of the school inclusive of an environment conducive to learning, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to develop professionally, consequently improving their ability to have a direct impact upon student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004; Mintrop, 2004; Thomas & Kearney, 2010; Villani, 2006). The design of the induction program for novice principals in Central District has the potential, over the long term, to more experienced school leaders and increase longevity in the position of principal, thereby alleviating vacuums created by retirements of veteran principals and high turnover rates of novice principals. While this study is focused on designing an effective professional development program, it is anticipated that, over the long term, a more comprehensive continuum of principal experience will facilitate the creation of school cultures across Central District conducive to high levels of student learning.

### **Development of Standards for School Leaders**

The mid-to-late 1980s ushered in a detailed examination of school leadership due to the introduction of new accountability measures and a growing realization that school leaders had become complacent, not adapting to the needs of a rapidly changing society nor the needs of modern corporate America (Murphy, 2003). From this movement grew the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and subsequent standards for school leaders (CCSSO, 1996). The ISLLC Standards were touted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) as the new benchmark standards for all building level administrators and, at the time, were supported by a twenty-four state consortium. The six-standard document

quickly gained support, and by 1996 was adopted across forty-three states (Murphy, 2003). As the modern principalship continued to become more and more complex, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2008) issued a re-examination of the original ISSLC Standards in order to align them better with the changing responsibilities of school leaders. Along the way, individual states were using the ISLLC Standards as a reference point in creating state-level standards specifically tailored to the needs of districts within their states. These state standards were to be utilized as guiding principles for the work of school administrators as well as to create evaluation instruments.

As a part of this evolutionary process, the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSSE) were developed by the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE, 2006). The NCSSE 2006 were written in a manner that recognizes the multiple roles a school leader adopts in running an effective learning environment, and that these roles are much too onerous for any one person. Consequently, the NCSSE 2006 focuses upon empowering principals to develop collaborative structures within schools in order to effectively manage all aspects of the school community (NCSBE, 2006).

Subsequent to the CCSSO 2008 revision, the NCSBE issued revised standards in 2013 placing a greater emphasis upon outside networking leading to the present NCSSE 2013 (NCSBE, 2013). In terms of this study, the NCSSE 2013 standards, which also inform the North Carolina principal evaluation process, constitute a primary source in developing survey questions and study questions.

The ISLLC 2008 standards have again undergone revisions. The revised version has been adopted under the new name of Professional Standards for School Leaders (PSSL) (CCSSO, 2015; Superville, 2015). The new PSSL now include 10 standards detailing what

CCSSO (2015) continues to tout as essential skills for principals. The PSSSL attempt to take a broader and more realistic look at the principal's day to day roles leading to a more balanced approach in addressing essential skills as they pertain to the areas of instructional leader as well as building manager (Superville, 2015).

### **Principal Evaluation**

In conjunction with the development of standards, North Carolina has developed a system of principal evaluation linked directly to the NCSBE (2013) standards. The seven North Carolina Standards for School Executives include strategic leadership (Standard 1), instructional leadership (Standard 2), cultural leadership (Standard 3), human resource leadership (Standard 4), managerial leadership (Standard 5), external development leadership (Standard 6), and micro-political leadership (Standard 7). Principals receive a scaled rating in each of the seven standards, ranging from the lowest ranking of “not demonstrated” to the highest ranking of “distinguished.” The assigned rating is based upon judgments of observable criteria and artifacts detailed in each area of the summary evaluation document (NCSBE, 2013). The NCSBE has defined customized expectations and criteria for evaluation, however there is presently no state system for the professional development or induction for school administrators, leaving local districts to bear the responsibility and the cost of program design for the induction of new principals.

### **Program Design**

Modern educational program design for professional development of administrators has begun to adopt a shift in thinking. Church, Bland, and Church (2010) describe this shift as a move away from the traditional method of presentation-based training to a system that incorporates a coaching process enhanced by engaging participants in collaborative learning

teams. At the heart of program design is a professional development model with clearly defined goals detailing desired learning outcomes (Learning Forward, 2011). Effective contemporary program design in education incorporates three major components: (a) coaching or mentoring opportunities for participants; (b) participation in collaborative learning communities; and (c) standards-based, continuing educational opportunities (Brown, Squires, Tadros, & Horowitz, 2014; Church et al., 2010; Hanover Research, 2012; Learning Forward, 2011; New Schools Venture Fund [NSVF], 2008). The three components of contemporary program design constitute a process of effective professional development with experiential learning opportunities at its core.

### **Professional Development**

Mitgang and Gill (2012) contends that the majority of principals are still trained through traditional college and university programs, and that the majority of these programs are inadequate in preparing principals for the challenges they will face. Gill also asserts that the costly investment made by individuals in order to become licensed school administrators often does not adequately prepare new administrators for the demands of the principalship, and therefore it has fallen upon districts and states take a more active role in developing principal training programs after they acquire the role of school leader. In doing this, districts and states can exercise their power to create high quality mentoring and professional development programs for novice principals. The conversation concerning the provision of homegrown and supportive leadership programs for novice principals has been ongoing for years. The worthy aim has been to attempt to stem the tide of new administrators leaving the principalship early in their careers, and to address the continual struggle to acquire qualified, experienced leadership (Sparks, 2002). Hall (2008) indicates that districts investing in effective mentoring and

professional development programs outperform districts that do not, implying an approach to maintaining high quality professional development programs. One district that provides effective mentoring and professional development and outperforms its peers is Gwinnett County, Georgia. Each summer all principals and assistant principals are required to attend a multi-day summer program led by retired and seasoned principals. Workshops in this program are designed to allow veteran administrators to share their knowledge and experience on a variety of topics including how they were able to reshape their school culture (Mitgang & Gill., 2012).

Davis and Leon (2011) conclude that the outcomes of effective professional development include the avoidance of doing things that do not work, and the turning away from ineffective philosophies by principals. Among their recommendations for improving principal training programs are that programs should (a) draw upon real world experiences in acquiring knowledge, (b) use a standards-based approach in measuring performance outcomes, and (c) adopt a team approach to acquiring knowledge. In developing effective professional development, it is also important to note that adults are most effectively motivated when the “why” of learning is clearly defined (Sinek, 2009), and when learning is self-actualized by incorporating relevant life experiences (Davis & Leon, 2011).

### **Approach to Discovery**

A mixed methods approach, utilizing a sequential transformative strategy (Creswell, 2009), will be utilized in the research components of this study in order to draw upon the various perceptions and experiences of participants. The sequential transformative strategy of research occurs in two phases. The first phase includes a single approach that is either wholly quantitative or wholly qualitative followed by a second phase of research that utilizes the approach opposite of phase one. The intent is that phase two of the sequential transformative

strategy accumulates data that builds upon the data gathered in phase one. In utilizing this research approach it is important to note that data gathered from phase one will inform the focus for phase two (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative phase will involve the gathering of numerical data from Likert-scale and multiple-choice surveys regarding existing support structures within Central District. The subsequent qualitative phase will focus on interviews of participants. The qualitative approach to research described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) incorporates a systematic collection of data, the avoidance of bias, and a critical approach to interpreting and reporting data. In this study, the qualitative phase will culminate in the generation of grounded theory, as explained in the following.

### **Grounded Theory**

As already indicated, a grounded theory approach will be taken in analyzing the qualitative data gathered for this study. Grounded theory is an interpretive approach that draws meaning from the responses of participants. The origin of grounded theory can be traced back to the 1960s and the work of Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss. Over time Glaser and Strauss developed differing processes for developing meaning from data. The primary difference involved an additional step of axial coding developed by Strauss to analyze subcategories and how they relate to primary categories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

Taking a grounded theory approach, the researcher does not attempt to prove a preconceived theory, but rather uses pre-established analytical procedures to systematically study a phenomenon. Data are gathered through human interaction, broken down by coding, and theory is recursively generated through a rebuilding process. In contrast to a quantitative approach to gathering data, a qualitative approach is less prescriptive in nature and allows interview participants to craft responses to interview prompts based upon their personal

experiences. At the core of developing grounded theory is the process of data-gathering through theoretical sampling described in the next section.

### **Theoretical Sampling**

Theoretical sampling is the quintessential data collection process of grounded theory. Glaser (1978) defines theoretical sampling as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his (sic) data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop his (sic) theory as it emerges” (p. 30). In defining theoretical sampling, it is important to note that the process itself cannot be predetermined as it follows the direction indicated by the researcher’s analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

In understanding the process of theoretical sampling, I am aided by the self-developed image of a traveler. I imagine a traveler who embarks on a journey, yet avoids all natural tendencies to plan specific aspects of the trip in advance. In embarking on this journey the traveler may have an ultimate purpose for taking the journey but is not able to predetermine where he or she may actually end up. The traveler also cannot predetermine a travel route but must read the signs along the way and continuously resolve how to proceed to the next stage of the journey. The reading of signs along the way is the key process to successfully completing the journey, synonymous to the coding and analysis process described by Glaser (1978).

Theoretical sampling must be driven by purpose. Morse (2007) explains that, unlike other methods of collecting data, in which the collection process is predetermined, the selection of participants, interpretation of data, and refinement of emerging theory will all be driven by the purpose of the study. Additionally, Breckenridge and Jones (2009) confirm that theoretical sampling is guided by the emerging theory, and focuses upon where to sample next and for what



theoretical purpose. Understanding that the purpose of this research study is to recommend a design for novice principal induction for Central District, I will maintain a focus on this purpose in order to build a grounded theory around this perspective. Once the researcher has reached the full extent of data collection, indicating that the continued collection of data is no longer generating new avenues to explore, then theoretical sampling has reached saturation and the process is ended (Glaser, 1992)

Throughout theoretical sampling it will be important to account for variations that may occur in responses received during interviews. Corbin and Strauss (2015) assert that data gathered through theoretical sampling will not easily coalesce in all instances. Due to outliers that are contrary to the categorical norm, researchers have to routinely deal with variations in data. In these cases, the variations in data can become problematic unless the researcher recognizes, from the beginning, that variations are likely to occur. Failure to account for variations may cause subsequent theory to appear artificial in nature, thus Corbin and Strauss further assert that the way to deal with variation is for the researcher to account for variations when writing grounded theory. Therefore, during my process of theoretical sampling, and subsequent grounded theory, I will be intentional to account for variations in data.

### **Study Questions**

In order to fulfill the motivating purpose of this study, focus will be applied around the following overarching study questions.

1. What is the consensus understanding among all the stake-holders regarding the current provisions for professional development for novice principals in Central District?

2. To what extent can the strengths and challenges of the current provisions be blended into a revised professional development program that align with current best practice in the field of education?

This study will gather quantitative and qualitative data from multiple choice surveys, statements that utilize Likert scale ratings, and interviews of novice principals, experienced principals, and district assigned mentors within Central District. Data gathered will be analyzed appropriately to formulate grounded theory which will then inform the design of a best-practice induction program for novice principals in Central District.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

With continual focus upon the motivating purpose of this study and in support of the topics presented in chapter one, a more in depth review of literature is presented in chapter two. The review of literature will remain focused upon the overarching topics of principal impact, the retention and recruitment of principals, development of leadership standards for principals, and program design for professional development. Professional development will be more thoroughly explored by review of subtopics inclusive of the socialization process of principals, effective mentoring, and sample program designs of induction. The aforementioned subtopics lend themselves to the concept of experiential learning essential to effective professional development (Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2010; Sparks, 2002).

### **Impact of the Principal**

Principals bring to schools models of leadership essential to the success of student learning. Villani (2006) asserts that emphasis upon teachers, assessments, and instructional materials alone will not produce desired results for schools. The framework for learning facilitated by the principal is an essential component in a school's formula for success. From Villani's survey data, 99% of superintendents indicated that behind every great school is a great principal. Also indicated is the belief among parents and teachers that school success hinges upon the effectiveness of the principal (Villani, 2006).

Teachers have the greatest and most direct impact upon student learning. However, second only to teachers is the impact principals make upon student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004; Thomas & Kearney, 2010). Leithwood et al. (2004) assert that principals have both a direct and indirect impact upon student learning. Measures indicate that up to 25%

of student learning can be attributed to a school's instructional and cultural framework designed and instituted with the principal as the lead. The percent impact of a principal upon student learning increases as a school's at-risk status increases as determined by the number of underperforming students within the school. Principal practices that directly impact teachers and indirectly impact student learning include setting direction, developing people, and design of organization (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Mintrop (2004) analyzed previously academically underperforming schools that experienced a successful turnaround, and found that principal leadership that nurtured collegiality among staff was a common factor for success. Principals manifest their value as instructional leaders by hiring quality teachers and ensuring they receive effective, job-embedded professional development. By this process principals directly impact the quality of teachers, the quality of instruction, and indirectly student performance (DuFour, 2001).

A 2007 Wallace Foundation study (Mitgang, 2007), indicates that a novice principal's ability to lead teachers instructionally is very dependent upon the district's investment in his or her growth in this area. The research found that most existing principal development programs fall well short of their potential by employing vague or unclear goals, placing insufficient focus on instructional leadership, and overemphasizing managerial roles.

In recognizing the enormous impact that principals have upon the success of schools (Leithwood, et al., 2004) it is easily inferred that with such impact comes multifaceted roles and responsibilities (Levine, 2005). As such, it is also derived that the turnover rate of principals is directly impacted by the principal's ability to survive in and sustain the multifaceted role of school leader (Duncan, 2009).

## **Retention and Recruitment of Principals**

Groff (2001), addressing a conference of state legislators, shared that effective school principals indeed have a significant impact upon student achievement, and foreshadowed future shortfalls in quality applicants as principals retire or resign. Groff further asserted that there will be more than enough certified candidates to fill coming vacancies, most of whom are classroom instructors. However, of those holding administrative certification, too many are deterred from applying due to the many societal issues within in our schools that distract principals from the primary purpose of education (Groff, 2001). Groff's (2001) assertion leads to the question of what issues may contribute to the shortfalls in qualified applicants for vacant principal positions.

Lack of financial compensation has been presented as one possible deterrent in addressing the issue of shortfalls in applicants for vacant principal positions. As noted by Groff (2001), there is no shortage in potential classroom teachers who hold administrative degrees. However convincing them that it is financially worthwhile to leave the classroom and move into the principal's office is often difficult. Villani (2006) asserts that in most cases, there is little to no difference in the day-to-day income of principals and teachers. When the salary of each, principals and teachers, is divided by the total number of annual workdays, the daily pay of a teacher is practically the same, and in some cases more than that of the principal (Villani, 2006).

The overtasking of principals is an apparent cause of principals leaving the profession as well as another potential deterrent of adequate numbers of applicants for vacancies. During the 2009 National Conference of Educational Leadership, Duncan (2009) compared the role of the principal to that of a CEO of a large company. The principal is expected to perform multiple roles acting as instructional leader, manager of a multi-million dollar budget, manager of facilities and operations, as well as being expected to collaborate with families and the

community (Duncan, 2009). Levine (2005) argues that the job requirements of principals far exceed the capacity of any one person. A 60 to 80 hour work week can be a typical occurrence for principals as they regularly encounter a variety of work categories inherent to school leadership, inclusive of many time-consuming tasks, involving the total school community, and addressing a variety topics such as instruction, operational programs, required paperwork, staff issues, and attendance of evening events (Levine, 2005).

Another issue that potentially affects retention and recruitment of principals is the issue of the demands and pressures presented by the school community itself. Villani (2006) presents multiple aspect of the school community and their impact upon the school leader. Villani describes school communities as consisting of multiple constituencies inclusive not only of teachers, students, and parents but also central office administrators, businesses, and community organizations. Thus, maintaining equitable relationships with all stakeholders can be demanding for even the most veteran of principals suggesting that most novice principals are ill-equipped to handle the multiple constituencies within the school community. Villani further asserts that the realization that many novice principals face is that decisions made by the principal often affect a wide range of constituencies within a school setting and that there are few decisions made that will please all constituencies involved. In turn this creates a new and complex dynamic possibly not experienced prior to the principalship (Villani, 2006). Irrevocably, those who accept the mantle of principalship are also tasked with maintaining a balance between personal or family life and the large quantities of time demanded of the principal. Time demands of the principal have continued to increase as both state and federal governments inflate accountability expectations (Hudson, 2009).

As the roles of the principal have become more varied and demanding, the need for induction of the novice principal has also become more urgent. However, only recently have efforts been made to develop programs to assist principals in navigating the multifaceted roles of the principalship (Duncan, 2009). Recognizing that with the demanding role of principal comes a myriad of roles and responsibilities, it is beneficial to understand that these roles and responsibilities are spelled out at both the national and state level in the form of standards for school leaders. Understanding the standards for school leaders may potentially affect the design of a program for induction of novice principals.

### **Development of ISLLC Standards for School Leaders**

The impact and importance of school leaders in promoting student learning has come to the forefront over the last thirty years (Murphy, 2003; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008) prompting national action that resulted in the development and evolution of standards to guide the work of school level administrators. From this national action was born a draft of anchor standards that were refined into the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (CCSSO, 1996). Murphy (2003) was one of the main proponents of the school leadership reform agenda, and chronicled the development of the ISLLC Standards. Murphy asserted that, during the mid to late 1980s, public education in the United States was being critiqued. As a result, school leadership was viewed as having become complacent in failing to create educational systems needed to support the corporate world. As Murphy chronicled, in 1994 a twenty-four state consortium (ISLLC) led by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration studied leadership systems of corporate organizations and behavioral science in order to develop a portfolio of leadership skills applicable to educational leaders. The ISLLC study led to a six-standard portfolio released in 1996 as the ISLLC Standards for School

Leaders. The ISLLC Standards became more widely utilized as state adoptions expanded from the original 24 states in 1996 to eventually include utilization by 43 states.

