

FLORIDA SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS RELATED TO THE INVOLUNTARY
REMOVAL OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by

CHRISTOPHER S. BERNIER
B.A. Le Moyne College, 1987
M.S. Nova Southeastern University, 1995

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Major Professor: Rosemarye Taylor

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine how external influences designed to improve student achievement and school performance such as No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, The Florida A+ Program, and the Differentiated Accountability model impacted Florida school superintendents' prioritization of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. In the study, major questions addressed concerned (a) the demographic characteristics of the school principals and superintendents involved in the removal of a school principal within the state of Florida; (b) the relationship between the problems a principal encountered and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards; (c) the Florida Principal Leadership Standards that were most often cited and rated most important by school superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within Florida; (d) principal's years of experience as a predictor of principal competence; (e) sources of information that were most important in providing awareness of principal problems; (f) interventions, if any, that were provided to principals to assist them in improving prior to the decision to remove them; and (g) principal career outcomes that were most to likely occur following a superintendent's decision to remove a school principal.

Utilizing a previously researched survey, the 67 Florida public school superintendents were asked to prioritize the Florida Principal Leadership Standards related to the removal of a single principal from the position and provide pertinent demographic information related to this individual. The following principal leadership standards were most commonly identified as important to the decision to remove a school principal: (a) human resource management, (b) decision making strategies, (c)

instructional leadership, (d) managing the learning environment, and (e) community and stakeholder partnerships.

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CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

Introduction

Like all organizational leaders, school district superintendents have relied on the quality of their selected principals “to do the right things and deliver the best results they are capable of.” (Collins, 2001, p. 50). The selection and longevity of a school principal has traditionally been a key factor in school success. In a nationwide survey, conducted by the nonprofit organization, Public Agenda, both superintendents and principals identified good leadership as vital to a school’s success. When surveyed, “superintendents (79%) and principals (69%) agreed that a talented principal is the first step in turning around a troubled school” (Feldsher, 2001, p. 1). However, locating excellent principals remained the most important factor critical for organizational success as “the difference between average and great principals lies in what they expect of themselves” (Whitaker , 2003, p, 17).

Fullan (2005) suggested the “work of school leaders is a mixture of technical and adaptive work” (p. 53). The measurement of a particular principal’s success has traditionally been an annual assessment and evaluation divided into both formative and summative subjective dimensions that determine an individual’s effectiveness (Anderson, 1991). Principal accountability has relied on performance indicators or standards related to an individual principal’s ability to effectively carry out particular responsibilities (Arrowood, 2005). In the state of Florida, the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) provided descriptive and operationalized standards for measuring the

effectiveness of school principals (Florida Department of Education, 2006). “Assessment of effective school principal performance was based on an individual’s ability to demonstrate, in a high performing manner, the indicators contained within each standard” (Florida Department of Education, 2006, p. 1).

National and state legislation focused on making principals accountable for student achievement indicated that principals no longer had time to produce required improvements in student learning (Marzano, 2004). This change in educational philosophy can be traced, in part, to several government interventions such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), Goals 2000, and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Bracey, 2002). Prior to 2001 and the enactment of NCLB, the federal government provided only representative involvement in the operation of public schools. Under NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), all public schools were required to test students in core subject areas. This legislation further mandated that school and district leaders demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) with all students, including subgroups, performing at proficient levels by 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). “These changes in expected outcomes of student achievement left the school principal ultimately accountable for the student achievement results” (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. 24).

“Prior to the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001, states had in place multiple standards and indicators related to effective school leadership” (Florida Department of Education, 2001a, p. 1). However, the advent of national legislation, focused solely on student achievement, impacted school superintendents’ use of these

standards. Rather than using the standards to create a holistic picture of school leadership as originally intended, emphasis was placed on a few selected standards (Arrowood, 2005). The No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and resultant state accountability systems placed student achievement at “the top of the national school reform agenda” (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007, p. 219). Principals were now required to demonstrate increases in academic achievement for all students. “Moreover, the NCLB legislation places the burden for improved academic achievement squarely on the shoulders of school principals” (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007, p. 219). One of the extreme measures of the NCLB legislation called for the “replacement of principal if sufficient progress” was not made in accordance with the new law (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1485). This study sought to examine Florida superintendents’ views related to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, the increasing levels of legislative accountability, and the resulting impact on decisions to remove a school principal.

Purpose of the Study

Effective school principals have been a proven factor in impacting learning and achievement in schools (Schlueter & Walker, 2008). The difficult decision to remove a school principal has been based on multiple dimensions and standards related to successful school leadership (Davis, 1998a). National legislative initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and their counterparts within the state of Florida, Florida A+ Program and the Differentiated Accountability model, required the replacement of school principals who demonstrated

ineffectiveness “related to student achievement and closing the achievement gap as defined by AYP” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1485). These factors, combined with the importance of affording school principals reasonable protection related to the essential element of time to collaboratively work with staff to improve instruction school environment and therefore student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005), made the examination of principal effectiveness a priority for school superintendent.

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by Florida superintendents in the removal of school principals from their positions. The utilization of the FPLS provided an objective and research-based framework to determine superintendent’s viewpoints as they related to “effective leadership practices, student achievement, and the assessment of principals within the state of Florida” (Florida Department of Education, 2006, p. 1). These standards created a structure for examining principal performance and insight into superintendents’ priorities when they decided to remove a school principal.

The study replicated the research conducted in Washington (Martin, 1990), Ohio (DeLuca, 1995), and Virginia (Fisher, 2001) concerning the involuntary departure or termination of school principals prior to the advent of accountability standards. An on-line survey was utilized to identify superintendent viewpoints, within the state of Florida, as they related to the FPLS and removal of a school principal. Additional demographic information related to the superintendent and removed principal were collected within the survey for comparison.

Conceptual Framework

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, U.S. schools and their respective school principals were placed under greater pressure than ever before (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Under NCLB, states were required to measure student achievement annually in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and again in high school between grades 10 and 12 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Measures were developed to examine student progress throughout their educational careers and also determine the effectiveness of the school in which the students were enrolled.

In part as a reaction to the passage of the NCLB legislation, the Florida A+ School Accountability System and the Differentiated Accountability Model (DA) were developed by the Florida Department of Education (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). These state mandated public accountability measures “focused on closing the achievement gap to ensure that all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency” and identified student achievement as the measure of school effectiveness (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p.24). The resultant accountability standards placed school principals at the focal point of school effectiveness and student achievement.

To respond to the increased accountability, school districts needed effective school leadership. Researchers had long suggested that effective school principals were vital to successful schools and students (Marzano et al., 2005). To be effective, leaders must have acquired a set of skills and “repeat them ad nauseam until they become an

unthinking, conditioned reflex, and a firmly ingrained habit” (Drucker, 2001, p. 205). Whitaker (2001) noted, in discussing effective schools, the need for “creative ways to develop and retain individuals to fill the ranks of the school principalship” (p. 91), and how retention of school principals played in the success of a school district. Whitaker (2003) added that “the difference between average and great principals lies in what they expect of themselves” (p. 17).

Leadership Crisis

The implications for school superintendents in identifying, hiring, and retaining effective school principals able to manage the increased accountability have been further complicated by the looming principal leadership crisis. The epidemic was apparent within one urban school district inside the state of Florida. In 2005, this school district realized that over 40% of its current school principals would retire by 2012. Those events were predicted to create openings for over 150 leaders in that district alone (Gledich, 2009).

The reasons for such a leadership crisis were varied. “Increased pressure by governments and parents put principals in higher-stress and more conflict-laden roles” (Cusick, 2003, p. 5). Pressures inherent in state and federal reforms, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, made the principalship less desirable (Cusick, 2003). Cusick (2003) concluded “increased expectations and demands have made the job less appealing to teachers who see what principals do and decide not to follow in their footsteps” (p. 4). In addition there were critical differences in the responsibilities faced as a result of

educational accountability and the continuing and increasing expectations which were related to day to day school building management and parental demands. These new responsibilities impacted principals who indicated “stress (91%) and time required at work (86%)” as the top occupational deterrents for people who choose to opt out of school leadership after they meet the credential requirements (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009, p. 87). Other issues identified as primary obstructions “were low pay (67%), accountability mandates (64%), and increasing disrespect from students (54%)” (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 87).

Whitaker (2001), examined superintendents’ perceptions of the quantity and quality of candidates who aspired to the principalship (p. 84). Of the 176 superintendents surveyed, 108 (59%) responded, indicating “that principals were under constant stress that manifested itself emotionally, cognitively, and physically” (Whitaker, 2001, p. 83). Additionally, the impact of school reform “had a direct impact on the stress felt by principals and the desires of teachers to move into administrative ranks. “Increased time demands, heightened accountability pressures, and the overall nature of the role of the principal, have compounded the problem of finding individuals to fill the principalship” (Whitaker, 2001, p. 83).

An additional factor complicating the identification of capable principals was that “not all educators, properly credentialed to serve as administrators, may be well suited for the job” (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 87). Support for these findings was reflected in the research of Feldsher (2001) who reported “many superintendents had widespread

reservations about the performance of current principals and the talent pool incoming candidates” as well (p. 1). Additionally Feldsher (2001) reported

Only about one in three superintendents say they are happy with their district's principals when it comes to recruiting talented teachers (36%), knowing how to make tough decisions (35%), delegating responsibility and authority (34%), involving teachers in decisions (33%), and using money effectively (32%). On only a single measure out of 13 does a majority of superintendents say they are happy with their principals: putting the interests of children above all else (65%). Six in 10 superintendents agree that you sometimes have to settle and take what you can get when looking for a principal (11% strongly agree, 49% somewhat agree). (p. 1)

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) reported on school leaders who “were asked to think of individuals they knew who held principal licenses but who did not currently hold a building-level administrative position” (p. 58). Research further indicated that “nearly one-half thought the person was not well suited for the position, either because of an inappropriate disposition or temperament (48%) or because the person exhibited poor judgment or common sense (38%)” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 58). As educational reform and accountability movements increased the complexity of the school and district educational environments, superintendents felt pressured to find “high-caliber candidates” who could deal with the complexity of the position (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 86).

“Education policy has been increasingly dominated by one objective, higher student achievement, and one strategy, accountability” (Herrington & Wills, 2005, p. 183). To achieve these outcomes, measures have included high-stakes tests, restructuring of schools, vouchers, and other punitive actions (Elmore, 2002). The legislative policies have been focused on principals as the individuals ultimately responsible for student

achievement. This, in turn, has created a shortage of available and willing candidates from which district superintendents can make their selections (Herrington & Wills, 2005).

Standards of Accountability

The diminished pool of qualified candidates, combined with retirement and superintendents' displeasure with school principals, has been further complicated by the pressures brought on by accountability. Although school superintendents had been able to rationalize marginal principal performance in the past, legislation and accountability standards no longer provided that opportunity at the beginning of the 21st century (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In past decades, educational trends moved from educational equity to the modern age of accountability and further complicated the leadership needs of school districts (Scribner & Layton, 1994). That change in educational philosophy was traced to several governmental interventions but most recently and primarily to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). "Under NCLB, all public schools were required to test students in mathematics and reading and were further mandated to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) by all students, including subgroups" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 1458).

In Florida, the Florida A+ School Accountability System and the Differentiated Accountability Model (DA) increased the level of school accountability related to student achievement. Since 1999, as part of the Florida A+ School Accountability System,

“school grades have been issued” (Florida Department of Education, 2001a, p. 2). The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) has served as the “primary criterion for those calculations” and students were tested for proficiency in “reading, mathematics, science, and writing” (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 1). In 2002, the state of Florida adjusted its process to include an additional component of learning gains (Florida Department of Education, 2008c). Learning gains were demonstrated when students improved their level of student achievement, measured by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), in one of the following three ways: (a) raising their previous year’s level of achievement, (b) maintaining a high level of academic achievement, or (c) demonstrating “more than one year’s worth of academic growth” (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 11). A final component to school accountability was the addition of the “performance of the lowest students” in reading and mathematics based on the FCAT and the required demonstration of annual achievement improvements (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 12). Points were awarded for each of the categories, “added together, and converted into a school grading scale” (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 3). The school grading scale is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Florida A+ School Accountability System School Grading Scale

School Grade	Points
A	525 or above
B	495-524
C	435-494
D	395-434
F	Less than 395

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2008c, p. 3).

These school grades were utilized as a measure of school’s performance, publicly advertised, and integrated into the standards measuring a principal’s effectiveness (Florida Department of Education, 2008c).

In 2008, the state of Florida and the U.S. Department of Education increased the level of accountability when the Florida A+ School Accountability System was merged with NCLB and AYP (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). The resulting Differentiated Accountability (DA) model created a new system of accountability “for the purpose of identifying the lowest performing schools in need of assistance and provided schools and school leaders with support and interventions related to improving student achievement” (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. i). The DA model retained the Florida A+ School Accountability System school grading procedures, but focused on subgroups and the data related to making adequate yearly progress. The objectives of the DA model included:

1. more school-wide assistance and direction for schools at or in restructuring to improve school performance and maintain success;

2. targeted and/or school-wide support and intervention for schools not yet in restructuring to prevent the need for complete restructuring;
3. focused assistance for schools that have previously been identified for improvement but have demonstrated recent improvement and have the opportunity to exit “in need of improvement” status. (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. i)

One of the conditions of school restructuring included the removal of the school principal and replacement with an individual with a proven record of improving student achievement (Florida Department of Education, 2008a).