The six ISLLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996) envisioned a school administrator as an educational leader who promotes (a) shared vision of learning, (b) school culture and instructional programming, (c) management and operations of the school, (d) collaboration with family and community, (e) integrity, fairness, and equity, and (f) understanding and influences political and social contexts (pp. 10-21).

According to Portin, Schneider, DeArmound, and Gundlach (2003), the ISSLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996) solidified a perception of ambiguity between the perceived responsibilities of the principalship and what the principal actually should do. Out of the Portin et al. (2003), Wallace Foundation-supported study, five specific conclusions emerged. One conclusion stipulates that principals frequently learn needed skills through on-the-job circumstantial events absent of what would have been beneficial training. In conclusion, Portin et al. (2003) asserted that “principals learn by doing. However trained, most principals think they learned the skills they need ‘on the job’” (Portin et al., 2003, p. 1). The argument in favor of principal induction being advanced in this study is supported by the Portin et al. (2003) recognition that specific practices, detailed through ISLLC Standards, were necessary for principals upon acquiring the position of school leader.

Moving closer to present day, the original ISLLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996) were revisited in 2008 (CCSSO, 2008). Recognizing the growing complexities faced by the modern principal, the original ISLLC Standards were slightly revised to become a broader set of national guidelines that states could, in turn, customize to fit their own purposes. CCSSO concluded that “ISLLC 2008 keeps the footprint of the original ISLLC Standards, but is written for new



purposes and audiences” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 3). ISLLC 2008 again confirmed the value of school leaders as being second only to that of classroom teachers in effecting student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004), and addresses the need for states and systems to become more proactive in developing induction and professional development programs for principals. In an effort to support principal preparation, CCSSO asserts that “in turn, ISLLC 2008 can inform licensing and induction programs, which assess new leader professional knowledge” (p. 11).

Since ISLLC 2008 (CCSSO, 2008), the roles of the principalship have continued to evolve placing greater accountability on principals in leading their schools to perform at high levels. The CCSSO recognized the importance of modifying standards in order to align with roles of principals, and, as such, released the draft ISLLC 2014 Standards (CCSSO, 2014) which were subsequently adopted in 2015 under the new name of Professional Standards for School Leaders (CCSSO, 2015). The latest revised standards were developed through a joint effort of the CCSSO and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). Chris Minnich, Executive Director of the CCSSO, asserted that the development of the revised standards took into account the realization that demands upon school leaders has never been greater and that the ability to meet the higher demands is dependent upon developing highly talented principals. Therefore, the revised standards are designed to help principals develop a common understanding of what the educational leader’s job entails as well as to ensure principals gain the knowledge and skills necessary to improve teaching and student achievement (CCSSO, 2014).

The newly named Professional Standards for School Leaders (PSSL) (CCSSO, 2015), previously ISLLC Standards, place an emphasis upon a more realistic view that balances the instructional and operational duties of school leaders, as well as adjusting standard headings to

align closely with more current national priorities as they relate to education. In comparison to the original ISLLC (CCSSO, 1996), the PSSL are more numerous and more closely aligned with current policy such as Race to the Top and the priorities of the reauthorization of ESEA (McGrath, 2014). The PSSL envision a modern school leader who (a) develops a shared mission and vision, (b) enhances instructional capacity, (c) promotes instruction that maximizes student learning, (d) implements effective curriculum, (e) promotes an inclusive school environment, (f) develops professional learning communities of teachers, (g) engages families and communities, (h) develops effective operational processes, (i) adheres to ethical norms, (j) develops a culturally responsive school, (k) develops a system for continuous school improvement (CCSSO, 2014, pp. 15-21). A 2015 Wallace Foundation study (Manna, 2015) further asserts that the role of principal is dynamic, therefore it is imperative that principals receive ongoing training after they become school leaders in order to adapt to the evolving roles of the principalship and to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

### **North Carolina Standards for School Administrators**

In 2006, the State Board of Education of North Carolina Public Schools (NC SBE) set out to develop a new set of standards for school principals. The framework of these standards was developed directly from the aforementioned Wallace Foundation Study of 2003 (Portin et al., 2003). A decade after the development of the national ISLLC (1996) standards, North Carolina formalized its own custom method for detailing the responsibilities of principals and assistant principals and how they would be evaluated. As such, the NC SBE facilitated the development of the North Carolina Standards for School Leaders (NC SSL), clearly articulating its desire to develop a new type of school leader, asserting that:

Public education's changed mission dictates the need for a new type of school leader -- an executive instead of an administrator. No longer are school leaders just maintaining the status quo by managing complex operations but just like their colleagues in business, they must be able to create schools as organizations that can learn and change quickly if they are to improve performance. (NC SBE, 2006, p. 1)

NC SBE (2006) recognized the complexities of the principal's role, and asserted that the newly adopted standards, if taken as a whole, would be impossible for one person to master on his or her own (p. 3). The NC SBE expectation was that principals would work toward building executive teams to collaboratively address all standards. In place of focusing upon developing a principal leader as a stand-alone entity, the NC SSE focus upon the principal developing leadership structures and effective practices within the school setting.

Similar to ISLLC 2008 (CCSSO, 2008), NC SBE revisited and updated standards in 2013. Over the years, one obvious language change is the absence of the term "school leader" and its replacement with "school executive." The change in terminology denotes the intention of the standards to encourage a change in practice through the development of a more corporate culture in the execution of school business, as well as a greater influence upon incorporating partnerships with community organizations, and thus developing a higher degree of networking with outside resources (NC SBE, 2013). Although the intent of the NC SSE was to encourage changes in practice, a 2013 study calls into question the effectiveness of new standards in effecting significant changes (Militello, Fusarelli, Alsbury, & Warren, 2013). Militello et al. (2013) asserted that utilizing standards as sole motivation to change leadership practices may not be highly effective in a humanistic organization such as schools. Rather, an approach that

incorporates standards as a guide coupled with apprenticeship training may yield more positive results for change.

In application to this study, the standardized roles and responsibilities of North Carolina principals as well as understanding how these standards are transitioned into criteria for principal evaluation (NC SBE, 2013) may provide valuable insights for a professional development program design for induction of novice principals in Central District. In support of this assertion, Stake (2004) indicated that one option for professional development program design is to develop the design around a set of established criteria. Therefore, a review of best practices of modern program design for professional development may lend insight into how to blend perception data, review of literature, and evaluative standards into an effective program design for professional development of novice principals in Central District.

### **Program Design for Professional Development**

Because most districts across the country have failed to initiate leadership development programs for novice principals, many local districts are losing novice principals and encountering difficulties in staffing schools with qualified, experienced leadership (Sparks, 2002). Districts are facing a diminishing pool of desirable applicants coupled with administrators who remain in current positions for short terms. The presumption is that home-grown professional development designs for novice leadership are the best option to assist in encouraging longevity and the fulfilling of potential vacancies with appropriately skilled candidates (Shepard, 2010). In designing professional development, Guskey (2000) indicates there are two designs available, site-based professional development and district-wide professional development. Site-based professional development is more relevant to the context of an individual school, but offers multiple obstacles in resources and sustainability. District-

wide professional development offers a broader view for improvement facilitated by a greater depth of resources, including collaboration across school levels and the ability to share expertise (Guskey, 2000). In order to standardize the induction process and to best utilize resources most effectively, the induction design of Central District may wish to investigate district-wide professional development. In developing a district level professional development design for induction, it is valuable to examine where to begin when planning. Stake (2004) asserts that in beginning program design it is important to decide between two strategic choices “to try to compare it to another program, a model program; or to try to compare it to a set of criteria that represents a model program, with standards marking different levels for each of the criteria” (p. 8). Considering that North Carolina has incorporated clearly articulated standards for principals (NC SBE, 2013), the design of study for Central District will explore development around the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

In the development of a professional learning design, it is desirable to create a sustainable model that includes several essential components. Common components identified by some researchers include the development of clear objectives for learning, experiential learning opportunities with collaborative opportunities, and frequent feedback through evaluation (Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2010; Sparks, 2002). All of these components are available through district level, standards-based professional development linked to meaningful evaluation. Additionally, this format lends itself to alignment with the framework of North Carolina Standards for School Executives utilized by Central District in the evaluation of principals

In determining a program design for novice principals that utilizes a standards-based approach, adequate emphasis must be placed on the learning process itself (Reeves, 2010), incorporating frequent feedback as an evaluative measure. Reeves, in the context of his

development of a leadership matrix for professional development, asserts that evaluation is a component that is severely lacking in most organizations' professional development plans. Reeves developed his matrix from a study that found that "nearly 18% of leaders have never been evaluated in their present positions and the other 82% received feedback that was late, ambiguous, and unrelated to the promotion of professional learning" (Reeves, 2010, p. 95).

Fully in keeping with Reeves (2010), Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2012) assert that the program design should ultimately lead to evaluation, thereby fulfilling the primary purpose of determining the worth of participants. Fitzpatrick et al. (2012) further assert that this can be accomplished through an "objectives oriented approach" (synonymous with standards-based judgments) that measures the performance of participants against established standards (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012, p. 154). Synonymous to individual measurement of participants against pre-established standards, the effectiveness of the program design itself will ultimately be determined by the overall measurement of all participants against the same objectives. Stake (2004) asserts that responsive program evaluation is an effective method to evaluate the effectiveness of the program design and to determine what changes may need to be made throughout implementation. Responsive program evaluation relies upon interpretive data collected around multiple criteria and experiences in order to make value judgments about programming objectives and in turn adjusting the program to achieve the objectives. In determining effectiveness of the program, it will be important to remain explicit about values as they relate to expected outcomes (Stake, 2004).

In designing an induction program to address this problem of practice study, several design elements are central. A consideration would be whether to align with a standards-based approach utilizing the Executive Standards for School Leaders established by the North Carolina

Board of Education (NC SBE, 2013) or a different format. It will be important to determine whether to incorporate a district-wide approach or a school level approach. Best practices infer that the related professional development should contain experiential learning opportunities incorporating opportunities for principals to collaborate as well as frequent, timely feedback. The performance of participants should be measured against explicit values and desired outcomes. Fitzpatrick et al. (2012) asserts that development of clear design parameters is a key to program design and ultimately provide a scale to measure effectiveness.

In my review of literature referencing recruitment and retention of principals, the topics of socialization and effective mentoring emerged as common in research and related literature as it pertains to newly hired principals. Aiken (2002) stresses that the key to success for newly hired principals is rapid movement through the initial socialization process. Goldstein (2001) asserts that effective mentoring is essential to helping novice principals navigate the challenges of the principalship inclusive of the process of socialization. A study by Beaudoin, Carmona, Delahanty, Gartside, Oyedele, Teta and Wilson (2012) supports a multi-tiered approach to program design for professional development of novice principals, asserting that a program of induction for novice principals benefits from applications that will address the socialization phenomenon through application of effective mentoring. The following sections will present a review of literature around these topics.

### **Socialization**

Although the process of socialization for novice principals is not a new concept, it may not be widely understood as the essential first step of integration for novice principals within their new school. Aiken (2002) describes socialization as the process of acquiring knowledge and skills unique to the school culture necessary to becoming successful in the role of principal.

Aiken further asserts that the chance of principals reaching success rests heavily upon their ability to socialize in their present school culture as quickly as possible. Therefore, induction programs are required to dedicate appropriate attention to the social aspects of leadership development as they pertain to specific school culture and district norms. Moving quickly through the socialization process allows the principal to transition from the position of outsider to the position of a trusted leader and colleague (Bodger, 2011). The socialization aspect of induction should assist principals in finding voice and vision, forming alliances and networks, developing a leadership persona, developing a balance between custodianship and innovation, and to make connections with the community (Aiken, 2002). The principal's ability to effectively socialize and interact with staff is a key indicator of whether or not the principal will experience success, noting that the culture of every school and district is unique. Individual school histories and cultures imply that the socialization process will be different at each school (Hudson, 2009).

The socialization process can be characterized in many different ways, and Hertting and Bourke (2007) imply that principals may actually begin learning social skills needed for the principal socialization process as early as the first years of teaching. Dukess (2001) describes socialization for novice principals as movement through several different stages, beginning with anticipation and survival and ending with rejuvenation and reflection. Similarly, Hudson (2009) outlines several stages that a new principal experiences during the socialization process beginning with shock and survival and progressing ultimately to professional actualization. Through the socialization process principals must develop strong interpersonal skills, and principals who are successful in doing so progress through three stages described as anticipatory, encounter, and insider. In this description the principal moves from a stage of loneliness,



attempting to identify with those in the new setting, to an eventual stage in which principals are considered a trusted member of the school family and thus are able to make systematic improvements (Lovely, 2004).

The value of support for novice principals, focused on not allowing them to become lost in the socialization process, cannot be underestimated. Due to weighty social demands and the small window of time to move from outsider to trusted leader, Thomas and Kearney (2010) surmise that principals must receive the greatest amount of support during the first two to three years on the job. Lovely (2004) is even more insistent about moving through socialization quickly declaring that novice principals should move through initial relationship-building stages by the end of the first year. In order to enable a novice principal to move through the socialization process quickly, a well-designed mentor-protégé program can be beneficial. The mentor-protégé relationship enhances more rapid socialization by lessening the sense of isolation experienced by many novice principals, and aids in improved development of relationships essential to the socialization process (Alsbury & Hackman, 2006).

### **Mentoring**

Goldstein (2001) formulates that the success of our schools hinges upon effective school leadership and that therefore development of school leaders must be high priority. As a part of the development process, effective induction includes a plan for mentoring of novice principals. For such novice principals, “induction programs must include a comprehensive plan for providing robust, targeted supports including development, internships, coaching, and mentoring” (Beaudoin et al., 2012, p. 12). More and more the role of creating and implementing leadership development programs has fallen upon local school districts, and thus the task of developing effective mentor programs has also followed. The multifaceted roles of a principal

make initial program development very difficult, and the ability to adequately prepare school leaders through traditional university programs has been called into question due to what some perceive as a disconnect to real-world leadership and the changing role of the principal.

Therefore it has become necessary for districts to take a more active role in induction of new principals (Hudson, 2009). Hudson further contends that the mentoring aspect of principal induction is vital to the development of effective school leaders. In developing localized support programs, improved leadership quality begins with districts creating a continuum of learning opportunities for school leadership. These opportunities are enhanced by development of effective mentoring programs. Villani (2006) echoes the importance of mentoring as a part of an effective induction program for novice principals when she asserts that,

It is imperative that new principals have appropriate support through comprehensive induction and mentoring programs so that they can enter schools confident in their ability to foster a strong learning community and be sensitive to the culture they are joining. (Villani, 2006, p. 5)

The concept of mentoring for novice principals is still a relatively new concept, and strong mentoring programs are rare occurrences (Alsburly & Hackman, 2006; Mitgang & Gill., 2012). Hall (2008) contends that mentoring programs too many times are ad hoc programs that lack systematic implementation. As a result, these poorly designed programs can actually be damaging for the novice principal. In order to counteract poor design, Hall further asserts that mentors should be well-trained in the mentor–protégé process, be appropriately matched with a protégé, and establish clear goals for success at the beginning of the relationship.

Throughout the mentor-protégé relationship it is beneficial for the mentor to cultivate positive habits by listening carefully, asking probing questions, providing honest feedback with

alternative viewpoints, and encouraging independence. The value of mentoring support from an experienced colleague is worthwhile in that it moves a novice principal through potential roadblocks more quickly, ultimately translating into better performance by the school.

According to superintendents, the growing trend is that new principals entering the principalship have less experience than those of the past. Consequently, “now more than ever, new principals need mentoring and coaching from their experienced colleagues” (Villani, 2008, p. ix). In a 2017 article, Goodwin and Hein ask the question whether schools should recruit extraordinary, natural leaders or nurture ordinary people to be leaders. Per their conclusion that leadership behavior changes over time, they assert that both experienced and inexperienced school leaders benefit from coaching. An inexperienced leader benefits from an experienced coach who can help with critical, high-stress decisions while an experienced leader benefits from a coach who will act as a critical friend and challenge the status quo (Goodwin & Hein, 2017).

### **Sample District Level Novice Principal Induction Programs**

My review of the literature incorporates descriptions of four program designs for professional development of novice principals presented by Villani (2006). Villani described several different induction designs specific to various school districts across the country. I selected four of the programs in my review of the literature and summarized the selected programs. The following summaries describe programs inclusive of best practices of program design and professional development including mentoring aspects to assist principals in moving through the socialization process.

#### **New Principal Induction Program, Wake Leadership Academy, Raleigh, NC**

The Wake Leadership Academy’s New Principal Induction Program was developed as a regional program with the ultimate goal of retaining quality individuals hired as new principals.

Participation in the program is required for one year, and involves participation in media training as well as attendance at monthly informational sessions. The informational sessions include topics such as school finance and special education. In an effort to develop relationships with support mechanisms, novice principals are introduced to district leaders in charge of district services. In lieu of formal mentor assignments, the induction program administrator assigns “buddy” administrators to new principals. The induction process in total is designed to incorporate the novice principal into the district culture (Villani, 2006).

### **Extra Support for Principals (ESP), Albuquerque, NM**

Extra Support for Principals is a collaborative effort put forth by Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the Albuquerque Public Schools Principal Association (APSPA) in order to provide extra support to novice principals. The goals of ESP are to initiate new principals into a positive leadership role, provide advocacy and consultation to support the school leadership process, and to utilize the expertise of veteran principals through supportive relationships.

Novice principals are selected and assigned mentors from within the district based upon input from the novice principal. The executive director for human resources oversees ESP and is responsible for organizing the program as a whole including integration of professional development opportunities, orientation of mentors, as well as providing on-going support to the mentor-mentee relationship (Villani, 2006).