With the passage and merger of federal and state legislation, government interjected itself “directly into public school performance and the professional careers of public school principals and superintendents” (Rammer, 2007, p. 67). Legislation created the necessity for school principals who were able to navigate the additional complexities of school accountability (Rammer, 2007). NCLB created accountability standards for schools and “outlined serious consequences for those not meeting these standards” (Rammer, 2007, p. 67). School principals who could not positively affect student achievement for all students could expect an outcome of removal. Accountability standards changed not only the roles of school principals and superintendents but also the time frame in which they were expected to demonstrate effectiveness (Rammer, 2007).

Longevity and Results

Public education leaders, specifically school principals, have faced additional scrutiny as government and legislative bodies sought additional demands for accountability coupled with an ever increasing demand for measurable student learning gains (Rammer, 2007). Standards of accountability, “increased student performance and

accountability and the continuous public dialogue about education has raised the expectations for school districts, especially school principals, to be more effective” (Rammer, 2007, p. 68).

During this period of heightened accountability, the principalship evolved into an increasingly complex position. Principals were given additional responsibilities and often required to comply with additional regulations with little regard for their individual development (Deal & Peterson, 1994). Despite the influx of complex rules and regulations, individuals responsible for student achievement and school organizations no longer were excused for not implementing policy. As Marzano (2004) stated, to do so would make a school and individual “remiss in their duties” (p. 126).

According to Dufour and Eaker (1998), time in the position increased principals’ opportunities for exposure to quality learning opportunities and the development of professional learning communities which resulted in additional knowledge concerning curriculum, instruction, leadership, and their relationship to standards-based reform. This acquired set of professional skills allowed instructional leaders to develop collaborative cultures and had the potential for moving schools toward a standards based model which would result in increased student achievement (Diegmueller & Richard, 2000). Rammer (2007) supported the importance of time and professional development for principals, indicating that principals needed to be afforded time to learn in order to make an impact related to increased student achievement. Superintendents’ viewpoints related to student achievement combined with state and federal standards for accountability, limited the provision of necessary individual development time.

Numerous researchers have addressed the importance of time in position for principals. Time is necessary to develop the “principal’s role in shaping the schools direction through vision, mission, and goals” (Hallinger & Heck , 1998, p. 187). Diegmüller and Richard (2000) suggested that school leaders need at least “two years to shape a vision for a school, gain the trust of staff members and build a systematic process to foster improvement” (p. 1). Van Vleck (2008) found that veteran principals were much more likely to understand their fundamental responsibilities and focus more time on activities related to instructional leadership. As principals gained experience, they were more responsive and inclusive when solving issues related to student achievement. Senge et al. (2000) expressed the belief that as instructional leaders of the organization, principals’ were responsible for the development of school cultures which included “systems thinking, personal mastery, team learning, shared vision, and mental models” (p. 6). “To become effective instructional leaders, principals must be taught and then practice and learn from their mistakes; principals must spend time and effort developing this trust” (O’Donnell & White, 2005, p. 68).

Instructional leadership attributes gained over time were statistically linked to student achievement as “experience as a principal is often regarded as the most important indicator of success.” (Kaplan, Nunnery, & Owings, 2005, p. 33). Results from studies related to these examinations demonstrated increases in both reading and mathematics “suggests that what principals do over time might influence higher student test scores” (O’Donnell & White, 2005, p. 64). Hallinger and Heck (1998) had earlier expressed their belief that effective school leaders impacted student achievement when principals shaped

“the schools direction through vision, mission, and goals” (p. 187). Sufficient time was needed to develop relationships and build systems. The quandary remained, however, as to the extent to which principals were being provided the time necessary to lead as they learned (Alvy & Robbins, 2005).

Principals have been expected to learn on the job and develop as leaders while holding few due process rights related to their position. Though it has been recognized that inexperienced principals were likely to make mistakes, over one-third of all principals reported they have been coached from, demoted, or dismissed from their positions involuntarily (Fisher, 2001). These involuntary departures have been a result of a principal’s failure to demonstrate expected leadership requirements and the pressures felt by the superintendents as district hiring authorities (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, 2005).

Changing Role of Superintendent

One dilemma for superintendents has been in developing school leaders and providing time and protection to grow when accountability standards were limiting the number of “quality administrators ready to fill vacancies” (Lindsay, 2008, p. 1). With the advent of NCLB and other legislative mandates, superintendents faced additional dilemmas related to the professional performance of principals. Not only have superintendents had a traditional leadership role to perform but they dealt with necessary legal requirements and public fallout related to school leaders and schools that did not produce results. The challenge for superintendents has been in identifying leaders who

could manage school operations and provide student and school wide achievement gains (Lindsay, 2008).

Although the mission of finding and supporting the development of effective school leaders has remained a superintendents' responsibility, the leadership shortage and accountability legislation created difficult obstacles. Superintendents and "education are facing increased scrutiny coupled with demands for accountability and increased student achievement" (Rammer, 2007, p. 67). Rammer (2007) continued by reporting "If principals are the linchpins of effective schools, then superintendents must select ideal candidates to fill these important roles" (p. 67). By legal statute, school boards have had authority as a hiring agent and have been required to take appropriate action in employing principals, but "the superintendent was the individual who made the decision and final recommendation as to who is hired" (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 86). Therefore, the selection and retention of excellent principals had become the single most important decision a superintendent could render. In this process superintendents' "aligned actions with shared values" and as they "enlisted others in a common vision" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 26).

According to Matthews (2002), while superintendents were required to understand the traits of successful principals to guide the selection process, they also needed to afford school leaders multiple learning opportunities, mentorships, as well as clear and accurate feedback on performance from multiple sources. In addition, superintendents needed to provide principals with "meaningful assessments designed to generate information for professional growth" and support them as they attempted to

create the improvements required by legislation (Kaplan et al., 2005, p. 42). Effective superintendent-principal relationships were required to be guided by open communication, mutual learning, and partnerships which were noted as key and vital to principal success (Boris-Schacter, 1998). The development of these collegial and professional relationships were recognized as helpful in eliminating the fear of failure many principals experience when assuming their roles (Boris-Schacter, 1998).

Decisions related to retaining a principal have required superintendents to integrate policy with what was known about effective leadership development (Knuth & Banks, 2006). Superintendents, as the individuals responsible for school district performance, have been required to balance their own complex set of leadership dimensions. Waters and Marzano (2006), in their research concerning the role of superintendents, indicated that job descriptions and expectations for school leaders were also being impacted by the increased complexity in the age of accountability.

Waters and Marzano (2006) identified “27 studies conducted since 1970 that used rigorous and quantitative methods to student the influence of school district leaders on student achievement. These studies involved 2,817 districts and the achievement scores of over three million students” (p. 3). Waters and Marzano (2006) “utilized a research technique called meta-analysis” (p. 9), creating an extensive and quantitative examination of research on superintendents. Waters and Marzano (2006) reported three major findings related to the superintendency and student achievement. These findings included “district leadership mattered, goal setting related to student achievement was vital, and superintendent tenure was positively correlated with student achievement”

(Waters & Marzano, 2006, pp. 3-4). The research suggested that superintendents needed to continually monitor district goals and provide the resources of time, money, support, and materials to reach their objectives. Additionally, the relationship between the school principal and superintendent needed to be one of “defined autonomy” in order to be effective (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4).

Waters and Marzano (2006) determined that “defined autonomy” (p. 4) between district and school leadership was a critical component for student achievement. It was determined in one study contained in the analysis that there was a “.28 correlation between the building autonomy of the school principal and student achievement” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4). However, within the same analysis, a negative correlation was determined surrounding the relationship between site based management and student achievement. These findings, though seemingly conflicted, were indications that effective school superintendents provided “clear, non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction, yet provided school leadership teams with the responsibility and authority for determining how to meet those goals” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4).

Accountability-driven superintendents have encouraged schools and school leaders to assume responsibility for their schools’ success and in this way hold school leaders accountable for student achievement. Waters and Marzano (2006) noted that “effective superintendents” have ensured that each school regularly examined its progress toward stated outcomes and that deviations from the expected results were interpreted as need for change or a more focused effort to impact achievement. By developing measurable goals related to student performance, the superintendents were able to rely

upon those individuals in school leadership positions to help achieve the organizational outcomes. According to Waters and Marzano (2006), the assessment of those individual school leaders by the district superintendent, based on those outcomes, provided a critical link to organizational performance.

Leadership Standards and Principal Assessment

The historical practice of connecting principal performance to superintendent and district outcomes had come in the use of leadership standards and collaboratively established goals. In the age of accountability, superintendents meshed their own careers, responsibilities, and need for job security to the performance of their principals (Waters & Marzano, 2006). The development of an approach to principal assessment, evaluation, and feedback in Florida was guided by leadership standards which sought to establish indicators and criteria for acceptable performance (Croghan & Lake, 1984). Historically, “principal training programs heavily emphasized management and business techniques. In the past 25 years, the principal's key role has been redefined as instructional leader” (Knuth & Banks, 2006, p. 5). Despite this trend, Fullan (2005) suggested that the principalship must still be examined holistically as it remained a complicated position and a mixture of both technical and adaptive work.

The state of Florida has supported this holistic approach with its 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) comprised of the necessary skills and abilities high performing principals’ should possess “in order to be rated as successful in their positions” (Florida Department of Education, 2006, p. 1). The standards, comprised of

10 dimensions, addressed the complexity of the principalship and focused on three areas of leadership: instructional leadership, operational leadership, and school leadership. They are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Florida Principal Leadership Standards

Standards	Dimensions	Type of Leadership
1.0	Vision	School leadership
2.0	Instructional Leadership	Instructional leadership
3.0	Management of Learning Environment	Instructional leadership
4.0	Community & Stakeholder Partnerships	School leadership
5.0	Decision-making Skills	Operational leadership
6.0	Diversity	School leadership
7.0	Technology	Operational leadership
8.0	Human Resource Management	Instructional leadership
9.0	Learning, Accountability & Assessment	Operational leadership
10.0	Ethics	Operational leadership

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2006, p. 1).

Prior to the advent of NCLB, AYP, and school grades, a system of principal assessment was developed in order for principals to “demonstrate competence in all of the aforementioned standards” (Florida Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). Florida defined high-performing school leaders as individuals who possessed the abilities and skills necessary to perform all of these designated tasks. Florida expected “school leaders, commensurate with job requirements and delegated authority, to demonstrate competence in the following standards and their related dimensions: Instructional Leadership (Dimensions: 2.0, 3.0, 8.0), Operational Leadership (Dimensions: 5.0, 7.0,

9.0, 10.0), and School Leadership (Dimensions: 1.0, 4.0, 6.0)” (Florida Department of Education, 2005, p. 1). These standards and their related dimensions provided a framework for superintendents to assess and evaluate the performance of school leaders within the state of Florida.

Sets of inter-related skills related to the standards and dimensions provided superintendents with a matrix to navigate the complex demands of assessing educational leaders (Knuth & Banks, 2006). However, these standards were developed to be utilized as a means to define the complexity of school leadership and provide necessary feedback to improve overall performance. NCLB and the Florida A+ School Accountability System, and the embedded requirements to produce measurable student achievement results demanded superintendents focus on measuring principal effectiveness by utilizing those dimensions impacting student achievement (Florida Department of Education, 2008a).

Why Do Principals Fail?

Knowing why and how people arrived at unsuccessful career conclusions creates a more comprehensive portrait of how those unsuccessful individuals behaved and communicated (Bennis, 1989). Accountability measures fostered new ideas for principal performance indicators as they related to student achievement. Though studying why leaders fail has rarely been the focus of leadership studies, the examination of the reasons reported for failure can be useful (Keller, 1998). Although superintendents and principals experienced pressure related to student achievement, principals usually lost their

positions due to ineffective handling of interpersonal and political situations (Fisher, 2001; Matthews, 2002). Factors such as student achievement and other more quantifiable information were both ranked low by responding superintendents and principals as a reason for removal (Davis, 1998b). This research was supported by Keller (1998) who noted that Davis (1998a) stated, “Bottom line: If you upset people, you are out the door” (p. 1).

Davis (1998a) categorized the duties of the school principalship as (a) human relations and (b) the performance of duty. Principals rarely lost their positions due to performance of duty, e.g., organization of tasks, safe learning environments, budgets, and operations. Instead, according to Davis (1998a), school leaders were likely to lose their positions due to the failure to build confidence and trust among the various internal and external stakeholders. Using the responses of 105 California school superintendents, Davis (1997) identified the following top five reasons why principals lost their positions as school leaders:

1. Fail to communicate or build positive relationships;
2. Fail to make good decisions and judgments ;
3. Unable to build a strong base of support ;
4. Fail to effectively manage the diverse political demands;
5. Fail to establish trust and confidence. (Davis, 1997 p. 75)

Matthews (2002) further supported Davis’ observations, reporting that principals were removed from their positions because “they were unable to execute the most basic of human relation tasks: working with faculty and staff” (p. 40). Without human relation skills, principals created a scenario leading to their own demise (Matthews, 2002).