### **New Administrator Induction Program, Bridgeport, CT**

Bridgeport Public Schools’ New Administrator Induction Program (BPS-NAIP) began as a one year support program for new principals but eventually expanded to include assistant principals, curriculum leaders, and special education administrators. The support program for new principals is differentiated to be a two year program and to include mentors. The goals of

the BPS-NAIP are to provide a network for new administrators, professional development, and mentoring. Additionally, the program supports understanding of the district evaluation plan as well as maintaining an emphasis upon retaining urban educators. During year one of the program administrators meet as a group monthly. Novice principals continue a second year of the program meeting quarterly. For novice principals, onsite coaching is provided through mentors and professional development is provided through both district and outside presenters. The district purchases books and other sources of literature to support the learning process. Participants in the BPS-NAIP also participate in a regional service program provided by the Cooperative Educational Services. The two programs are designed to be complimentary of each other (Villani, 2006).

### **Leadership Initiative for Transformation (LIFT), Chicago Public Schools**

The goals of LIFT are to support novice principals in their first year as school leaders, to identify and train experienced principals in order to serve as mentors, and to initiate new principals into the culture of Chicago Public Schools (CPS). CPS executes the induction process through an approach that includes participation in five academies sponsored by Leadership for Quality Education, Chicago Principals and Administrators Association, Illinois Administrators Academy-Chicago, Kellogg School of Management-Northwestern University, and the Center for School Improvement. LIFT begins with a four-day summer orientation provided by district staff in order to provide networking support, information concerning available resources, and school opening procedures. Mentors are assigned to novice principals by the district and can be either full-time veteran principals currently serving as principals in the district or may be recently retired (Villani, 2006)

## **Conclusion**

My review of the literature for this study culminated in several themes that may potentially impact the program design for induction of novice principals in Central District. The review of literature began by describing the critical impact that principals have upon school success (Leithwood et al., 2004), and the struggle to find high quality, experienced applicants to fill principal positions (Groff, 2001). The review proceeded to explore the multi-faceted roles and responsibilities for school leaders detailed in both national (CCSSO, 2014) and state (NC SBE, 2013) standards and their evaluative function. Subsequently, the review explored program design for professional development incorporating the subtopics of socialization (Aiken, 2002) and effective mentoring (Goldstein, 2001). My review of the literature concluded with summaries of sample program designs for professional development of novice principals that utilized best practices as described in by Villani (2006). It is my intent to utilize knowledge gained through review of literature in combination with grounded theory developed through the methodology and design of study portion of this study in order to develop the professional development program design for induction of novice principals in Central District.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF STUDY**

The literature review used to guide this study indicates that districts across the nation, across North Carolina, and in Central District are facing the growing issue of poor principal retention as well as a diminishing pool of experienced applicants to fill vacancies when principals retire or resign (Groff, 2001). Central District has not been immune to this nationwide trend, and, as a result, has a high percentage of novice principals who have taken the helm of school leadership (NCDPI, 2013). Due to its high percentage of novice principals and the lack of principal development programs at the state level, it has fallen upon Central District to provide developmental supports for novice principals as they tackle the complex tasks of school leadership. Although Central District does provide limited mentor support to first year principals, it does not presently provide a formal design for novice principal induction.

Also indicated by the review of literature it is my conviction that effective professional development program design for induction consists of three primary components: effective mentoring of novice principals, collaborative focus group opportunities for novice principals, and targeted on-going professional development (Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2010; Sparks, 2002). Each of the three design components are typically tied to organizational standards used to guide and evaluate principal performance (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

#### **Purpose of the Study**

As stated earlier, the study questions for this study are:

1. What is the consensus understanding among all the stake-holders regarding the current provisions for professional development for novice principals in Central District?

2. To what extent can the strengths and challenges of the current provisions be blended into a revised professional development program that aligns with current best practice in the field of educational administration?

This study will utilize data gathered from participants in order to inform the generation of grounded theory responses to the two key questions focused on the induction of novice principals. The grounded theory developed from data gathered from participant interviews, combined with best practices gleaned from the review of literature, will inform the professional development program design for induction of novice principals in Central District. In order to create a design that will have the greatest impact, the purpose of this study will build on the current principal supports employed by Central District in order to address the areas of greatest need and to facilitate the success of novice principals as related to the NCSSE 2013.

### **Overview of Research Process**

In taking this purpose-driven journey, the first step is to determine an adequate starting point. Breckenridge and Jones (2009) contend that for the novice researcher the most pressing task in the grounded theory process is to determine an appropriate starting point. Coyne (1997) explained that “the researcher must have some idea of where to sample, not necessarily what to sample for, or where it will lead” (p. 625). Therefore, establishing a reasonable starting point provides a solid point of reference from which to launch the theoretical sampling process.

Consequently, my research will initially include analysis of quantitative data in order to provide a firm starting point, and then transition to the qualitative theoretical sampling process driven by the purpose of this study. Participants will be interviewed using a voice recorder to gather their perspectives concerning present assistive practices within Central District in response to the following general, open-ended questions.



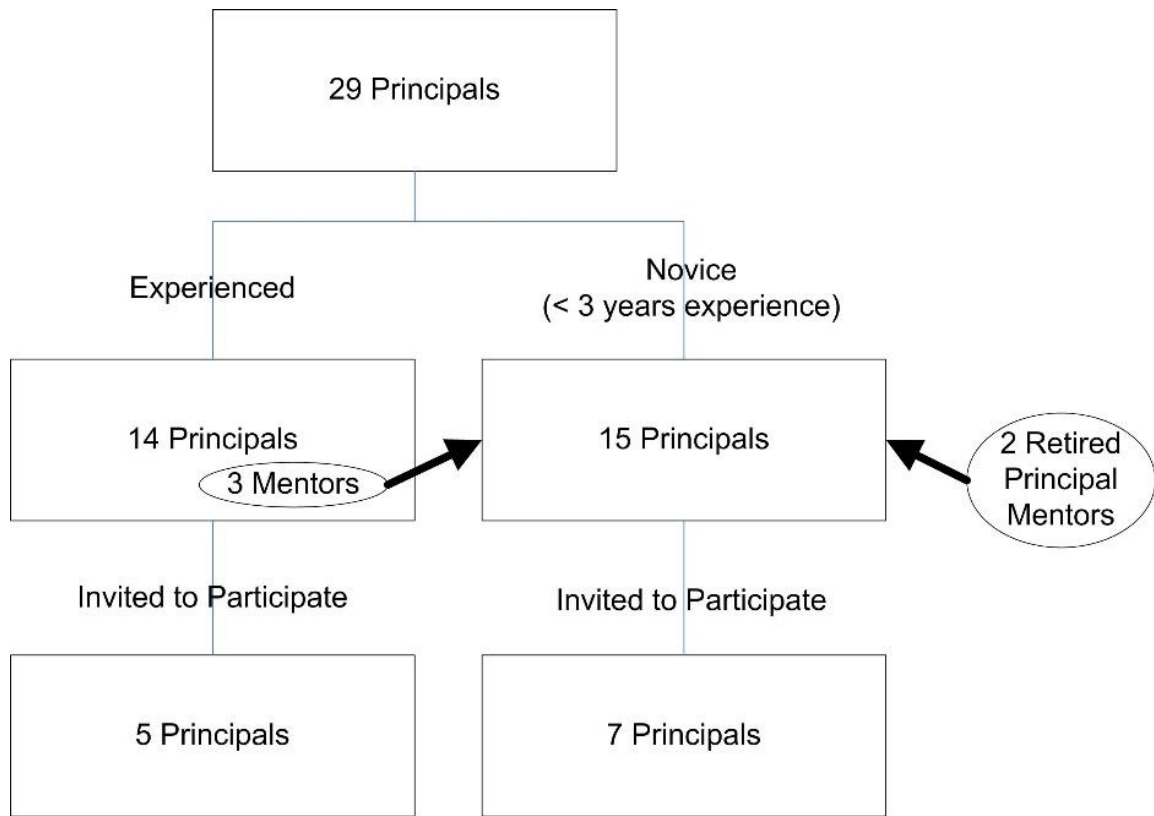
1. What Central District practices are in place to support induction of novice principals, and how effective are these?
2. What areas of the NC Standards for School Executives are addressed well by Central District's current practices?
3. What areas of the NC Standards for School Executives are not addressed well by Central District's current practices?

Data gathered through interviews will be transcribed and analysis will commence with coding, categorization, and memo writing. Subsequent coding and categorization of the data will aid me in later development of grounded theory, and will guide me to where and with whom I need to follow up in order to enhance my understanding

Throughout the data-gathering process, grounded theory will be developed. However, when theoretical sampling reaches the saturation point, interviews will cease and there will no longer be a need to gather data. The grounded theory, in conjunction with best practices identified through review of literature, will inform the design of an induction program for novice principals in Central District.

### **Study Participants**

As shown in Figure 3, 15 of Central District's 29 principals are within their first three years as a principal, categorizing them as novice principals in the context of this study, while the remaining 14 are categorized as experienced (NCDPI, 2013). This study will not further disaggregate principal participants into school level groups such as elementary and secondary. The purpose of this study is to determine an induction process that can be applied to novice principals at all levels, on the understanding that transition from one level of administration to another may create an environment in which a principal will again find himself or herself in the



*Figure 3. Relationships among proposed study participants.*

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role of novice principal. Additionally, there are five individuals who have been assigned as mentors within Central District including three chosen from the experienced principal group and two individuals who are retired from the principalship. I will invite novice principals, assigned mentors, and non-mentor, experienced principals to participate in the data collection phase of my research. My intent is to solicit participation from seventeen individuals including seven novice principals, five experienced principals, and five principal mentors.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship among the proposed participants. The rectangle at the top represents the total number of principals. Immediately below the total is divided into subsets of experienced and novice. The bottom rectangles represent the preferred number of volunteer participants from the experienced and novice groups. Circles represent the total number of principal mentors assigned by Central District.

Participants for the study will be invited through a letter detailing the study process (see Appendix B), and will be contacted via email or telephone as needed. Throughout the data-gathering process the confidentiality of participants will be restricted. Anonymous identifying labels for participants will be utilized to ensure continued confidentiality during the research process and subsequent publication of findings.

### **Design of Research**

The process of developing an effective program for the induction of novice principals will utilize a four-tiered approach involving a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methodology during the research phases. The four tiers to be described in detail below are:

- Tier 1: The collection of background and situational information from participants through multiple choice questions.

- Tier 2: Likert-scale ratings of statements to be completed by participants concerning their perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses as principals in relation to the NCSSE.
- Tier 3: Interviews of participants and application of theoretical sampling in order to develop grounded theory.
- Tier 4: Based upon results of research data collected from Tiers 1 through 3 and information detailed in the review of literature, an induction process for novice principals will be proposed.

### **Tier 1: Multiple Choice Questions**

Tier 1 is the initial step in the research process in which principal participants will be invited to provide responses to multiple-choice questions distributed in print format. Tier 1 will include only the novice and experienced principal members of the participant groups, as multiple choice questions are tailored for participants holding the position of principal. The multiple-choice questions (see Appendix E) are designed to provide historical information about participants as well as to gather factual information concerning support opportunities they experienced during their time as novice principals. Through analysis of these responses, I will attempt to identify historical trends or commonalities, as well as apparent differences based upon school locations, types, and pathways to the principalship. The ability to uncover common responses among all participants will potentially assist in determining a platform from which to launch the qualitative theoretical sampling portion of the study. Distinct differences may also provide differentiated perspectives based upon school locations and demographic make-up.

## **Tier 2: Likert-Scale Questions**

The second tier of data collection will employ Likert-scale statements aligned to the NCSSE (see Appendix F). Tier 2 will involve only the novice and experienced principal members of the participant groups. Mentors are not included in Tier 2 because a desired result is to receive feedback about support provided within Central District in relation to evaluative indicators of the NCSSE which may, in part, include perspectives as they relate to mentor support. The NCSSE 2013 standards are utilized by districts state-wide to evaluate principals, and have been adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education as the catalog of essential leadership skills of effective school principals (NC SBE, 2013). Because the NCSSE 2013 are understood and recognized by principals and mentors alike as the scale by which all principals within Central District are ultimately evaluated, the common use and understanding of the NCSSE 2013 should aid the efficiency of the data-gathering and analysis process. Through the Likert-scale statements aligned to the NCSSE 2013, participants will rate their confidence level, drawing upon their perceptions during their first three years as principals in Central District, as it pertains to each standard. Tabulation of Likert-scale responses will also aid in establishing a starting platform for qualitative theoretical sampling. Considering the length of the NCSSE 2013, some repetition of language among different standards has been removed (see Appendix F). Participants will be invited to read each statement and rate their confidence levels on a Likert-scale ranging from one (indicating they strongly disagree with the statement) to five (indicating that they strongly agree with the statement).

## **Sample Likert-Scale Rating**

The NCSSE employs multiple standards from seven leadership domains covering (a) Strategic Leadership, (b) Instructional Leadership, (c) Cultural Leadership, (d) Human Resource

Leadership, (e) Managerial Leadership, (f) External Development Leadership, and (g) Micro-political Leadership. Within each of these domains multiple standards detail behavioral or functional expectations that must be met in order to be rated as either “distinguished,” “accomplished,” “proficient,” “developing,” or “not demonstrated.”

As an example, from the NCSSE 2013 domain of Strategic Leadership, the phrase “*Systematically challenges the status quo by leading change with potentially beneficial outcomes*” is an example of a standard used in rating principal performance. The Likert scale statement created to align with this standard will be, “*As a novice principal I was confident in leading school-wide change.*” Participants will be invited to read the Likert-scale statement prior to rating their level of agreement with the statement based upon how they felt during their novice years as principal. Data gathered and analyzed from Likert scale responses will allow me to prioritize perceived areas of weakness or strength.

### **Tier 3: Interviews**

The third part of data gathering corresponds with the transition to the qualitative portion of my study, and will involve interviews utilizing open-ended questions to be posed during face-to-face interviews with participants. Interview participants will consist of novice principals, experienced principals, and individuals who have served as mentors. Open-ended questions that are designed for principals will allow principal participants the opportunity to elaborate more on their experiences during the novice principal years (see Appendix G). Questions designed for the interviews with mentors will allow the district-assigned mentors the opportunity to provide information from the perspective of the mentor-mentee relationship as it relates to the needs of novice principals as well as perceptions of mentor preparedness and capability to provide mentor services (see Appendix H). Responses to interview questions will be coded. Throughout the

analysis, memo writing will facilitate the determination of areas that need follow-up through continued discussion with participants (Glaser, 1978) until reaching data saturation, indicating that the continued collection of data is no longer generating new avenues to explore (Glaser, 1992).

The interview process for all groups of participants is designed to be initially broad in nature around the aforementioned components of effective induction: (a) mentoring of novice principals, (b) collaborative opportunities for novice principals, and (c) targeted on-going professional development. The broad nature of the interview questions will allow me to move through the coding and memo-writing process and to probe more deeply into the three component areas listed above through follow-up questions or follow-up interviews as needed (Coyne, 1997).

I will attempt to apply what is often referred to as a constructivist approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007) during my study. Application of a constructivist approach implies that during the process of grounded theory development I very closely utilize the words of the participants in order to avoid unconsciously contaminating the grounded theory development with my personal experiences or biases. As an opponent of the constructivist concept, Glaser (2012) asserts that all things are data and that personal bias is simply a factor to be addressed in development of grounded theory, but that it does not warrant a separate approach in development of grounded theory. However, Bryant and Charmaz (2007) as well as Strauss and Corbin (2009) assert that a researcher can effectively minimize personal bias by maintaining a more narrow focus on the words of participants, thus reducing the opportunity for personal bias to infiltrate the process.

During all parts of the data-gathering process, it is my intention is to create an environment in which participants feel safe and comfortable with responding truthfully and

candidly about their experiences. During the interview process a voice recorder will be utilized in order to facilitate later transcription of the interviews. Transcription of interviews will help me to focus upon the responses of participants and aid in coding, writing of memos, and development of grounded theory.

#### **Tier 4: Synthesis of Data for Design**

The product from the first two tiers of the research design and the subsequent theoretical sampling process of Tier 3 will result in the development of grounded theory related to a professional development program design for the induction of novice principals within Central District. Throughout the synthesis process, I will maintain focus upon the two central questions that form the foundation of the purpose of this study and subsequently use the knowledge I have gained when designing induction for novice principals. Ultimately, the design of an induction program for novice principals should be specifically built upon best practices already outlined through my review of the literature, and include the three components of (a) effective mentoring, (b) a collaborative focus, and (c) targeted on-going professional development.

In anticipation of what the professional development program design will entail there are various program design aspects to consider. Villani (2006) asserts that induction of novice principals includes a dual approach of professional development structures planned and implemented by the district as well as intentional mentor support. There are several potential options to consider in designing professional development support structures including; district orientation for new principals, guidance opportunities provided by the superintendent and senior staff, networks of experienced and beginning principals, support through principal associations, workshops and conferences, visitations and shadowing of principal peers, and readings or book studies (Villani, 2006, p. 19). In facilitating mentor support, Villani (2006) asserts that each



mentor should meet specific criteria established by the district for selection, undergo coaching training, have a clear understanding of district established roles and responsibilities of a mentor, and that mentors should not have any evaluative responsibilities (pp. 21-23). As an important aspect of the mentor-protégé relationship, Villani further asserts that a mentor should act as a confidant to the novice principal, providing support services where the novice principal can confidentially share concerns as well as have the opportunity to gain practical, situational knowledge.

My design of a professional development program for novice principal induction will initially explore a standards-based approach to program design with thought given to potentially include some of Villani's options for dual support of novice principals. As previously mentioned, the anticipated by-product of my program design is to help principals remain in the principalship long enough to attain experienced status. It therefore follows that the program should assist novice principals to rapidly acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve high evaluation scores as they relate to the indicators of the NCSSE 2013, thus a standards based approach. In achieving these goals, a backward design approach will be utilized with the NCSSE 2013 as the authoritative resource or rubric for prioritizing potential aspects of the design.