The position of school principal with its related tasks of leadership has long been viewed as complex. The ability to attend to multiple tasks and stakeholders has required leaders who excelled in managing the multiple frames of complex organizations (Deal & Peterson, 1994). The principalship has been further complicated and the stakes have been raised related to individual performance due to increased public accountability which “can be traced to the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act” (Rammer, 2007, p. 67).

The advent of school accountability impacted school districts, superintendents, and school principals. The development and retention of candidates for such positions had become increasingly difficult (Whitaker, 2001), and while researchers suggested that effective building principals were vital to successful schools (Marzano et al., 2005), they must be provided the time to apply their knowledge and learning in meaningful ways to impact student achievement. Within the Florida principal assessment process, superintendents faced increased legislative mandates which focused on a singular aspect of principal performance, student achievement (Florida Department of Education, 2005). These legislative reforms have increased the complexity of the school and district educational environments (Pijanowski et al., 2009) and complicated decisions as to when or how a school principal should be removed (Florida Department of Education, 2005). This study sought to determine how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by superintendents when deciding to remove a school principal, the impact of student achievement and accountability standards to that process, and the number of years served under “career threatening condition” (Fisher 2001, p. 1).

Research Questions

Both national and state legislation has required increased accountability for schools and their respective leaders in the area of student achievement performance. One outcome of the legislation for underperforming principals in the state of Florida was removal from their positions by district superintendents (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). In an effort to identify and understand how these accountability standards impacted a superintendent's decision to remove a school principal, the following questions were selected to guide this study:

1. What were the demographic characteristics of the school principal, (K-12 school level, gender, years of experience, years under threatening condition, number of staff, student enrollment, previous position, and school/district population) who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?
2. What were the relationships between the problems encountered by the principal and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed by a principal within the state of Florida??
3. What Florida Principal Leadership Standards were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

4. Were a principal's years of experience a predictor of principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?
5. What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?
6. What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to remove a principal within the state of Florida?
7. What career outcomes were most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

Definition of Terms

The following terms and related definitions were provided to increase the clarity of the study.

Adequate Yearly Progress: A measure of school success related to student achievement based upon local standardized exams used to determine if every student, including sub groups, was proficient in language arts and mathematics (Haycock & Wiener, 2003).

Average Student Enrollment: The average number of student enrolled at school or the average student population of a particular school building.

Budgetary Issues: Information related to improprieties or issues regarding the financial business of the school building.

Career Outcomes: The resulting conclusion to a principal's career once involuntarily removed from a school leadership position (Fisher, 2001).

Career Threatened Principal: The chief administrator within a school being considered for removal or other consequence by the superintendent (Fisher, 2001).

Classroom Teacher: Those individuals employed within a school responsible for instructing students.

Central Office Administrators: Persons who supervised instructional programs at the school district or sub-district level.

Community Members: Individuals within a school community who had an interest in the success of the particular school building. Examples included: business members, community leaders, politicians, and volunteers.

Ethical Improprieties: Information related to principal's integrity, fairness, or honesty (Florida Department of Education, 2010a).

Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS): The requisite skills a school leader was required to possess "in order to perform the roles and responsibilities of the principalship in an acceptable manner" (Florida Department of Education, 2006, p. 1).

Interventions: Those intercessions (conferencing, improvement plans, mentors) utilized by a superintendent upon realizing a principal was experiencing a career threatening condition (Fisher, 2001).

Involuntary departure: Leaving of a position of employment that was not the choice of the individual exiting the position.

Leadership Decisions: Information regarding decisions the principal had made.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Federal educational reform legislation enacted based on high standards and measurable goals. The Act required states to develop assessments to be provided to all students in certain grades in order to improve student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Number of Years as Superintendent: The “aggregate number of years” an individual served in the capacity as a superintendent (Fisher, 2001, p. 10).

Number of Years Served Under Career-Threatening Conditions: “The length of the principal remained in the position after career threatening conditions were known by the superintendent” (Fisher, 2001, p. 9)

Outcome for Career-threatened Principal: “The consequence of career-threatening problem” (Fisher, 2001, p. 8)

Parents of Students: Parents were defined as one or both of the biological individuals responsible for a student, an individual with guardianship over a student, or any individual whom acted in a parental manner with authority over the student.

Position Immediately Prior to Principalship: The position of employment that immediately preceded the acceptance of the principalship (Fisher, 2001).

Principal: The head administrator of an elementary, middle, or high school who held a valid Florida license.

Principal Longevity: The amount of time an individual in the role of school principal required to become more responsive and inclusive when solving issues related to student achievement (Senge et al., 2000).

School AYP Status: The standing of the school building related to overall student achievement and the progress of its particular subgroups.

School District: The “administrative unit that exists at the local level to assist in the operation of public schools and to contract for school services” (Florida Department of Education, 2009, p. 2). District may be further classified as:

Urban: Areas classified by the United States Census Bureau where each area had at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants (United States Census Bureau, 2000);

Suburban: Areas classified by the United States Census Bureau where each metropolitan statistical area had at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population (United States Census Bureau, 2000);

Rural: Areas classified by the United States Census Bureau where there were no urban areas of at least 10,000 inhabitants (United States Census Bureau, 2000).

School Grade: An annual accounting of student progress on state examinations in Florida expressed in a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

School Level: The student make up of the school as determined by grade levels including:

High School: A school unit comprised of students grades 9-12;

Middle School: A school unit comprised of students grades 6-8;

Elementary School: A school unit comprised of students pre-K-5.

School Staff: Those individuals, instructional and non-instructional, employed within a school building for a particular purpose (teachers, administrators, clerks, custodians, paraprofessionals). Total school staff was the sum of all of these individuals.

Sources of Information: Items providing information to superintendents regarding the progress of principals and career-threatening problems related to the individual principals (Fisher, 2001).

Superintendent: “The chief executive of a school division” officer of a school district who may be elected or appointed by the school board. The superintendent is responsible for the district’s progress toward goals and objectives set by the school board and oversees all instructional and non-instructional employees (Campbell & Green, 1994). Superintendent was further defined as the individual who is responsible for the “direct or indirect supervision of school principals” (Fisher, 2001, p. 8).

Population

The study population was defined as the public school district superintendents for the 2010-2011 school year within the 67 public school systems contained within the state of Florida organized by county configuration. Florida school districts not included in the population were the Florida A&M University Laboratory School, Florida Atlantic University Schools, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, Florida Virtual School, and the P. K. Yonge Developmental Research School due to their specific innovative approaches, specificity of services, and their lack of a regional school district, county-

based configuration. The school systems selected for study, and their respective superintendents, were responsible for over 2,628,428 students (Florida Department of Education, 2009). The districts represented were diverse in both student enrollment and settings. Additionally, all socio economic levels were represented within these 67 school districts (Florida Department of Education, 2009, p. 3).