In executing the process that leads to design, each tier of the research process will naturally feed into the next. Information from Tier 1 will provide a baseline understanding of who is involved (participants) in the research process. Tier 2 will assist in narrowing down the areas of focus, based upon perceived strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the NCSSE 2013, and inform additional questions that I may create and add to the open-ended questions in Tier 3. Both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the first three tiers of the

methodology process will expectantly reveal common needs among novice principals in Central District. Subsequently, the determination of common needs should also be helpful in determining which support structures are needed as well as which indicators from the NCSSE 2013 demand the greatest amount of focus. Finally, the data gathered will potentially advise and support the roles and responsibilities of mentors.

### **Consideration Prior to Implementation**

Upon completion of my professional development program design for novice principals, it will be favorable to receive feedback from participants concerning the design prior to implementation. Feedback will inform possible adjustments to the final design, and ensure participant support of the design. The desire is to earn a favorable consensus for the program design as a whole so that the administration of Central District will be committed to introducing the professional development program design forthwith.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The research process designed for this study incorporated a mixed methods approach which began with a quantitative portion consisting of a two-part survey. Survey results informed interview questions for the qualitative portion of my research. All data gathered helped me to understand better the responses of principals and mentors to the following questions.

1. What Central District practices are in place to support induction of novice principals, and how effective are these?
2. What areas of the NC Standards for School Executives are addressed well by Central District's current practices?
3. What areas of the NC Standards for School Executives are not addressed well by Central District's current practices?

I have applied my analysis of data gathered from each part of my mixed methods study to the following two central questions in order to develop a professional development design for the induction of novice principals in Central District.

1. What is the consensus understanding among all the stake-holders regarding the current provisions for professional development for novice principals in Central District?
2. To what extent can the strengths and challenges of the current provisions be blended into a revised professional development program that aligns with current best practice in the field of educational administration?

### **Quantitative Results**

The quantitative portion of the study consisted of a two part survey. The first part of the survey was multiple choice and was designed to glean background information about the group

of Central District principals invited to participate. The second part of the survey consisted of Likert scale ratings representing principals' perceptions indicating their confidence levels in the first three years of their principalships as they relate to the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSBE, 2013). The complete surveys are included in Appendix E and Appendix F.

My original intent was to survey seven novice principals and five experienced principals. However, recent administrative changes altered the availability of experienced principals in Central District. Therefore, of the twelve principals surveyed, nine are novice level and three are experienced. In passing, it is of some interest in terms of the context of my study to note that the recent changes actually increased the number of novice principals in Central District.

### **Participant Background Information**

The twelve principals who participated in the survey all indicated that they were assigned to their first principalship in Central District and all were promoted from the position of assistant principal. The fact that all principals interviewed, both experienced and novice, were hired from the assistant principal ranks is worth noting and sends a strong message to Central District about the most common applicant pool in acquisition of new principals. Some thought should be dedicated to how Central District not only supports novice principals, but also how thoroughly it prepares those who are most likely to become novice principals.

Half of the survey group were principals in schools located in urban areas, while five were located in areas considered to be rural, and one was assigned to a school identified as located in a suburban area. Eleven schools in which principals were surveyed have a free and reduced lunch percentage that exceed 75% and school sizes vary ranging from fewer than 300 students to schools exceeding 600 students. Table 2 summarizes the data relating to school size.

Table 2

*School Sizes*

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Student Population	Number
Fewer than 300	1
300 - 599	7
600 - 899	4
900 or more	0
Total	12

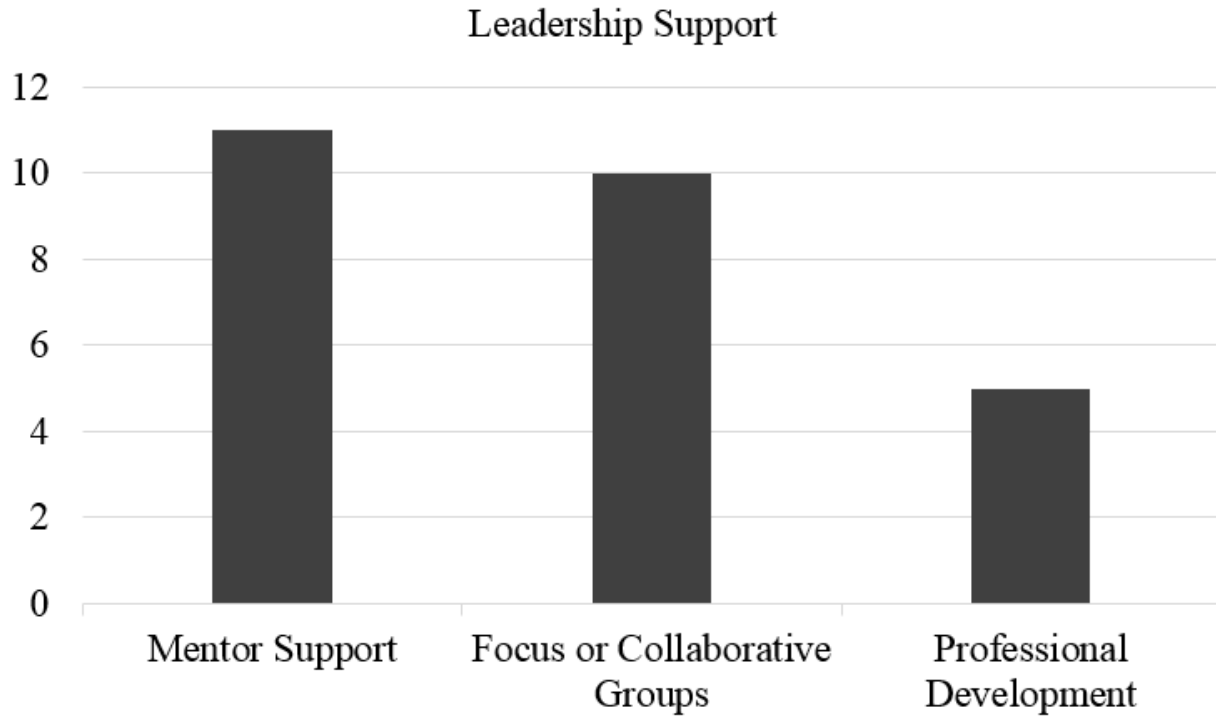
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The variety of school sizes, locations, and demographic make-up as well as the innate challenges that come with high poverty populations are all issues that may need consideration when determining who will serve as mentors as well as potential collaborative learning groups for professional development. Additionally, a new principal's preparedness may also be influenced by where they served as assistant principal prior to becoming a principal including aspects of school size, demographic make-up, and whether or not the school was high poverty.

The participating principals indicated a variety of information concerning support provided by Central District during their first three years as principal. Eleven principals were assigned a mentor during their first year as a principal. In accord with current Central District practice, mentor support is provided only during the first year. Of those eleven, four were assigned a mentor who is also an active experienced principal or active central level administrator, six were assigned a mentor who is a retired administrator, and one indicated that the person assigned as mentor is someone who does not fit either the active or retired school administrator description.

In respect to additional support provided by Central District during their novice years, the majority of principals indicated that they have participated in collaborative group activities, while fewer than half participated in ongoing professional development linked to school leadership. Figure 4 summarizes the data relating to leadership support.

Collaborative group opportunities were primarily described as district led meetings however some indicated that they had also participated in other focus group opportunities with principal colleagues. One principal indicated that neither collaborative group nor focus group opportunities were experienced and therefore responded with "no leadership growth opportunities."



*Note.* Vertical bars represent the number of principals who participated in each form of leadership support.

*Figure 4.* Types of leadership support.

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In surveying ongoing leadership professional development opportunities, nine of twelve principals submitted that district led meetings also included opportunities for professional development, six indicated that they had participated in state led leadership professional development opportunities, and two indicated that they had not participated in any professional development opportunities during their novice years as principal.

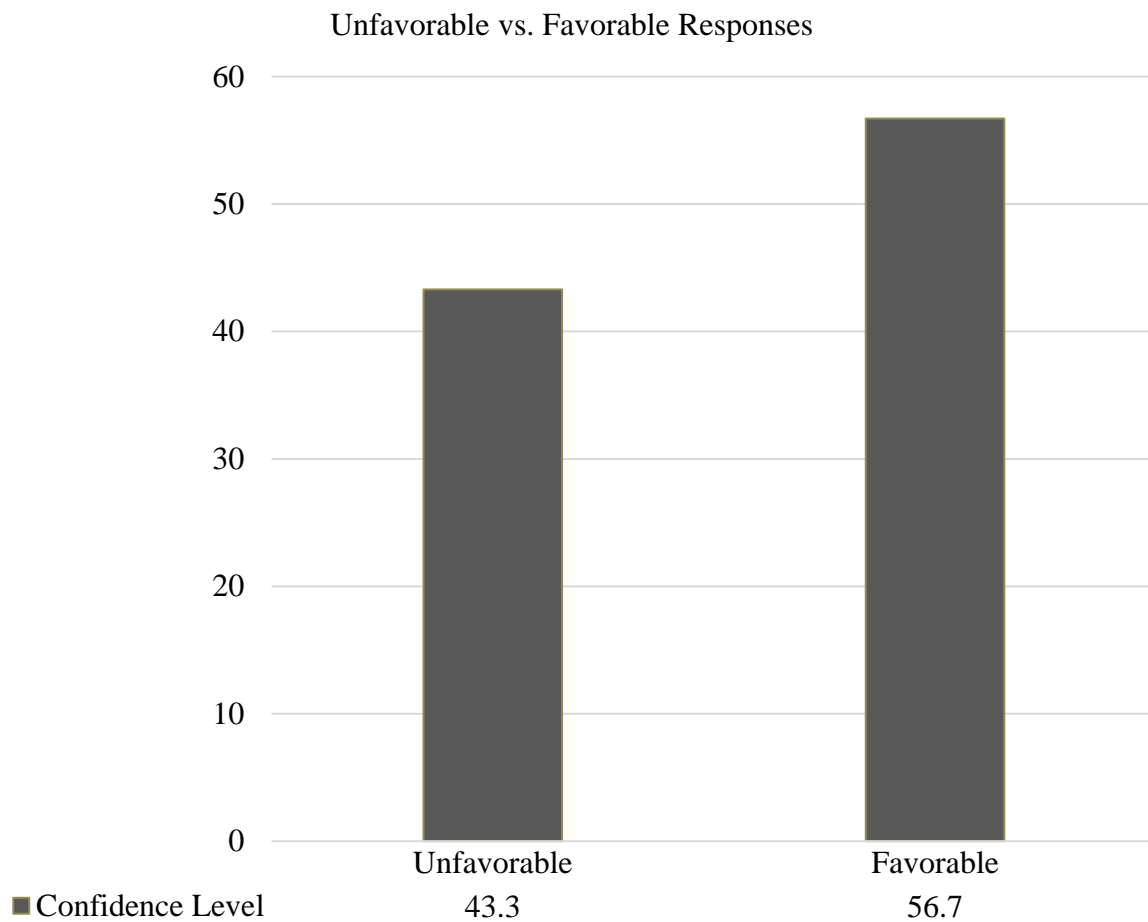
### **Perception of Confidence from Likert Scale Surveys**

The Likert scale survey statements were designed to align with the standards of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives 2013. The responses are perceptual ratings indicating the level of confidence principals had during their novice years as it relates to fulfillment of the NCSSE. In analyzing results, responses of “agree” or “strongly agree” are considered favorable responses. Responses of “neutral”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” indicate unfavorable response. Response percentages were calculated at three levels with the intention of providing more specific data as I progressed through each level of analysis. The levels from most general to most specific are: (a) total combined composite, (b) average composite by response type, and (c) average results per individual standard.

### **Total Combined Composite Results**

By way of reminder, the total combined composite percentage is comprised of all responses deemed unfavorable, (“neutral,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree”), and all responses deemed favorable, (“agree” or “strongly agree”). The total combined composite results infer several opportunities in the design of induction for novice principals in Central District. This inference is supported by 43.3% of responses that are deemed as unfavorable responses. Figure 5 summarizes unfavorable versus favorable responses.





*Note.* Vertical bars represent the percentage of unfavorable and favorable responses from the combined composite of Likert scale surveys.

*Figure 5.* Unfavorable vs. favorable responses.

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### **Average Composite by Response Type**

In drilling deeper through the combined composite results, 82.1% of responses are borderline, indicating that they were marked as either “neutral” or “agree.” There were 51.7% of responses rated as “agree,” and 30.4% of responses were rated as neutral. The perceived confidence levels of principals during their novice year for all 48 indicators resulted in only five percent of responses indicating that they were highly confident in fulfilling the standards of the NCSSE 2013. Table 3 summarizes the average composite by response type.

### **Composite by Individual Standard Categories**

The average composite of responses to individual standard categories reveals a higher percentage of confidence among surveyed participants in the standard categories of Instructional Leadership, Cultural Leadership, and Human Resource Leadership. Confidence ratings in the standard categories of Strategic Leadership, Managerial Leadership, and Micropolitical Leadership demonstrate a fairly balanced percentage, while the category of External Development Leadership indicates a lower percentage of confidence. In all categories there exists a significant percentage of unfavorable responses. This significant percentage of unfavorable responses may be addressed for improvement through a professional development design for induction of novice principals. Figure 6 represents composite results by individual standard categories. In analyzing composite results by individual standard categories, the variance of favorable responses for cultural leadership and human resources leadership as compared to the other five categories is worth noting. The question arises as to whether standards attributed to the categories of cultural leadership and human resource leadership were more common to the assistant principal role and thus carried over to the role of novice principal.

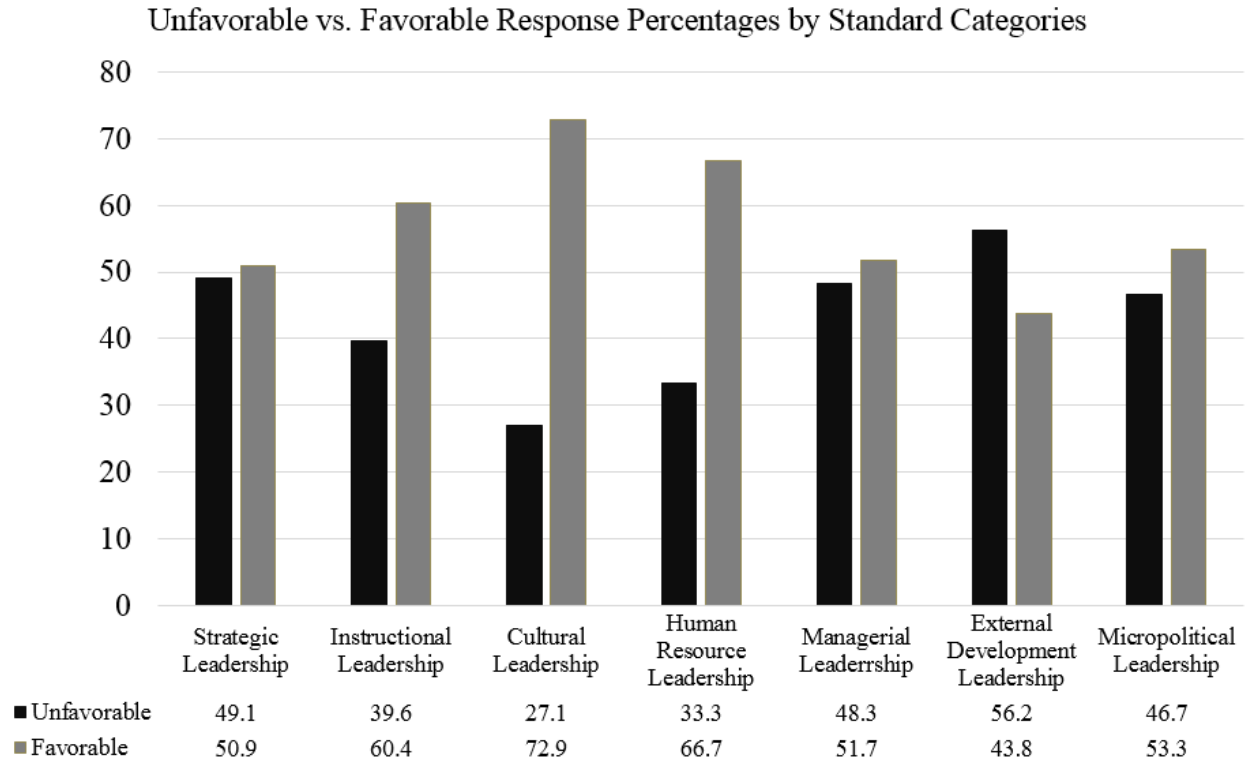
Table 3

*Confidence Level – Combined Composite*

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Likert Scale Rating	Percent
Strongly Disagree	.4
Disagree	12.5
Neutral	30.4
Agree	51.7
Strongly Agree	5
Total	100

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*Note.* Vertical bars represent the percentage of unfavorable and favorable responses from the standard categories of Likert scale surveys.

*Figure 6.* Unfavorable vs. favorable response percentages by standard categories.

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## **Average Results by Individual Standard Overview**

Analysis of individual standards is intended to prioritize specific standards in which a high percentage of participants indicated that they lacked sufficient confidence during their novice years as principal. The benchmark for prioritization is any standard receiving greater than a 40% average of unfavorable rankings. This would indicate that at least five of the twelve survey participants recorded an unfavorable rating of three “neutral,” two “disagree,” or one “strongly disagree” when they reviewed the Likert scale statement related to a specific standard. Analysis of the individual standards is provided in Table 4.

### **Quantitative Summary**

Quantitative data gathered from surveys support possible historical inconsistencies in structures of support for novice principals within Central District. These historical inconsistencies include (a) the fact that some participants were assigned mentors while others were not, (b) only a few participants were involved in focus groups that specifically addressed the needs of novice principals, and (c) there are no known professional development opportunities that specifically address the needs of novice principals across the broad spectrum of the NCSSE 2013. The practice of focus groups for novice principals was briefly in place under a previous superintendent’s administration and no longer exists. Professional development in Central District is primarily linked to the instructional leadership standard alone and is provided by the curriculum and instruction department to all principals during the monthly administrative staff meetings.

It is also apparent that some principal participants perceive categorical supports such as collaborative or focus group opportunities and leadership professional development as being defined as what they commonly experience through routine district led meetings. However, I

Table 4

*High Priority Standards from Likert Scale Surveys*

Standard Category	Standard Area - 40% or Greater Unfavorable Rating
Strategic Leadership	Leading School-wide change Analysis of data for improvement Developing and implementing new processes Developing a school's vision, mission, values, and goals Developing a process to review and revise programming in order to adhere to the school's vision, mission, values, and goals Developing collaborative structures for developing and implementing the school improvement plan Developing and assigning distributive leadership roles
Instructional Leadership	Implementation of professional learning communities for analysis of formative data and revisions to instruction Processes for allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and teacher needs Providing support for underperforming teachers Creating processes that protect teachers from issues that detract from instructional time
Cultural Leadership	None
Human Resource Leadership	Providing continuing adult learning opportunities Creating processes for hiring Assignment of staff in the most effective placements
Managerial Leadership	Balancing the operational budget for school programming Resolution of school-based problems or conflicts Development of a master schedule
External Development Leadership	Soliciting stakeholder input and support from parents Advocating from your school as well as soliciting input and support from community organizations Creating opportunities to showcase the school's successes Communicating with the media to promote the school's accomplishments

Table 4 (continued)

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Standard Category	Standard Area - 40% or Greater Unfavorable Rating
Micropolitical Leadership	Creating systems for staff feedback Balancing school needs with personal needs of staff members Realizing and facilitating resolutions to staff disagreements or discordant issues in the school Anticipating potential risks and problems with implementation of new school programs

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argue from the Likert data that not all individual principal participants shared this definition and perceived categorical supports as something different or in addition to supports that all principals receive during district meetings. It is also apparent from the significant percentage of unfavorable responses to the Likert scale statements that any targeted supports provided by the district may need to refocus priorities in order to address the NCSSE 2013 areas that the participants perceive as lacking in their own novice principal experiences. Results of the two-part survey warrant deeper investigation in the qualitative phase of the study and will be examined through interviews of research participants.

### **Qualitative Results**

The principals who participated in the interview process were the same as those who completed the survey questionnaires. They included nine novice principals and three experienced principals. I asked all principals the same interview questions. In addition, I interviewed five mentors. The mentors did not complete the survey questionnaire prior to interviews. Two of the mentors I interviewed are retired staff employed part-time by Central District for the purpose of mentoring, while three are currently employed full-time by Central District in a capacity other than mentor. The summary of data gathered through interviews will be analyzed through the lens of question one from the study questions:

1. What Central District practices are in place to support induction of novice principals, and how effective are these?

### **Most Frequent Theme from Interview Participants**

During the interview process the theme that continued to resurface among novice principals, experienced principals, and mentors was how to cope with the quantity and diversity of challenges inherent in the principalship. This theme became very apparent when I asked each



participant to share the most significant challenge he or she experienced as a first year novice principal or witnessed as a mentor. There were a variety of responses including responses about school finance, development of a healthy school culture, the hiring process, staff capacity, and specialized programming. Although responses varied in what constituted the most significant challenge for first year novice principals, responses were consistently framed in the context of time management and how to address significant challenges in a setting that pulled principals in many different directions on a daily basis. The theme of coping with quantity and diversity of challenges inherent to the principalship remained constant throughout. For example:

Participant 6 - Being able to juggle all aspects of the job as it came at me. And what I mean by saying that, the instructional side, what I would call the management side, the budget side, the parent and community side. I didn't realize how many hats you wear at one time. That was probably my greatest struggle, having to figure out, especially that first year, of how to juggle and prioritize the workload.

Participant 12 - But when you come into the seat of administration, there are just so many nuances that take up such a large amount of time. You really don't see the impact of trying to manage all those things, from the budget piece to the bus piece to the teacher piece and teacher absences and subs. All those things mashed together create a substantial challenge and trying to manage it all, the nuances of having all of those things at the same time.

I also asked principal participants (a) what supports were provided by Central District during their novice years that they categorized as helpful, (b) what supports they found to be absent, and (c) what supports they would include if they could advise future novice principal support plans. Responses to these questions most frequently addressed the areas of mentor

support, training and professional development opportunities provided by the district, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. It is interesting that responses from participants typically aligned with topics revealed in the research phase of my study and detailed in my review of literature.

### **Central District Support Practices**

The primary practice established by Central District is the assignment of a principal mentor for first year principals. “First year” indicates that the principal is truly novice, and has not previously been assigned as a principal in another district or previously within Central District. Typically, the mentor assignment is for the first year only, however there are times that a mentor assignment may be extended into the novice principal’s second school year. This occurs when a novice principal is hired during the active school year and therefore the mentor assignment may be extended for his or her second school year. This is dependent upon the time of year when the novice principal was hired. For example, if a novice principal is hired after the midpoint of the active school year, the mentor assignment continues into his or her second school year.

From the interviews I conducted, neither the mentors nor principals were able to articulate the decision-making process of how mentors are selected, nor how they are assigned to novice principals. The selection and assignment of mentors appears to be the prerogative of the superintendent. It also became apparent through my interviews of experienced principals that the practice of mentor assignment to novice principals is a relatively new practice in that participant three from the experienced principal pool was not assigned a mentor during her novice years. Participant three began as a novice principal in 2012.

Mentor assignments varied in that some novice principals were assigned mentors who were active, full time principals at other schools, while other novice principals were assigned a retired individual who had been a principal at some point in his or her career prior to retirement.

As emerged from the interviews of novice principals, experienced principals, and mentors, the frequency and amount of time that mentors spent with novice principals varied. Full-time principals who were assigned as employee mentors were primarily available for distance support initiated by the novice principal, and mentoring was most typically conducted via telephone calls and emails. By contrast, retired staff who were assigned as mentors were able to spend time on campus with novice principals more often, and were able to provide face-to-face counseling or advice. The two retired mentors whom I interviewed spent a significant amount of time on campus with novice principals, and were also available via telephone and emails. Based upon interview responses, there are no established criteria regarding the frequency or amount of time that mentors are expected to follow in mentoring novice principals. In the absence of criteria, the frequency and duration are based upon the level of need determined through the judgment of the mentors and novice principals.

Central District also provides support in the form of monthly administrative staff meetings and school level roundtable meetings. "School level" refers to the levels of elementary, middle, and high schools. Monthly administrative staff meetings are informational in nature, providing an opportunity for district level staff to provide operational updates and receive feedback from school level administration. Roundtable meetings are led by district level instructional staff, but principals play a participatory role. The participatory role includes discussion about concepts of current instructional practices as well as instructional planning at a district level. Monthly administrative staff meetings and roundtable meetings received mixed

feedback from interview participants. Some reflected upon the positive impact of the meetings, whereas others felt they were too informational and did not provide enough time to ask questions or collaborate with colleagues. In retrospect, the purpose of the monthly meetings is not targeted specifically to the needs of novice principals, but they do appear to have an overall positive impact upon the learning of operational and instructional processes by default.

Another support provided by Central District for novice principals is access to district level leadership staff including executive directors, directors, specialists, and coaches. The executive directors are assigned specifically to school levels including the Executive Director for Elementary, the Executive Director for Middle School, and the Executive Director for High School. Novice principals may contact his or her assigned executive director for advice or resolution to a question. As emerged from my interviews with mentors, the fact that executive directors have an evaluative role with principals has impacted the novice principals' willingness to contact executive directors. Novice principals, as emerged from my mentor interviews, may have a fear of appearing incompetent to executive directors, and therefore seek out others with whom to communicate about some questions or concerns.

Directors oversee departments at the district level such as exceptional children, federal programs, English as a second language, student services, career and technical education, and technology. As emerged from the interview responses provided by principal participants, directors are often contacted regarding how to apply budgeted funds, and to seek advice about legal applications, and how to obtain supplemental resources.

In addition, in the past, the superintendent held quarterly meetings with first year novice principals to provide a collaborative opportunity. Principals who were first year novice at the

time this practice was in place spoke positively about these meetings. With transition in district leadership, this practice has ceased, and current novice principals do not have this resource.

In summary, Central District provides three levels of support that address coaching or mentoring, professional development opportunities, and the ability to collaborate. These are embedded in: (a) the first year active mentoring program, (b) monthly administrative staff and roundtable meetings, and (c) district level support personnel. However, with the exception of the mentor assignment during the first year of principalship, these are not targeted to the specific needs of novice principals.

### **Mentor Support**

Mentor support provided by Central District for first year novice principals received both positive and negative ratings by principal participants. It is apparent that there is a significant difference in novice principal support provided by retired mentors (those who have retired and have been rehired) versus employee mentors (those who are employed full-time in another capacity and have been assigned as mentors in addition to their current responsibilities). Retired mentors were not limited by the constraints of a full-time position, and therefore were more flexible in scheduling. This flexibility enabled retired mentors to visit campuses more frequently and to spend more time with first year novice principals. My analysis of interview responses yielded no recorded responses by either a principal or a mentor indicating that an employee mentor had actually visited the school of the first year novice principal. All reported employee mentor contact had been by phone or email. As such, it seems very apparent that retired mentors are able to provide greater and more sustained support to novice principals than employee mentors. Interview responses in reference to retired mentors were typically long and detailed and were very supportive in nature. Two examples include:

Participant 6 - They gave me a seasoned mentor. That was probably the most important thing I had. I would listen because she brought a wealth of experience and other perspectives.

Participant 8 – Well, I had a mentor my first year, and he was very helpful in helping me with my struggles in budget and hiring and everything else that I needed. I feel like I had very strong district support with that mentor, and I've never had a problem communicating so I always ask for help. I've had those supports in place, I feel like, from the beginning, so I think the mentor was very helpful for me.

Interviews of employee mentors validated that employee mentors were experienced principals at other schools in Central District during the time they served as mentors and that, as a consequence, they were assigned mentor responsibilities in addition to their roles as principals. The responses of the principal participants in my study about the support provided by employee mentors was brief, vague, and not as positive as responses about retired mentors. Principal participants expressed concern that employee mentors had their own schools to run, and some felt that communicating with the employee mentor was an inconvenience or burden to the mentor. Additionally, some first year novice principals also expressed a concern that too frequent communication with the employee mentor would give the appearance of incompetence to a colleague. For example:

Participant 2 - I love the idea of a mentor and I would like it not to be a colleague. I know it brings money into the equation but it's good to have a mentor separate from a buddy.

Participant 4 - I was assigned a principal mentor. It was another veteran principal. I talked to him a little bit but I talked more to the principal I was under, you know, as an assistant principal.

Participant 3 – (experienced principal participant who was not assigned a mentor) Well I would have liked to have had a mentor who could have come and spent time with me. I realize that no one really has the time to do it that way if you are a principal at your own school.

Throughout the interview process it emerged that novice first year principals who had retired mentors felt a greater level of support and advocacy, however, not in all cases.

Participant ten was a novice principal in an inner city school that is also a high poverty school. The retired mentor assigned brought experience from a rural background, and therefore novice principal participant ten had difficulty applying the advice provided by the mentor.

Participant 10 - So they were rural schools but they were so different than what I experienced here, so I felt like sometimes there was such a disconnect with what he offered to what I really needed as a first year principal, and I found it really hard to tell him in a professional way “that’s good, but that’s not what I need right now.”

Interview responses of novice principals and experienced principals, as well as the mentors, yielded three topics of interest. The topics were (a) the right fit, (b) the trust factor, and (c) the selection and training of mentors. All three of these topics play integral roles in the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship, and each is discussed in the subsection as follows.

## **The Right Fit**

The statement of participant ten alludes to possibly the most important factor in the mentor-mentee relationship, finding the right fit in the mentor-mentee relationship. Responses from both principal and mentor participants place a great deal of emphasis upon assignment of a mentor who fits well with the novice principal. Participants described the right fit as one in which the experiences of the mentor would mesh with the needs of the novice principal, and one where personalities would not get in the way of constructive communication.

Participant 13 - But you have to have some idea of how to match that person with someone who will benefit them and who will be able to support them.

Participant 12 - What wasn't my mentor's strong suit was the budgetary piece and his support piece that would have been more beneficial to me.

Participant 14 – You have to know the personality of the principal. You have to know the personality of the mentor. You need to find someone where the personalities do not clash.

Finding the right fit crossed into multiple areas including not only personality, but also relevant experiences. Relevant experiences pertain to the location, size, and demographic type of school of the mentor's prior experience and the principal's current reality. Principals assigned to rural area school expressed more positive comments concerning mentors who had been principals in rural schools. Likewise, principals in urban or inner city schools expressed a need for mentors who had experiences in urban or inner city schools.

## **Trust**

Another factor that commonly surfaced during interviews was the factor of trust. Both mentors and mentees responded positively about maintaining trust, and in no cases was there a



response that concluded the trust factor in the relationship was violated. For principal participants, the trust factor was inferred and expected simply by the nature of the relationship. However for mentor participants, building trust was the most important, initial role in the relationship. Trust had to be established before open dialogue could be expected.

Participant 15 (retired mentor participant) – I think that would probably be important and knowing that they just have somebody they can talk to without feeling that they are not going to be trusted. They have to feel that you trust them and they can ask questions that they may not feel comfortable talking to people in central office about, their directors.

For principal participants, the highest priority factor remained the counsel or advice that the mentor could provide to address questions and gaps in their knowledge. Throughout my interviews, the recurring theme of how to cope with the quantity and diversity of challenges inherent to the principalship remained constant. Interviews asserted that without establishing the trustworthy assurance that conversations would be held in confidence and therefore remain only between the mentor and mentee, progress in addressing knowledge gaps and the multiple challenges of the principalship could not occur.

### **Selection and Training**

At present there are no known criteria for selection of who will serve as mentor nor is there any required training to serve as a mentor. As previously stated, the sole criterion for serving as a mentor is to meet with the superintendent's approval. None-the-less, there were many responses, especially from mentors, related to selection and training. The responses were affirmative and consistent in that, prior to selection, (a) mentors should have a significant number of years of experience, (b) mentors should be the right fit for novice principals, and that

(c) mentors should be able to demonstrate that they were successful in the principalship. That is not to say that any mentor involved in this study did not fit all of these criteria, but my interviews highlighted that, currently, there is no known vetting system in place to ensure all criteria are met before a mentor is assigned to a first year novice principal. As a result, at times, the mentor was less effective than desired. This may be the result of some unknown factors, however, several of the participants asserted that a more intentional effort in assessing the credentials of mentors is a necessary step in the selection process.

Participant 13 – I think one thing would be making sure, it's not really training, but experience, I think they should have a certain level of experience (as principals), whether it be 3 years or 5 years.

Participant 17 – I think they should be chosen based on their experience as a principal, and based on their experience at the level of where they're going to be working with the principal. I think that's very important for them and based on how successful they were as principals.

Participant 16 – They definitely have to have some experience in that level and they also have to have, for example, if I work in an elementary school I need to have some experience and background in an elementary school.

In the area of training of mentors, respondents were unanimous in their support for mentor training, and that it should be determined at the local level, taking into account the size, level, and demographic make-up of a school. The framework of mentor training should also involve experiential feedback from mentors and principals who have already been through the mentor-mentee experience. Training should also include making the mentor aware of district

goals and initiatives. Although some aspects of mentor training may be common for all participants, there are other factors that would be more individualized.

Participant 14 – I do feel like there should be some training for mentors and I feel like that a district should look at their principals who have been successful across the board whether it's inner city, suburban, or rural schools, small, large, medium, and sit down with them and talk with them about what things that a mentor should know.

Participant 16 – I do feel like they should go through some training. I think a mentor should also be abreast of the latest trends or guidelines or goals. And even if we were to look at some who are retired I think this should be a number of years that we view, you know, as far as their retirement years because we don't need anybody antiquated trying to provide them support with new trends.

Participant 17 – I think they need to keep abreast of what is going on and I think that they need to be a part of the staff development that takes place within the school system because things change.

### **Monthly Administrative Staff Meetings**

During interviews, all principals, novice and experienced, were asked to name the supports provided by the district that helped them during their novice years. I also asked them what supports were absent, and what they would have liked to have seen as supports from the district. In their responses, participants made reference to monthly administrative staff meetings as being somewhat supportive in relation to the novice principal experience. Monthly meetings in Central District consist of one day per month in which all school principals gather with district level leadership. The monthly meetings are divided into two parts. Part one of the meeting consists of operational and administrative updates, and is led by the superintendent, assistant

superintendents, or directors. Part two of the meetings consists of school level (elementary, middle, and high) roundtable discussions about instructional strategies and resources. The monthly meetings are designed to provide support to all principals, therefore, by default, novice principals receive useful information related to the running of their schools. However, as emerged from the interview responses, participants acknowledged that they need something in addition to monthly staff meetings that is more specific to the needs of novice principals.

Participant 6 – I do think that the principals meetings help. Just having that monthly check in face-to-face. Like, I think at the round tables, I've gotten a lot about guided reading, a lot about envision you know the different components like the opportunity to take math foundations which has been awesome so that's there, but more of the non-instructional that happened at the different levels. For example, I think the discipline piece, just ideas or suggestions. Because sometimes I feel like I'm at a loss about what to do next. I would just like more support and that area.