Instrumentation

A survey, originally developed by Martin (1990) and refined by Fisher (2001) was modified in order to identify perceptions of each Florida school superintendent (Appendix A). The survey was adjusted to include the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) when determining and prioritizing the reasons for the superintendent's decision to involuntarily remove a school principal. Permission to use the questionnaire with modifications was obtained (Appendix B).

The instrument required superintendents to respond to their most significant case regarding removal of a principal rather than deriving responses related to multiple experiences. The survey contained eight separate areas related to the removal of school principals including: superintendent demographic data, principal demographic data, problems encountered by the principal, competence of the principal based on the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS), sources of information concerning principal performance, interventions prior to removal, outcome, and open responses.

Following the path of previous researchers, this researcher pilot tested the instrument by inviting five educational administrators who directly or indirectly

supervised school principals to participate in order to review and provide recommendations related to survey design. The survey was edited based on feedback from the pilot test. Following pilot testing, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (Appendix C), and the survey was administered electronically via a web-based survey program to Florida superintendents in the summer of 2010. Contact information and email accounts, for contact and communication purposes, were obtained through the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS).

Reliability

The instrument was previously utilized and refined in three dissertations (Deluca, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Martin, 1990). Martin (1990) noted the consistency and alignment of the data throughout the entire research process which included interviews, review of literature, a pilot study, and the final administration of the survey. Fisher (2001) also reported respondent mean averages for each section of the survey based on a Likert-type scale of 1-5 where 1 = the lowest and 5 = the highest rating for an item. Those results, reported in the last administration of the survey (Fisher, 2001), provided mean averages for clarity of 4.8, readability of 4.9, exclusivity of 5.0, and exhaustiveness of 5.0.

Validity

“A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to determine if there were factors underlying the competencies analyzed within the survey” (Fisher, 2001, p. 55). “All factors with an eigenvalue greater than one were considered to

be useful factors; eight separate factors were identified” (Fisher, 2001, p. 55). The survey utilized in this research was dependent on respondents’ self-reports to provide valid data. Previous administrations of the survey instrument yielded consistent and aligned data. The research process included interviews, review of literature, a pilot study, and the final administration of the survey. Therefore the inherent weakness of dependence on respondents was not a severe limitation for the study.

Data Collection

From June to September of 2010, all participant information was collected related to the survey in the following areas: demographic data related to both the school principals and the superintendents, problems encountered by the school principal, competence of the school principal, sources of information, initiated interventions, outcome, and open responses. Item responses and data were collected, and were entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database for further statistical analysis. These data were analyzed through various statistical procedures using the appropriate data sources within the survey as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Sources of Data: Research Questions and Survey Items

Research Questions	Survey Sections/Items
1. What were the demographic characteristics of the school principal, (K-12 school level, gender, years of experience, years under threatening condition, number of staff, student enrollment, previous position, and school/district population) who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?	Section A: Items 2-6 Section B: Items 1-7
2. What was the relationship between the problems encountered by the principal and Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed by a principal within the state of Florida?	Section C: Items 1-10 Section D: Items 1-10
3. What Florida Principal Leadership Standards were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section D: Items 1-10
4. Were years of experience in the school principal position a predictor of principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section B: Item 3 Section D: Items 1-10
5. What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?	Section E: Items 1-11
6. What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to involuntarily remove a principal within the state of Florida?	Section F: Items 1-10
7. What career outcomes were was most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section G: Items 1-9

Data Analysis

Survey responses were utilized to determine if there were significant differences in the rankings related to the FPLS and dimensions as reported by Florida superintendents. Additional disaggregation and examination of the survey responses were conducted related to the size of the school district, size of the school, principal and superintendent gender, years of experience of the principal and superintendent, type of school, student enrollment, staff size, years served prior to termination, position held prior to appointment as principal, and outcome. Descriptive statistics, Spearman correlations, and a Simple Linear Regression analysis were performed using an alpha level of .05.

The results for survey section related to problems encountered by the school principal (Section C) and individual competence (Section D) were also gathered and compared to arrive at a percentage of agreement among respondents for each survey item. Agreement was defined as the percentage of superintendents who responded with 4 or 5 ranking on items (Fisher, 2001). Percentages of agreement were reported as the proportion of superintendents who scored a particular leadership trait as either a 4 or 5 on the Likert scale. Example: As indicated by the data, 98% of the superintendents agreed that creating a safe and orderly learning environment was a critical trait for an effective principal. “Based on previous research (Fletcher, 1994), agreement of greater than 90% was considered to be significant in the statistical analysis” (p. 101). Fletcher (1994) used the following agreement levels, displayed in Table 4, in reporting findings related to performance indicators.

Table 4

Superintendents' Levels of Agreement and Percentage Range

Agreement Levels	Range
Significant agreement	90% +
Good agreement	89% - 80%
Moderate agreement	79% - 70%
Average agreement	69% - 60%
Fair agreement	59% - 50%
Low agreement	49% or below

Note. Adapted from Fletcher, 1994, p. 101.

Assumptions

It was assumed that all responding superintendents completed the Career Threatened Principal Survey honestly and to the best of their ability. It was further assumed that all principals who were considered as career threatened by their superintendents were originally chosen and hired in good faith.

Delimitations

This study was delimited as the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were used solely by the state of Florida to determine principal competency.

Limitations

An inherent weakness of this study was the lack of ability to generalize findings beyond the thoughts and responses of the Florida superintendents who participated in the study. Inferences regarding the data contained within this study to other states were not necessarily appropriate. Additionally, the size of the study's targeted population was

another limitation (N = 67). A final identified limitation of this study was the research methodology. As noted, the survey was dependent on respondents to provide valid data. Previous utilization of the survey instrument yielded consistent and aligned data and included interviews, review of literature, a pilot study, and the final administration of the survey. Therefore this inherent weakness was not a severe limitation for the study.

Significance of the Study

The age of accountability has impacted education and studying why leaders fail has rarely been the focus of leadership studies. Bennis (1989) noted that knowing why and how people arrive at unsuccessful career conclusions could provide a better road map to success. Though leadership traits and skills have repeatedly been defined, a comprehensive portrait of leadership which also provided critical non-examples has not been common. The results and implications of this study provided a picture of why principals have lost their positions within the state of Florida and allowed others to avoid those potential career pitfalls. The information gathered would add to the body of knowledge on the ability and skills needed for effective and successful school leadership, and could be utilized to guide school district principal preparation programs and leadership development programs in higher education.