Responses to my interview questions continually circled back to the need for focused, collaborative opportunities to meet with other principals outside of the setting of structured monthly administrative staff meetings. Principal participants regretted the lack of opportunity to have open dialogue with colleagues in order to problem solve and learn from each other's experiences. Suggestions for improvement included initiating cohorts, or allowing principals the opportunity to meet away from the agenda of the district leadership. Experienced principals who were novice under a former administration recalled that there was a time when novice principals were allowed to convene once every quarter and have dialogue as a group with the superintendent and noted that such meetings have ceased. Principal participants indicated that they needed the opportunity to develop their own agenda based upon their unique needs and to

simply feel supported by the district. They saw value in being able to schedule work sessions where they could discuss, explore, and learn from each other given that there would have to be meeting norms to ensure constructive conversation.

Participant 11 – I think allowing the colleagues maybe to come together and have some more open dialogue. Being able to share with other folks on your own level about what's going on and that was beneficial.

Participant 7 – I guess some type of cohort. A novice principal support group. They would be able to do monthly meetings or have times they could come together and collaborate.

Participant 4 – That was under (former superintendent's name) leadership. He started a principal support group that helped tremendously because we were able to talk through different things and we found that we shared some of the same struggles. So it was good to talk through different things.

Monthly administrative staff meetings are necessary for the smooth running of Central District and to keep leadership informed of district initiatives and instructional strategies. As such, they indirectly have a positive impact upon novice principals, but they are not intended to address the specific needs of novice principals. Therefore, the need for a more purposeful, collaborative opportunity in which novice principals can have open dialogue with cohorts of principal colleagues would be a desirable addition to the Central District's monthly mandatory meeting.

### **District Level Leadership**

In addition to mentor support and monthly administrative staff meetings, Central District offers district level leadership as a support mechanism for all principals, including novice

principals. Included under the umbrella of district level leadership are executive directors assigned to the levels of elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools as well as departmental directors. Figure 7 demonstrates the organizational structure of administrators in Central District.

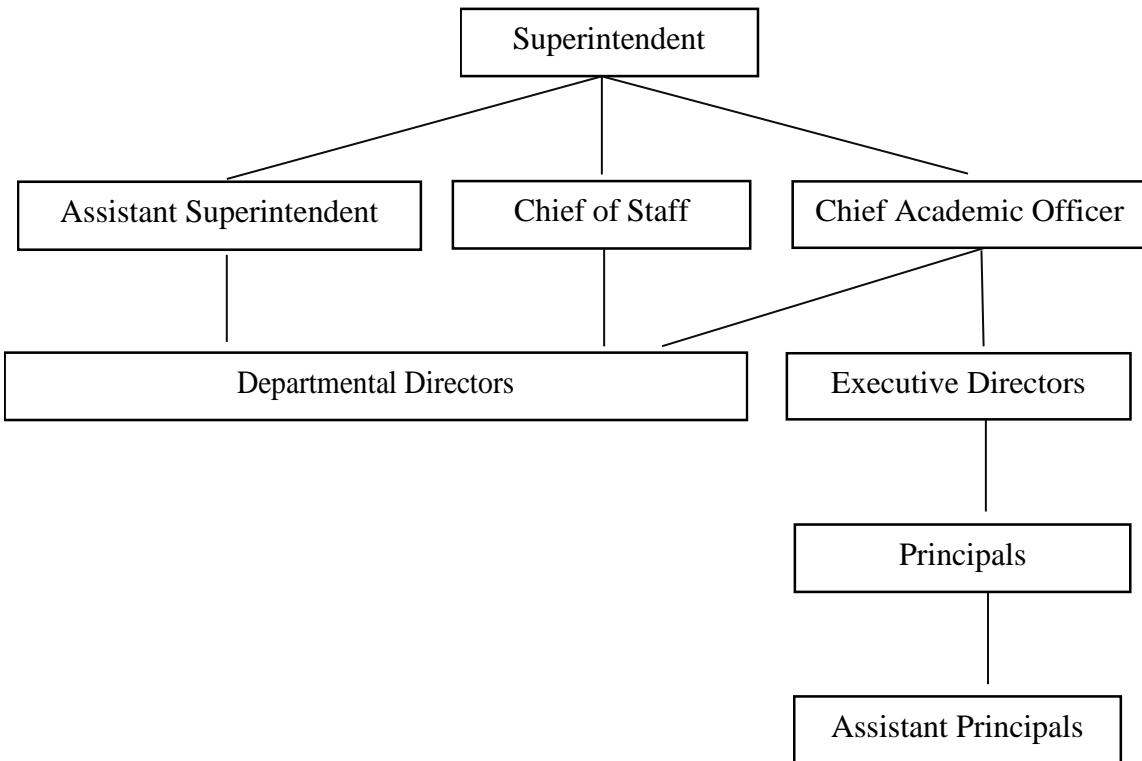
### **Executive Directors**

Principals are encouraged to contact executive directors as a first contact for most issues and questions. The participants' responses to my questions regarding communication with executive directors was mixed. Some participants pointed out that executive directors have an evaluative function in their relationship and, therefore, executive directors are not always their first choice in seeking resolution to questions or issues. The recurring concern of appearing incompetent inhibited novice principals' open communication with their evaluators.

Participant 6 – As a new principal you kind of walk on a tight wire because you're trying to navigate learning and looking and listening, as I was directed to do to learn and then lead, but while you're doing that, not appearing as incompetent. So that's the balancing act. So when you say additional support you don't want to look like everything you do you have to run by somebody, but then again you don't want to make a mistake so there's the, oh my goodness which way do I go?

Participant 13 – I feel like new principals don't want to be perceived as not knowing something so they will be less likely to ask for help.

However, in some instances, the executive directors were viewed as very helpful in helping principals to grow in knowledge. They were perceived as being in the process with principals, and, therefore, principals felt more comfortable in accessing support from executive directors.



*Figure 7. Administrative organizational structure of central district.*

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Participant 7 – The executive director was very hands-on and one-on-one with me and helpful. In reference to the areas where I needed support.

Participant 12 – And this year with (name) being the executive director for (level) school education, that has been even better. She specifically handles (school level). So any questions or concerns that I may have I am able to turn to her and get advice and influence about where to go and how to handle certain things.

### **Directors**

When I asked the question concerning what additional supports novice principals would have liked to have received from the district, participants provided a significant amount of feedback as it relates to departmentalized needs. Directors have the roles of managing departments, and because the functions of these departments have a direct impact on the daily operations of schools in Central District, novice principals found that these were the areas where they lacked a significant amount of knowledge. My interview responses also inferred that time management is a significant issue for principals and proactive departmental training provided by directors would play a positive role in assisting novice principals with more efficient decision-making and more effective management of day-to-day tasks.

Participant 2 – I'm not sure exactly what we offer right now for novice principals but I think there are just day-to-day operations that a new principal just has no clue exists.

Participant 6 – The second thing would be a first 90 days Survival Guide. It would include curriculum, HR, budgets, student services, you know, when to call central office.

Common department-specific topics surfaced as many participants mentioned the need for training opportunities. Directors have the knowledge to provide training in multiple areas of need expressed by novice principals, including:



- Information about different monetary allocations within school budgets and restrictions around different allocations such as Title One, other federal funds, state funds, and local funds.
- Finding and tracking of qualified candidates as well as vetting candidates for interview.
- The confusion that novice principals experience in the hiring process and mistakes that were made that slowed the hiring process and at times caused the loss of potential hires due to delays.
- Additional human resources training requested because of the gap in knowledge about how to deal with underperforming staff, and the process of dismissal.
- Lack of knowledge related to providing student support services for students in need of social-emotional support including how to navigate the complexities of exceptional children requirements.

Novice principals face multiple issues on a daily basis and their lack of departmental expertise causes inefficient use of limited time. Because principals have to make critical and time-sensitive decisions, providing necessary departmental knowledge in advance through departmentalized training opportunities is a support that is desirable for novice principals.

### **NCSSE 2013 Standards Addressed**

In determining which areas of the NCSSE 2013 that were supported well by the complete range of district-provided supports, all seven domains of the standards were addressed at different times in the ongoing relationship between the principals, mentors, and district staff. Dependent upon the circumstances, Central District provided supports based upon established practices and individualized needs. Responses from interview participants are varied as to the

effectiveness of district-provided supports making it apparent is that significant gaps remain. Additions to and refinement of the current support practices in Central District would provide greater support and would encompass more universally the needs of novice principals. Table 5 provides an overview of interview feedback regarding the support provided by Central District to novice principals, disaggregated in terms of the categories of NCSSE 2013.

### **Summary of Findings**

The review of literature supports that effective contemporary program design in education incorporates three major components: (a) coaching or mentoring opportunities for participants; (b) participation in collaborative learning communities; and (c) standards-based, continuing educational opportunities (Brown et al., 2014; Church et al., 2010; Hanover Research, 2012; Learning Forward, 2011; New Schools Venture Fund [NSVF], 2008). From my mixed methods study it is apparent that Central District has made provisions to provide one support structure specifically for first year novice principals and the remainder of support structures are general in nature and are in place for all of Central District's principals, regardless of experience level. These structures include: (a) mentors for first year novice principals, (b) informational sessions and instructional training for all principals through monthly administrative staff meetings, and (c) support staff available to principals as needed. With the exception of the mentor program for first year novice principals, there are no program structures that are specifically tailored to the needs of novice principals.

The quantitative portion of my study utilized a multiple choice questionnaire, short answer questions, and a Likert survey in order to gather initial data. The results from the multiple choice questionnaire revealed that eleven of the twelve principal participants were assigned mentors as support mechanisms during their first year only as principal. The

Table 5

*NCSSE (2013) Categories Addressed by Central District Supports for Novice Principals*

	Strategic Leadership	Instructional Leadership	Cultural Leadership	Human Resource Leadership	Managerial Leadership	External Development Leadership	Micropolitical Leadership
Mentor Support	X		X		X	X	X
Administrative Staff Meetings					X		
Roundtable Meetings		X					
Executive Directors	X	X	X	X	X		
Directors		X		X	X	X	
Educational Specialists and Instructional Coaches		X					

questionnaire also indicated that ten of the twelve principal participants felt that they had participated in focus or collaborative group activities, while five indicated they had participated in targeted professional development. Responses to the short answer questions called into question how principal participants defined focus or collaborative groups as well as professional development. From the responses, it was apparent that there was neither common understanding of what constituted focus or collaborative groups nor professional development for novice principals. The Likert survey revealed significant variability among principal participants as to their confidence in performing tasks related to the seven domains of the NCSSE. The most critical areas of concern were in the domains of strategic leadership, managerial leadership, external development leadership, and micropolitical leadership. Instructional leadership, cultural leadership, and human resource leadership received a higher percentage of favorable ratings, however, there remained a significant percentage of responses that were unfavorable in these three domains also.

The qualitative portion of my study consisted of interviews of novice principals, experienced principals, and mentors. First and foremost, interviews revealed the recurring theme of coping with the quantity and diversity of challenges inherent in the principalship. Additionally, through analysis of interview responses, I was able to make a deeper dive into topics that surfaced during the quantitative portion and to examine more closely the support structures provided by Central District.

In relation to mentoring, interviews uncovered that some of the assigned mentors are retired mentors while others are employee mentors who are also full-time, active principals. Retired mentors were able to provide a more comprehensive service to novice principals than that of employee mentors. Additionally, there are addressable factors in relation to how mentors

are assigned, specifically as they relate to congruent experiences between the mentor and mentee, leading to finding the right fit for novice principals.

In the areas of focus or collaborative group activities as well as professional development, most participants indicated that monthly administrative staff meetings was the setting in which these occurred. Since entering the principalship, only one principal participant indicated that she had been involved in professional development that was specifically targeted for improvement of principal leadership skills outside of the monthly administrative staff meetings. She indicated that the training was provided through her professional organization, not the district. None of the principal participants acknowledged professional development designed specifically for novice principals specifically in relation to the NCSSE.

All participants described a wide variety of specific gaps in knowledge inherent in being a novice principal that could be categorized as departmentalized knowledge. Directors provide fragments of this knowledge to principals upon request and as needed, however, at present there are no professional development structures in place to formalize the teaching of this knowledge base. Much of the departmental knowledge is learned by novice principals while on the job and through circumstances that require principals to investigate and research.

Lastly, interviews of experienced principals revealed that, in the past, focus or collaborative groups were available for novice principals, but that this practice ceased with changes in district leadership. Many participants conveyed a need to collaborate with colleagues in a self-established manner that is not subject to the agenda of district leadership. This type of professional collaboration would allow novice principals to identify both common and individual topics not routinely addressed in monthly administrative staff meetings, and to seek knowledge and advice from colleagues in order to address the topics.

This summary of my more detailed findings highlight a consensus understanding of the current provisions for professional development of novice principals in Central District as well as the strengths and challenges of these provisions. In the next chapter, I detail a set of recommendations for a revised professional development design which blends the current practices of the district with the best practices found in my review of literature.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

During interviews, participant six alluded to the formidable challenges that all principals face in “juggling all aspects of the job”. Understood from this statement are the enormity and complexity of responsibilities placed upon individuals once they enter the principalship. Also inferred from consistent interview feedback is that few if any novice principals truly understand how complex and demanding the responsibilities will be when they accept the role of principal. Therefore, implementation of a comprehensive plan for the induction of novice principals is a worthy endeavor for Central District.

Based upon the findings of my analysis of the research data collected from my study participants and information detailed in my review of literature, in this final chapter I will recommend a professional development design for the induction of novice principals in Central District. The data gathered from my review of literature and from my mixed methods study process were intended to aid in the determination of the components and processes of my recommended professional development design. The necessity of this study and subsequent professional development design are paramount, given the large cohort of novice principals created by frequent principal transfers or resignations within Central District. The issue of high principal turnover and increased numbers of novice principals facing Central District is not a localized phenomenon, but one that is affecting districts nationwide (Guterman, 2007; Hall, 2008; Johnson, 2005; United States Department of Education, 2010; Villani, 2008). Additionally, the need for well-trained principals is heightened when considering that the impact of the principal is second only to that of the classroom teacher (Leithwood et al., 2004). As such, the continued dilemma of high numbers of novice, less-experienced principals in Central District

creates a legitimate problem of practice faced by many school districts locally, at the state level, and nationwide.

In order to address the on-going problem of practice that Central District is experiencing, my study focused upon two study questions to inform an effective professional development design for the induction of novice principals. The study questions were:

1. What is the consensus understanding among all the stake-holders regarding the current provisions for professional development for novice principals in Central District?
2. To what extent can the strengths and challenges of the current provisions be blended into a revised professional development program that aligns with current best practice in the field of educational administration?

As a consequence of my analysis of the participants' responses to the study questions, I am proposing that Central District include three components in its design of professional development for induction of novice principals: (a) mentoring opportunities for novice principals; (b) participation in collaborative learning communities; and (c) standards-based, continuing educational opportunities (Brown et al., 2014; Church et al., 2010; Hanover Research, 2012; Learning Forward, 2011; New Schools Venture Fund, 2008). To a certain extent, Central District addresses these three components, with the greatest emphasis upon mentoring, however, based upon data gathered during the research phase of my study, there are areas that would benefit from significant modifications and additions in order to target more specifically the unique needs of novice principals. An additional component emerging from my responsive program evaluation of the current arrangements (Stake, 2004) is a new component that I am



proposing in order to ensure that the professional development design runs efficiently and remains effective throughout implementation.

### **Site-Based Versus District-Wide Program**

Mitgang and Gill (2012) contended that university programs do not adequately prepare principals for the challenges they will face and, therefore, it has fallen upon districts and states to take a more active role in developing principal training programs after they acquire the role of school leader. As such, Guskey (2000) asserted that districts have to determine whether to implement district-wide professional development or site-based professional development. Both models of professional development offer benefits and short-comings. District level professional development offers a broader view for improvement facilitated by a greater depth of resources, while site-based professional development would be targeted more specifically to the individual needs of the novice principal but is restricted by more limited resources (Guskey, 2000). By implementing a professional development design for the induction of novice principals that includes (a) mentoring, (b) collaborative learning opportunities, and (c) standards-based professional development, I contend that Central District will be able to implement both district-level and site-based learning opportunities for novice principals, maximizing the use of resources.

### **Responsive Program Evaluation through the Superintendent's Designee**

As is often noted in administration, improvement typically occurs when the improvement process is closely monitored. As a proponent of responsive program evaluation, Stake (2004) reiterated this concept. Stake asserted that there should be a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the program design and to determine what changes may need to be made throughout implementation. Responsive program evaluation relies upon interpretive data collected around

multiple criteria and experiences in order to make value judgments about programming objectives and in turn adjusting the program to achieve the objectives. As such, modifications for improvement of induction support for novice principals in Central District will occur best with responsive program evaluation in place. Therefore, it is imperative that the change process be led by an individual, at the district level, with the authority to evaluate effectiveness of program components and the authority to make adjustments when needed. I further recommend that this individual leader be a “designee of the superintendent” dedicated to obtaining frequent feedback from program participants in order to interpret program impact and to formulate changes for improvement.

### **Mentoring**

During interviews, feedback from principal participants was most abundant and detailed in relation to mentor support. I have concluded that this is the case because Central District has invested the greatest amount of support for novice principals in the mentor program. Based upon participant feedback, the primary role of the mentor is to assist principals through the initial socialization process. Aiken (2002) describes socialization as the process of acquiring knowledge and skills unique to the school culture in order to become successful in the role of principal. Moving expeditiously through the socialization process allows the principal to transition from the position of outsider to the position of a trusted leader and colleague (Bodger, 2011) as swiftly as possible. Novice principals are able to draw upon the experiences and skills of mentors to aid in situational decision-making as well as effective practices in dealing with staff and the community. As such, I have several recommendations for modifications and additions in relation to the mentor program of Central District.