Summary

This chapter presented the purpose of the study and a clarification of the problem. The population has been delineated, and the research questions used to guide the study

have been stated. The conceptual framework, which served as the basis for the research, and the research design have been introduced. Addressed in the research design were instrumentation, data collection and analysis. Concluding the chapter were assumptions, limitations, and a statement regarding the significance of the study.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature reviewed within the study focused on the positions of school principal and district superintendent in order to better understand the factors related to student achievement, accountability, and their impact on the decision to involuntarily remove a school principal from their school leadership position within the state of Florida. Since 2000, the levels of accountability related to a singular measure of principal performance, student achievement, increased at a phenomenal rate. This increase in accountability and its potential impact to principal removal focused the review on factors which impacted the role of the superintendent and principal, the trends related to student achievement and accountability, the development of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS), principal performance evaluation, and previous research conducted related to the topic.

A consultation appointment with the university research librarian was utilized to begin the literature review process and clarify the research topic, research questions, and the available and best resources to the researcher. The literature study examined empirical research and information from a variety of sources including educational journals, peer reviewed articles, previously conducted research studies and dissertations, as well as government records. Research processes included the utilization of various educational databases (ERIC-Ebscohost, Education Full Text, Dissertation and Theses: Full Text) and printed material available to the researcher.

This chapter has been organized to present the supporting rationales which created a basis for understanding the involuntary removal of Florida school principals including: (a) the availability of suitable and effective principal replacements, defined as the leadership crisis, which were examined to ascertain the pressures on district superintendents to find suitable replacements when the decision to remove a school principal was rendered, (b) principals and their impact on student achievement were examined to better understand the historical development of the national and state accountability legislation, (c) the national and Florida trends focusing on school accountability were analyzed in order to expand the understanding of the pressures and expectations school principals and superintendents faced as performance became exclusively defined by student achievement, (d) the role of the school superintendent was examined and provided insight into how district leaders dealt with the expectations of accountability and aligned district goals to those of the building level principals, (e) the development of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were analyzed to provide a greater understanding of the state of Florida's expectations for school principals and provided the basis for this study's survey (Appendix D) and the superintendent's evaluation of school leadership performance based on those competencies, (f) previously conducted studies related to principal removal were reviewed, as the data provided a basis for understanding as to why school principals had been previously removed from their positions and provided foundational research-based support for this study and comparison data for its results.

Leadership Crisis

Researchers indicated that the implications for school superintendents in identifying, hiring, and retaining effective school principals who are able to manage the increased accountability were complicated by a looming leadership crisis (Whitaker, 2001). Of the 93,000 principals currently serving in school leadership roles more than 39% were close to retirement (Potter, 2001) and those over the age of 50 years was 54% (Lovely, 2004). “When a school principal fails, it comes at great social cost to the school’s students and families, at significant economic and often political cost to the school district, and at an extreme personal cost to the principal” (Knuth & Banks, 2006, p. 4). The implications were worse for relatively new principals to the profession as they are undoubtedly “lost to the profession forever” (Knuth & Banks, 2006, p. 4).

New Challenges

The replacement of school principals presented more of a challenge in the first decade of the 21st century than it had in the past. Superintendents who looked toward individuals who were in leadership development positions to fill vacancies found that they were often no longer applying for the position. “Pressures inherent in state and federal reforms, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, made the principalship less desirable” (Cusick, 2003, p. 4). Cusick (2003) concluded “there were critical differences in the responsibilities faced as a result of educational accountability and the previous standards which were related to day to day school building management and typical parental demands” (p. 4). These new responsibilities impacted principals who “indicated

stress (91%) and time required at work (86%) as the top occupational deterrents for people who choose to opt out of school leadership after they meet the credential requirements” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009, p. 87). Other issues identified as primary obstructions “were low pay (67%), accountability mandates (64%), and increasing disrespect from students (54%)” (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p.87).

Principal Shortage

In a survey of 176 superintendents in the western United States, Whitaker (2001), examined the principal shortage by gathering data related to superintendents’ “perceptions of the quantity and quality of candidates seeking a principalship” (p. 83). A total of 108 useable surveys were returned, and “follow up interviews with superintendents were conducted (N = 10). Using a Likert scale of 1 (no shortage) to 5 (extreme shortage), the overall mean score of the respondents was 3.44” (p. 84). Whitaker (2001) concluded “that 90% of the respondents indicated a moderate to extreme shortage of principal candidates, with the problem more severe at the high school level” (p. 84).

Superintendents’ responses reflected their frustration about both the low number of applicants and their unease and concerns as to applicant quality (Whitaker 2001):

When asked to rate the overall quality of principal candidates on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), 30 superintendents (28.3 percent) rated the quality as "poor" or "fair," whereas 54 respondents (51 percent) rated the quality as "good." Only two superintendents rated the quality as "excellent," and 18 respondents (16.9 percent) rated the quality as "very good." The mean score was 2.89. (p. 85)

Superintendents identified lack of experience as a factor which diminished the quality of principal applicants in comparison to previous years (Whitaker, 2001). This frustration was supported by the research of Feldsher (2001), who noted superintendents expressed reservations about current principals and aspiring candidates. Whitaker's (2001) research also identified the need for principals who could deal effectively with urban and high school environments. Superintendents needed principals who had knowledge of instructional and assessment, and could utilize data to develop plans for improvement. Whitaker's (2001) research provided important initial information concerning a changing definition of principal shortage.

Research conducted by Roza (2003) supported this definition of principal shortage and the call for better principal candidates. Analyzing 83 U.S. public school districts in 10 geographical regions, Roza (2003) focused the research on understanding why particular areas of the country were "struggling to fill principal vacancies" (p. 12). The 10 geographic areas (Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New Mexico, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, and Santa Clara) were chosen based on population statistics or reported labor shortages within education. As a result of the study, Roza (2003) concluded that common beliefs surrounding the shortage of school principals were in error. Findings revealed that in some cases there had been a reduction in the number of certified candidates, creating greater concerns for locating and hiring secondary school leaders, but the greater issue was a perceived lack of candidates who were able to meet the demands of school accountability. Therefore, the looming principal shortage had become a matter of definition. In many cases there were adequate numbers of certified

applicants. However, individuals who had the prerequisite leadership skills to deal effectively with accountability standards were in short supply. Though the quantity of potential school leaders in the human resource pipeline had not significantly diminished, expectations for those individuals had changed. School principals were now required to be instructional leaders and it was no longer sufficient to be a manager and disciplinary figure (Roza, 2003).