## **Mentor Cohort**

Recognizing the significant role a mentor plays in the success of a novice principal, it is essential that the first step in the development of a mentoring program would be to collect a cohort of individuals, both retired and presently employed, that have demonstrated high levels of success as school leaders and are willing to serve as mentors. Based upon feedback from study participants, the following are recommended variables for consideration in determining who should be considered as potential mentors.

- Number of years of service within Central District.
- Review of past school performance records of mentor prospects.
- The ability to communicate clearly and concisely.
- The leadership reputation of a potential mentor as it relates to positively impacting a school culture and eliciting community support.
- Specific to employee mentors, sufficiently high status to provide input into district level leadership decisions, including being a leader among his or her peers.

## **Finding the Right Fit**

Hall (2008) contended that mentoring programs are too frequently ad hoc programs that lack systematic implementation. As a result, these poorly designed programs can actually be damaging for the novice principal. In order to avoid poor design, one of Hall's assertion was that mentors should be appropriately matched with a protégé. Responses from my participants concerning finding the right fit between mentor and mentee align with Hall's assertion. Therefore, the essential next step in the mentor-mentee process is to find the right fit. In the end, decisions about mentor assignments are judgment calls, but the following are recommended

practices to aid in making data-driven decisions about the right fit in the mentor-mentee relationship.

- Conduct a survey and hold a conversation with the novice principal to determine his or her personality traits and areas of strength and weakness in relation to the NCSSE 2013. A modification of the survey utilized in the quantitative portion of my study would be a useful tool in surveying novice principals.
- Prior to assigning a mentor to a novice principal, review the past experiences of the mentor to ensure that the mentor has background experiences that are relevant to the school setting, school level, and cultural aspects of the novice principal's school.
- Ensure that the mentor assigned is one whose personality and method of service delivery will mesh well with the novice principal in order to aid in communication and to help the relationship to run smoothly.
- To ensure that the right fit has been established, conversations with novice principals should be held periodically by the superintendent's designee. If it is determined that the mentor-mentee relationship is not the right fit, then a change should be made.

### **Frequency and Duration of Support Sessions**

After determining the right fit, I recommended that Central District then ensure that an adequate amount of time be allocated by the mentor for his or her support of the novice principal. As noted from interviews, there is a significant variance in the time allocated by retired mentors in comparison to time allocated by employee mentors. However, considering the large cohort of novice principals within Central District, it is not financially feasible to assign only retired mentors to all novice principals. Additionally, the right fit may not exist between a certain novice principal and any of the retired mentors. Therefore, it is expected that employee mentors

will continue to be utilized. As such, I recommend that Central District institute minimum expectations concerning frequency and time allocated by the mentor in communication with the novice principal. Frequency and time allocated should be monitored by the superintendent's designee through conversations with novice principals and assigned mentors. The following are recommendations concerning frequency and time.

- During the first semester that a novice principal is assigned to a school, the mentor should communicate with the novice principal bi-weekly at a minimum.
- After the first semester, the mentor should communicate with the novice principal at least once monthly as a minimum requirement.
- A log of dates and times of communication should be maintained by the mentor and submitted to the superintendent's designee quarterly.

### **Method of Communication**

From interview feedback, the method of communication between the mentor and mentee varies. As previously noted, retired mentors spent a significant amount of time onsite with novice principals throughout the principal's first year. On the other hand, there was no feedback from novice principals, experienced principals, nor mentors that indicated employee mentors actually visited the campuses of novice principals. That is not to say that onsite visits by employee mentors have not occurred, but there is no evidence that it occurred with the participants interviewed for this study. Utilizing various communication tools, communication between mentors and mentees can occur in many forms; via telephone, video conferencing, texting, emails, and private social media tools. However, all of these distance options are poor substitutes for onsite observations and face-to-face conversations. Therefore, I recommend that

Central District implement minimum requirements for onsite visits to be conducted by the mentor. The following are recommendations concerning onsite visits.

- Mentors should make a minimum of three visits to the school of the novice principal annually. The visits should be conducted at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year, and prior to end-of-year testing.
- Mentors should maintain a log of dates for off-site communication and dates that onsite visits have been conducted. The logs should be submitted to the superintendent's designee at the end of the year.

### **Mentor Training**

Feedback provided to novice principals by mentors is a crucial part of the mentor-mentee relationship. However, feedback is most effective when provided in the context of a shared understanding about district-wide goals and initiatives and the application of these at the school level. Hall (2008) asserted that the ability to provide well-trained mentors is crucial to the mentor-protégé relationship. Based upon feedback from all study participants, especially mentor participants, currently there is no formal training provided to mentors, by Central District, prior to their assignment to a novice principal. At least one retired mentor participant indicated that she makes attempts to attend monthly administrative staff meetings in order to gain a better understanding of district operations and instructional initiatives, however her practice is not the norm for retired mentors. Additionally, employee mentors, who are typically experienced principals assigned to a school, are sometimes assigned to novice principals at a different school level. Without exception, principals attend monthly instructional roundtable meetings specific to the level of their own schools. As a result, difficulties may arise for the mentor who is trying to understand initiatives instituted at a mentee's school, along with a lack of the ability to provide

informed feedback. Therefore, I recommend that Central District develop a structured training plan for mentors. The following are structures may be beneficial in preparing mentors:

- A beginning-of-year training for mentors to inform them of Central District's strategic outline and its application at all school levels as well as various resource personnel available for support contact.
- During the beginning-of-year training, sharing of minimum expectations for communication with novice principals and the methodology for logging and submitting communications.
- During the beginning-of-year training, allow mentors to share best practices they have experienced in the coaching of novice principals and how best to provide feedback.
- Mentors should be invited to attend director level trainings for novice principals to be outlined later in the standards-based professional development portion of this chapter.
- Central District may wish to contract with a professional organization or individual to provide best practices from research in reference to coaching and mentoring.

### **Number of Years Assigned**

At present, Central District assigns mentors to novice principals during the first year only. Per participant feedback, there are some novice principals who would like to extend the mentor assignment into a second year. The framework of the mentor-mentee relationship in a second year may look different from that of the first year and the intensity of services may vary based upon the perceived needs of the novice principal. I therefore recommend that the superintendent's designee conduct end-of-year interviews with mentors and novice principals to determine whether mentor support should end with one year of support, or should continue into the second year. In the event that the superintendent's designee determines a second year of

mentor support is necessary, the superintendent's designee would have the flexibility to determine minimum requirements for the frequency and intensity of services, on a case-by-case basis.

### **Collaborative Learning Communities**

As a part of an effective professional development design, Davis and Leon (2011) proposed adopting a team approach to acquiring knowledge. Davis and Leon (2011) also noted that adults are most effectively motivated when learning is self-actualized by incorporating relevant experiences. These findings from my review of the literature are supported by multiple responses of research participants detailing a need to experience collaborative learning opportunities with colleagues in order to address issues they have experienced as novice principals. Collaborative learning communities would allow novice principals to communicate openly with other novice principals and more experienced colleagues in order to gain knowledge about relevant experiences. Per responses from participants, it is also understood that novice principals benefit from understanding that many of the issues they face are common among all principals. Therefore, as part of a professional development design for novice principals, I recommend that Central District adopt the practice of collaborative learning communities targeted specifically for novice principals. The following are recommendations for consideration in implementing collaborative learning communities.

- Central District should encourage frequent collaborative learning community meetings consisting of the cohort of novice principals. I recommend that a minimum of quarterly meetings occur separate from monthly administrative staff meetings.
- The cohort of novice principals should establish meeting norms to ensure productive and efficient use of time.



- Individuals outside the novice principal cohort may be invited to attend a meeting as needed and per consensus agreement of the novice principal cohort.
- Collaborative learning communities of novice principals should not be subject to a district agenda. The agenda of the novice principal learning community meeting should be determined by the novice principal cohort.
- At least once annually, the superintendent along with the superintendent's designee should be invited to attend, in part or in whole, a novice principal collaborative learning community meeting. This should take place so that the superintendent can field questions from the novice principal cohort and to provide an opportunity for the superintendent's designee to receive feedback for improvement.

### **Standards-Based Continuing Educational Opportunities**

In making the decision to include standards-based continuing educational opportunities in my professional development design for induction of novice principals and in considering what components should constitute standards-based continuing educational opportunities, I considered five factors.

1. As previously noted, university programs do not adequately prepare principals for the rigors of the principalship and, as a result, districts must take a more active role in developing principal training programs (Mitgang & Gill., 2012).
2. One option for a training program model design is to utilize common standards as criteria for program development (Stake, 2004).
3. North Carolina has incorporated clearly articulated standards that detail the expectations of the principalship (NC SBE, 2013).

4. Among the common components for effective professional development design are clear objectives for learning and experiential learning opportunities (Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2010; Sparks, 2002).
5. Based upon feedback from participants in both the quantitative and qualitative portions of my study, there are significant gaps in experience and knowledge for novice principals that present several time-consuming and often frustrating situations that could be more quickly resolved if the district was more proactive in educating novice principals prior to the start of the school year.

In consideration of these factors, I recommend that a New Principal Academy be developed by Central District in order to educate novice principals. The goal of the New Principal Academy would be to fill in as many gaps in knowledge as possible prior to thrusting novice principals into the active school year. The New Principal Academy would occur in the summer months prior to the opening of school, run over several days, and would be facilitated by district departmental directors and experienced principals. The New Principal Academy would provide essential knowledge to novice principals through director-led and experienced principal-led presentations, as well as interactive, scenario-based learning opportunities. Learning topics would be aligned with the standards of the NCSSE 2013.

Responses provided by study participants have provided many topics that are recommended as priority topics to be included in the New Principal Academy. The topics are:

- Finance Department – To include information about various allotment sources, how different allotments may be used, and effective processes for budgeting, monitoring, and purchasing.

- Human Resources Department – To include the hiring process, resources for locating qualified applicants, and the process for addressing underperforming staff.
- Exceptional Children Department - Inclusive of how to navigate the complex maze of exceptional children law, identification and the IEP process, and how to monitor staff to ensure exceptional children students are appropriately receiving legally required services.
- Student Services Department – To include processes and resources for students who are experiencing crisis, students who have environmental obstacles to learning, available community-based resources, and appropriate disciplinary procedures.
- Curriculum Support Department – To include identification, educational resources, and administrative procedures for language minority students.
- Experienced Principals – To include building a healthy school culture, networking with community organizations, and building relationships with parents and the school community.

Knowledge obtained from the New Principal Academy would benefit novice principals by reducing the amount of time presently expended in researching information to address recurring issues that characteristically arise in the day-to-day work of the principal. More efficient use of time in addressing unplanned tasks and events would allow novice principals to dedicate more of their limited time to the priority functions of the school: teaching and learning. In addition, understanding that the principal's role is very complex and that it is impossible for a principal to fulfill those roles unassisted, it is expected that the principal build collaborative teams to address the multifaceted roles of the principalship (NC SBE, 2006). Possessing a stronger knowledge base obtained through the New Principal Academy, novice principal would

be enabled to plan strategically, to create collaborative teams, and to delegate tasks in accord with strategic plans.

### **Summary Chart of the Professional Development Design**

Table 6 provides an abbreviated summary of professional development design components for the induction of novice principals in Central District. Components of the professional development design are aligned with the domains of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives 2013. Descriptions of specific standards are included in Appendix D.

### **The Final Challenge**

Principals are crucial to the success of schools and in turn they are crucial to the success of school districts. Central District, like so many districts across the nation, experiences frequent turnover of principals. The constant cycle of retirements, resignations, and transfers of experienced principals is creating recurring cohorts of novice principals. In turn, novice principals enter the principalship with gaps in experience and knowledge that are essential to creating a successful school. In the current school environment of increased accountability that demands continuous success, Central District has two options for addressing this cycle. The first option is to leave things as they are and continue to watch the same dominos continue to fall in the same cycle. The second option is to take action through the implementation of a comprehensive professional development design for the induction of novice principals. By implementing comprehensive induction for novice principals to include effective mentoring practices, collaborative learning communities, and standards-based professional development, Central District will more rapidly move the knowledge base of novice principals to that of experienced principals. In doing so, Central District will also enable novice principals to more

Table 6

*Summary of Professional Development Design for the Induction of Novice Principals in Central*

*District with Alignment to NCSSE Domains*

Design Component	Subtopic	Description	NCSSE Domains
Superintendent's Designee	Responsive Program Evaluation	District-level leader dedicated to program implementation and program monitoring. Collects frequent feedback from program participants and has the authority to implement program changes as needed	N/A
Mentoring	Socialization	Acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to becoming successful as a principal	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII
	<i>Mentor cohort</i>	Variables considered to determine who is included as potential mentors	
	<i>Finding the right fit</i>	Guidance in making judgments about mentor-mentee assignments	
	<i>Frequency and time of support</i>	Minimum parameters for communication between mentor and mentee	
	<i>Method of communication</i>	Minimum requirements for onsite visits	
	<i>Mentor Training</i>	Structured training plan for mentors	
	<i>Number of years assigned</i>	Determination of need for continued support	
Collaborative Learning Communities	Team approach to acquiring knowledge	Development of Novice Principal Cohort to conduct self-supported meetings to share and learn	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

Table 6 (continued)

Design Component	Subtopic	Description	NCSSE Domains
Standards-based Continuing Educational Opportunities	New Principal Academy	Priority topics aligned with the NCSSE	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII
	<i>Finance</i>	Various allotment sources, budgeting, and purchasing	V
	<i>Human Resources</i>	The hiring process, locating applicants, evaluating staff	IV, VII
	<i>Exceptional Children</i>	Exceptional children law, identification, IEP, and monitoring	II, III, IV, VII
	<i>Student Services</i>	Student crisis, environmental obstacles, community resources, and disciplinary procedures	II, III, IV
	<i>Curriculum Support</i>	Support of language minority students	II, III, IV, VII
	<i>Experienced Principals</i>	School culture, networking, and building relationships	I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII

readily “juggle all aspects of the job” and, in turn, reap the benefits of its investment on behalf of novice principals.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on reported information, the following are offered as suggestions for further research:

1. Research and design of a preparation program for assistant principals who aspire to become principals. Central District is aware that its primary pipeline for principal vacancies is its pool of assistant principals, therefore it is logical that a study be implemented on how to proactively prepare assistant principals who aspire to move to the principalship.
2. Development of an annual timeline for program evaluation of the Professional Development Program Design for Novice Principals in Central District. Stake (2004) asserts that responsive programming is essential to optimize success. Program evaluation is an essential part of Responsive Program Design.
3. A case study of one novice principal at each of elementary, middle, and high school levels who have experienced the Professional Development Program Design for Novice Principals in Central District. Understanding how components of the professional development design have been applied at each school level, by practitioners, would be beneficial. Data gathered in this process will assist in understanding which components of the program are successful, which need modification, and which may need removal and,
4. Initiating a periodic review with each of the departments involved in the Professional Development delivery to ascertain what issues they are encountering from all

principals with the novice principals as a subset. A periodic review would assist in streamlining the delivery process of supports and lend itself to constant improvement.



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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office**  
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moyer Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB

To: Edward Hicks

CC: Robert Reardon

Date: 7/8/2016

Re: UMCIRB 16-000932

Design of Novice Principal Induction

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/7/2016 to 7/6/2017. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Consent Form	Consent Forms
Draft Script_Questions	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Draft Scripts_Questions	Surveys and Questionnaires
Proposal_Program Design for Induction_Updated_Edward Hicks.pdf	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Recruitment email	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

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IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418

IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

## APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT EMAIL SCRIPT

### **Email Request for Volunteer Participation in the Dissertation Study of Edward L. Hicks** **Study Title:** Design of Novice Principal Induction for a Central North Carolina School District

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am sending this email to you in order to invite you to participate in the research project I am conducting. This research project is my final requirement for completion of my doctoral studies with East Carolina University.

The aim or purpose of my research is to collect data from participants that will inform my recommendations for design for induction of novice principals in Central District. (Central District is a pseudonym for the district of study).

Your participation in this project will involve one or all of the following: **(a)** responding to a set of multiple choice questions, **(b)** Likert scale survey designed to provide self-evaluative feedback as it relates to North Carolina Standards for School Executives, and **(c)** face-to-face interview(s) with me.

- School Principal Participants – parts **a**, **b**, & **c**
- Mentors – part **c** only

All parts of the study process will be conducted in a way that is as respectful as possible of your schedule.

There are no known risks to you associated with this research. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Confidentiality of participants will be maintained and the identity of respondents will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

Participation in this research study may help our district to better understand and meet the needs of novice principals in our district. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. There is no penalty in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

In order to confirm your participation, it is necessary for me to meet with you to review the informed consent document, answer any questions you may have about the study, and to obtain your signature agreeing to volunteer as a participant in my study.

You may contact me to confirm or decline participation at 252-230-5823 or by email at [eddie.l.hicks@gmail.com](mailto:eddie.l.hicks@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Edward L. Hicks

Graduate Student, East Carolina University

## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT



### **Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: **Design of Novice Principal Induction for a Central North Carolina School District**

Principal Investigator (*Person in Charge of this Study*): **Edward Lee Hicks, Graduate Student, ECU Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University, Department of Educational Leadership, Address: 3408 American Eagle Lane, Wilson NC, 27896**

Telephone #: 252-230-5823

Study Coordinator: **Dr. Martin Reardon, Assistant Professor**

Telephone #: 252-328-5278

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Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

#### **Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**

Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools (NRMPS) has a large percentage of novice school principals. (The term “novice” is defined as having fewer than three years of experience as a school principal) Additionally, NRMPS has many schools with recently transferred principals, which in effect creates a situation in which principals are effectively novice to their new settings. NRMPS does provide support to novice principals through assignment of a mentor during a principal’s first year, however, at present, it does not provide a formal induction process to support novice principals. The ultimate aim of this research study is to gather data that will inform recommendations for a design for induction of novice principals in the Nash-Rocky Mount School District.

By doing this research, we hope to answer the following study questions:

- Based upon surveys and interviews of school principal participants and interviews of mentor participants, what practices presently employed by NRMPS may positively impact a design for induction of novice principals?
- Based upon surveys and interviews of school principal participants and interviews of mentor participants, what areas of additional, needed support may be determined to inform a design for induction of novice principals?

Data gathered from exploration of the two study questions will be applied to researched, best practices, from the review of literature, in order to develop recommendations for a design for induction of novice principals tailored to the needs of NRMPS.

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are either a novice school principal, an experienced school principal, or a principal mentor within NRMPS. The decision to take part in this research study is yours to make. If you choose to participate, the information you provide during the research phase of this study will be crucial to development of recommendations for design for

induction tailored specifically to the needs of novice school principals within NRMPS. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about seventeen people to do so.

**Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**

You should not volunteer to participate in this study if you are unwilling to participate in the survey and interview(s) necessary for the research study.

**What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**

You can choose not to participate.

**Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research will be conducted within administrative offices of NRMPS. As a volunteer participant, the interview portion of the research phase will either be conducted within your office or within my office per your signed consent to participate and a mutual agreement from our communication about the time and location of the interview. Please note that follow up interviews may be necessary for clarification or more in depth exploration of the aforementioned study questions.

The survey for novice and veteran school principals will take a total of approximately 30 minutes. The interviews of novice school principals, veteran school principals, and principal mentors will take approximately 60 minutes. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately 90 minutes over the next 3 months. (Please note that follow up interviews may be necessary for clarification or more in depth exploration of the aforementioned study questions)

**What will I be asked to do?**

You are being asked to do the following:

- School Principal Participants – Complete a written survey provided by the principal investigator (Edward Hicks)
  - The survey will include multiple choice questions concerning your background, employment history, and district provided supports. The survey will also include a series of Likert scale statements that asks you to self-evaluate based upon practices detailed in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (2013).
- School Principal Participants and Mentor Participants – Participate in an interview and “possible” follow up interviews with the principal investigator (Edward Hicks)
  - The purpose of the interview(s) is to allow you the opportunity to provide detailed feedback to me concerning your perceptions about present supports provided by the district, potential areas for improvements, and potential identification of areas in which needed supports are deficient.

To do this research, the people listed below may know that you took part in this research.

- The Principal Investigator – Edward Lee Hicks
- The ECU Faculty Advisor of Edward Lee Hicks – Dr. Martin Reardon, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

Please note that audio recording is a part of the interview process so that I am able to transcribe interview content for coding and analysis. Access to audio recordings will be available to only myself (Edward Hicks) and potentially my faculty advisor (Dr. Martin Reardon). As part of the total research record, audio recordings will be stored with transcriptions and surveys for three years after completion of the study. Upon completion of the three year period, audio recordings will be deleted

and transcriptions will be shredded. (Please note that unique, anonymous numerical identifiers will be assigned to participants in order to provide confidentiality)

**What might I experience if I take part in the research?**

I don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. I don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

I will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer to be in this study.

**Will it cost me to take part in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?**

To do this research, the people listed below may know that you took part in this research. They may also see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- The Principal Investigator – Edward Lee Hicks
- The Faculty Advisor of Edward Lee Hicks – Dr. Martin Reardon, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

(Please note that unique, anonymous numerical identifiers will be assigned to participants in order to provide confidentiality)

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?**

Audio recording is a part of the interview process so that I am able to transcribe interview content for coding and analysis. Access to audio recordings will be available to only myself (Edward Hicks) and potentially, to my faculty advisor (Dr. Martin Reardon). As part of the total research record, audio recordings will be stored with transcriptions and surveys in a secure location for three years after completion of the study. Upon completion of the three year period, audio recordings will be deleted and transcriptions will be shredded. (Please note that unique, anonymous numerical identifiers will be assigned to participants in order to provide confidentiality)

**What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?**

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

**Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The person conducting this study will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator, Edward Hicks at 252-230-5823 (days, nights, and weekends).

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the ORIC, at 252-744-1971

**Are there any Conflicts of Interest I should know about?**

As principal investigator, I have not identified any conflicts of interests in conducting this research study. In the event that a conflict of interest arises, I will immediately contact my faculty advisor.

**I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

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**Participant's Name (PRINT)**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Person Obtaining Informed Consent:** I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

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**Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Principal Investigator**

## **APPENDIX D: NC STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL EXECUTIVES (NCSSE)**

### **I. Strategic Leadership**

- Is able to share a vision of the changing world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that schools are preparing children to enter;
- Systematically challenges the status quo by leading change with potentially beneficial outcomes;
- Systematically considers new ways of accomplishing tasks and is comfortable with major changes in how processes are implemented;
- Utilizes data from the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey in developing the framework for continual improvement in the School Improvement Plan;
- Is a driving force behind major initiatives that help students acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- Creates with all stakeholders a vision for the school that captures peoples' attention and imagination;
- Creates processes that provide for the periodic review and revision of the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals by all school stakeholders;
- Creates processes to ensure the school's identity (vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals) actually drive decisions and inform the culture of the school;
- Adheres to statutory requirements regarding the School Improvement Plan;
- Facilitates the collaborative development of annual school improvement plans to realize strategic goals and objectives;
- Facilitates the successful execution of the school improvement plan aligned to the mission and goals set by the State Board of Education;
- Facilitates the implementation of state education

- policy inside the school's classrooms;
- Facilitates the setting of high, concrete goals and the expectations that all students meet them;
- Communicates strong professional beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning that reflect latest research and best practices and in preparing students for success in college or in work;
- Creates processes to distribute leadership throughout the school.

## **II. Instructional Leadership**

- Focuses his or her own and others' attention persistently and publicly on learning and teaching
- by initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning that are oriented towards high expectations and concrete goals;
- Creates an environment of practiced, distributive leadership and teacher empowerment;
- Demonstrates knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum, instruction, and assessment by leading or participating in meetings with teachers and parents where these topics are discussed, and/or holding frequent formal or informal conversations with students, staff and parents around these topics;
- Ensures that there is an appropriate and logical alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program;
- Creates processes and schedules that facilitate the collaborative (team) design, sharing, evaluation, and archiving of rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional lessons that ensure students acquire essential knowledge;



- Challenges staff to reflect deeply on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete educational development of students;
- Creates processes for collecting and using student test data and other formative data from other sources for the improvement of instruction;
- Creates processes for identifying, benchmarking and providing students access to a variety of 21<sup>st</sup> century instructional tools (e.g., technology) and best practices for meeting diverse student needs;
- Creates processes that ensure the strategic allocation and use of resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs;
- Creates processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction;
- Creates processes that protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time; and
- Systematically and frequently observes in classrooms and engages in conversation with students about their learning.

### **III. Cultural Leadership**

- Creates a collaborative work environment predicated on site-based management that supports the “team” as the basic unit of learning and decision making within the school and promotes cohesion and cooperation among staff;

- Communicates strong ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and professional learning communities with teachers, staff, parents, and students and then operates from those beliefs;
- Influences the evolution of the culture to support the continuous improvement of the school as outlined in the School Improvement Plan;
- Systematically develops and uses shared values, beliefs and a shared vision to establish a school identity that emphasizes a sense of community and cooperation to guide the disciplined thought and action of all staff and students;
- Systematically and fairly acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school and staff;
- Visibly supports the positive, culturally responsive traditions of the school community;
- Promotes a sense of well-being among staff, students and parents;
- Builds a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff that result in a “can do” attitude when faced with challenges; and
- Empowers staff to recommend creative, 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts for school improvement

#### **IV. Human Resources Leadership**

- Provides structures for the development of effective professional learning communities aligned with the School Improvement Plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and for 21<sup>st</sup> century student learning;
- Models the importance of continued adult learning by engaging in activities to develop personal knowledge and skill along with expanded self- awareness;
- Communicates a positive attitude about the ability of staff to accomplish substantial outcomes to improve their efficacy;

- Creates processes for teachers to assume leadership and decision-making roles within the school that foster their career development;
- Creates and monitors processes for hiring, inducting and mentoring new teachers and other staff to the school;
- Uses the results of the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey to create and maintain a positive work environment for teachers and other staff;
- Evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner and utilizes the results of evaluations to improve performance;
- Provides for results-oriented professional development that is aligned with identified 21<sup>st</sup> century curricular, instructional, and assessment needs, is connected to school improvement goals and is differentiated based on staff needs;
- Continuously searches for the best placement and utilization of staff to fully benefit from their strengths; and
- Is systematically and personally involved in the school's professional activities.

#### **V. Managerial Leadership**

- Creates processes to provide for a balanced operational budget for school programs and activities;
- Creates processes to recruit and retain a high quality workforce in the school that meets the diverse needs of students;
- Creates processes to identify and solve, resolve, dissolve or absolve school-based problems/conflicts in a fair, democratic way;
- Designs a system of communication that provides for the timely, responsible sharing of information to, from, and with school and district staff;

- Designs scheduling processes and protocols that maximize staff input and addresses diverse student learning needs;
- Develops a master schedule for the school to maximize student learning by providing for individual and on-going collaborative planning for every teacher; and
- Collaboratively develops and enforces clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff.

## **VI. External Development Leadership**

- Implements processes that empower parents and other stakeholders to make significant decisions;
- Creates systems that engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success;
- Designs protocols and processes that ensure compliance with state and district mandates;
- Creates opportunities to advocate for the school in the community and with parents;
- Communicates the school's accomplishments to the district office and public media in accordance with LEA policies;
- Garners fiscal, intellectual and human resources from the community that support the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning agenda of the school; and
- Builds relationships with individuals and groups to support specific aspects of the learning improvement agenda and also as a source of general good will.

## **VII. Micropolitical Leadership**

- Uses the School Improvement Team to make decisions and provides opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies;

- Creates an environment and mechanisms to ensure all internal stakeholder voices are heard and respected;
- Creates processes and protocols to buffer and mediate staff interests;
- Is easily accessible to teachers and staff;
- Designs transparent systems to equitably manage human and financial resources;
- Demonstrates sensitivity to personal needs of staff;
- Demonstrates awareness of informal groups and relationships among school staff and utilizes these as a positive resource;
- Demonstrates awareness of hidden and potentially discordant issues in the school;
- Encourages people to express opinions contrary to those of authority;
- Demonstrates ability to predict what could go wrong from day to day;
- Uses performance as the primary criterion for reward and advancement;
- Maintains high visibility throughout the school; and
- Maintains open, vertical and horizontal communications throughout the school community.

## APPENDIX E: MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

### Historical and Baseline Questions

Directions: Read the questions and circle the best response(s) as it pertains to your experience as a principal.

1) Which best describes the number of years you have been a principal in Central District? (not including assistant principal or principal in another district)

a) 0-3 (Novice)      b) 4-10 (Intermediate)      c) 11+ (Veteran)

2) Were you a principal in another district prior to joining Central District?

a) yes      b) no

3) If yes to question 2, which best describes the number of years you were a principal prior to joining Central District?

a) 0-3      b) 4-10      c) 11+

4) Which best describes the grade levels within your building when you first became a principal in Central District?

a) pre-K – 2      b) K-2      c) pre-K – 5      d) K-5  
e) 6-8      f) 9-12      g) other

If other, describe:

5) Which best describes your position immediately prior to becoming a principal in Central District?

a) principal      b) assistant principal      c) teacher      d) counselor  
e) other

If other, describe:

6) During your first principalship in Central District which best describes the area in which your school is/was located?

- a) urban
- b) suburban
- c) rural

7) Which best describes the size of the student population of your first school within Central District?

- a) less than 300
- b) 300 – 599
- c) 600 – 899
- d) 900 or more

8) Which best describes the free and reduced lunch status of your first school in Central District?

- a) less than 25%
- b) 25% - 49%
- c) 50% - 74%
- d) 75% or more

9) Select all of the following supports facilitated by the district during your first principalship in Central District.

- a) Mentor Support
- b) Focus or collaborative group opportunities
- c) On-going, linked professional development
- d) Other

If other, describe:

10) How would you describe your own mentor support within Central District?

- a) No mentor assigned
- b) Active veteran principal
- c) Retired school staff
- d) Other

If other, describe:

11) How would you describe collaborative group opportunities within Central District for novice principals? (Select all that apply)

- a) District-led meetings
- b) Focus group opportunities with other principals
- c) Other
- d) None

12) How would you describe professional development opportunities within Central District for novice principals? (Select all that apply)

a) Scheduled district-led staff meetings	b) District-led leadership development training	c) State-led leadership development training	d) No leadership training opportunities
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## APPENDIX F: LIKERT SCALE SURVEY

### Self-Perception of Novice Years as it Pertains to the NC Standards for School Executives

*The following survey is adapted from the North Carolina Standards for School*

*Executives (2013). Likert scale statements included in this survey follow the order of the NCSSE 2013. In order to contend with repetition of language across the NCSSE, some Likert scale statements may address more than one standard. Therefore, the participant will not encounter a one-to-one correlation of Likert scale statements to individual standards.*

**Directions:** Using the scale below, rate your self-perception as it relates to the first three years of your assignment as principal within this school district. Circle your response.

Scale: **1** (strongly disagree) **2** (disagree) **3** (neutral) **4** (agree) **5** (strongly agree)

---

### I) STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
1) Leading school-wide change	1	2	3	4	5
2) Analysis of data for improvement	1	2	3	4	5
3) Developing and implementing new processes	1	2	3	4	5
4) Implementing instructional programming that develops 21 <sup>st</sup> skills in students	1	2	3	4	5
5) Developing a school's vision, mission, values, and goals	1	2	3	4	5

6) Developing a process to review and revise programming in order to adhere to the school's vision, mission, values, and goals	1	2	3	4	5
7) Developing collaborative structures for developing and implementing the school improvement plan	1	2	3	4	5
8) Developing and assigning distributive leadership roles	1	2	3	4	5
9) Implementing state and local policy	1	2	3	4	5

## II) INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
10) Initiating and guiding conversations about instruction and student learning	1	2	3	4	5
11) Ensures alignment between the curriculum of the school and the state's accountability program	1	2	3	4	5
12) Implementation of professional learning communities for analysis of formative data and revisions to instruction	1	2	3	4	5
13) Processes for allocation and use of resources to meet	1	2	3	4	5

instructional goals and teacher needs					
14) Ensuring best practices for meeting diverse student needs	1	2	3	4	5
15) Systematically and frequently observes in classrooms and providing formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5
16) Providing support for underperforming teachers	1	2	3	4	5
17) Creating processes that protect teachers from issues that detract from instructional time	1	2	3	4	5

---

### III) CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
18) Creating site-based collaborative structures for decision-making	1	2	3	4	5
19) Communicating beliefs about learning to all stakeholders: students, teachers, & parents	1	2	3	4	5
20) Developing processes for acknowledging failures and celebrating successes	1	2	3	4	5
21) Empowering staff to problem solve when challenges arise	1	2	3	4	5

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#### IV) HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
22) Providing continuing adult learning opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
23) Maintaining and modeling a positive attitude for staff	1	2	3	4	5
24) Creating a process for hiring	1	2	3	4	5
25) Evaluating staff	1	2	3	4	5
26) Assignment of staff in the most effective placements	1	2	3	4	5

#### V) MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
27) Balancing the operational budget for school programming	1	2	3	4	5
28) Resolution of school-based problems or conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
29) Development of efficient communication processes	1	2	3	4	5
30) Development of master schedule	1	2	3	4	5
31) Implementation of school-wide character education and disciplinary programs	1	2	3	4	5

## VI) EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
32) Soliciting stakeholder input and support from parents	1	2	3	4	5
33) Advocating for your school as well as soliciting input and support from community organizations	1	2	3	4	5
34) Creating opportunities to showcase the school's successes	1	2	3	4	5
35) Communicating with the media to promote the school's accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5

## VII. MICROPOLITICAL LEADERSHIP

**As a novice principal I was confident in:**

	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>
36) Utilizing the school improvement team in order to make decisions and develop school policies	1	2	3	4	5
37) Creating systems for staff feedback	1	2	3	4	5
38) Balancing school needs with personal needs of staff members	1	2	3	4	5
39) Realizing and facilitating resolution to staff disagreements or	1	2	3	4	5

discordant issues in the  
school

40) Anticipating potential  
risks and problems with  
implementation of new  
school programs

1

2

3

4

5

---

## **APPENDIX G: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS**

1. As a novice principal, in what areas did you have the greatest struggles/difficulties?
2. What do you feel Central District provided well in order to help you in the areas where you struggled or had difficulties?
3. What additional supports do feel that Central District could have provided to help you in the areas where you struggled or had difficulties?
4. As a novice principal, in what areas did you experience the greatest success?
5. Why do you think you were successful in these areas?
6. If you were in charge of developing Central District's novice principal support plan what would your recommendations be? (Prioritize your responses)

## **APPENDIX H: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS**

1. In what areas do beginning principals need the most support?
2. Do superintendents see the same needs for beginning principals?
3. Is there a difference in the needs of a beginning principal in a rural, suburban and urban setting?
4. Is there a difference in the needs of a beginning principal based on building size?
5. Is there a difference in the needs of a beginning principal based on free and reduced student lunch percentages?
6. How should mentors be chosen?
7. What training should mentors have?