Based on these results, Roza (2003) identified a gap in the perceptions of school superintendents and human resource administrators. “While human resource directors are quite satisfied with their new hires, superintendents continued to express dissatisfaction about inadequate leadership capabilities of new principals” (p. 8). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) supported this position in their study of “educators who were eligible to work as school administrators” (p. 58). Specifically, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) reported on school leaders who “were asked to think of individuals they knew who held principal licenses, but who did not currently hold a building-level administrative position” (p. 58). Respondents indicated that “nearly one-half thought the person was not well suited for the position, either because of an inappropriate disposition or temperament (48%) or because the person exhibited poor judgment or common sense (38%)” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p 58). Cusick (2003) agreed there were critical differences between the responsibilities faced as a result of educational accountability “including a lack of coherence between the responsibilities placed on principals by these and other proposed reforms and the more immediate tasks of running the school and attending to parents” (p. 4).

“During the past decade education, policy has been increasingly dominated by one objective, higher student achievement, and one strategy, accountability” (Herrington & Wills, 2005, p. 183). This legislation focused on the principal as the individual ultimately responsible for school and student achievement which, according to Herrington and Wills (2005), created a shortage of available principal candidates for district superintendents. As educational reform and accountability movements increased the complexity of the school and district educational environments, superintendents came under increasing pressure to identify “high-caliber candidates” (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 86) who could deal with the complexity of the position.

School Leadership and Student Achievement

According to Deal and Peterson (1994), the position of school principal and the related tasks of school leadership have always been complex. The ability to attend to multiple tasks and stakeholders has required excellent leaders who could manage the multiple frames of complex organizations. The principalship, already a complex position, was further complicated by the advent of state and national legislation which brought student achievement and instructional leadership to the forefront of principal responsibilities (Florida Department of Education, 2008a).

Impact on Achievement

Hallinger and Heck (1998) examined prior studies in order to develop an understanding of principal leadership and its impact on student achievement. Their

review of literature, which included published journal articles, dissertations, and papers presented at peer reviewed conferences, focused on “the apparently powerful impact of principals on processes related to school effectiveness and improvement” (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 158). Though each of the studies they reviewed had been conducted to examine the relationship between student achievement and principal leadership, the framework utilized for their examination differed in approach and methodology (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Hallinger and Heck (1998) used three basic categories to classify their examination of the research:

- a) direct effects (i.e., where principal’s action influence school outcomes), b) mediated effects (i.e., where principal actions affect outcomes indirectly through other variables) and c) reciprocal effects (e.g., where the principal affects teachers and teachers affect the principal, and through these processes the outcomes are affected). (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 163)

The results yielded mixed findings. The most frequent structures for researchers who analyzed the relationship of school leadership on student achievement were direct effects models and mediated effect models. When utilizing direct-effect models, researchers were unable to produce consistent and measureable effects. “A finding of no significant relationship was the most common result, with occasional findings of mixed or weak effects” (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 166).

Significant differences in outcomes were noted when examining the studies based on mediated-effect models. Studies which utilized such models produced evidence that principal leadership impacted school achievement outcomes. “When combined with antecedent variables, the more complex model shows an even more consistent pattern of

positive indirect effects of principal leadership on school effectiveness” (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p. 167). The researchers concluded that the patterns revealed in the literature supported the belief that principals impacted school effectiveness and student achievement, but only in an indirect manner. Hallinger and Heck (1998) added that “while the indirect effect is small, it is statistically significant, and we assert meaningful” (p. 186).

The notion of a principal’s direct and indirect impact on student learning and achievement was supported by additional researchers (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005). Researchers noted that direct effect research models used in an attempt to determine the relationship between principal behavior and student achievement, “the statement that educational leadership matters was rather weak” (Kruger, Witziers, & Slegers, 2007, p. 3). Principals may have at one time been focused on direct relationship and causal outcomes, but the complexity of the school building now required leaders to impact achievement by focusing on “instructional organization and culture” (Kruger et al., 2007, p. 3).

Importance of Time

As school accountability related to student achievement evolved, the school principalship developed into a position where responsibilities were ever increasing, complex, and where additional regulations were provided without regard to individual development (Deal & Peterson, 1994). The quandary presented by Alvy and Robbins (2005) was the extent to which principals were provided the time to lead as they learned.

Gentilucci and Muto (2007) regarded amount of time as the critical component that allowed leaders the opportunity to apply their knowledge and learning in meaningful ways, and allocate more time to instructional activities. According to these researchers, effective school leaders were able to impact student achievement when sufficient time was provided to develop relationships and build systems. As principals gained experience, they were more responsive and inclusive when solving issues related to student achievement (Van Vleck, 2008).

Time in the position increased a principal's opportunity for exposure to quality learning opportunities and development of professional learning communities which has resulted in additional knowledge concerning curriculum, instruction, leadership, and their relationship to standards-based reform (Dufour & Eaker, 1998). Senge et al. (2000) provided an expanded view of the principal as the leader of their organizational culture. They viewed leaders as being responsible for the development of organizational cultures which "included systems thinking, personal mastery, team learning, as well as shared vision and mental models" (Senge et al., p. 6). These acquired sets of professional skills allowed instructional leaders to develop collaborative cultures and move schools toward a standard based model, resulting in increased student achievement (Diegmueller & Richard, 2000). However, at least two years were necessary for a principal two years for principals to "shape a vision for a school, gain the trust of staff members, and build a systematic process to foster improvement" (Diegmueller & Richard, 2000, p. 1). This timeline was important as new leaders often trapped themselves in matters unrelated to curriculum and instruction, spending an inordinate amount of time dealing with

administrative trivia (Van Vleck, 2008). In 2007, Rammer supported this research concluding that new principals must be afforded time and professional development to make an impact related to increased student achievement and improve United States schools.

Instructional leadership attributes gained over time were statistically linked to student achievement as “experience as a principal is often regraded as the most important indicator of success.” (Kaplan et al., 2005, p 33). The development of instructional leadership attributes was of importance as “principals are under pressure to produce results, especially increased test scores and reduced achievement disparities associated with income and race (Quint et al., 2007, p.1). However, these researchers also found that principals who are more actively involved in their own professional development helped improve teacher quality and those schools student test scores resulted in higher achievement. (Quint et al., 2007). These conclusions were supported by Van Vleck (2008) who reported that veteran principals were much more likely to understand their fundamental responsibilities and focused more time on activities related to instructional leadership.

Despite the influx of additional complex rules and regulations, individuals responsible for student achievement and school organizations no longer were excused from immediately implementing policy as to do so would make schools and individuals “remiss in their duties” (Marzano, p. 126). Though it has been recognized that inexperienced principals have been likely to make mistakes, the time for such errors has been shortened. Superintendents’ viewpoints related to student achievement, combined

with the standards for accountability, had limited the provision of necessary professional development time for principals.

Rise of Accountability

Late in the 20th century, the focus of education issues moved from educational equity to accountability and, thereby, further complicated the leadership needs of school districts (Scribner & Layton, 1994). “Accountability schemes come in many forms, including high-stakes student testing, district-led closure, or restructuring of low-performing schools, and state takeovers of low-performing schools and districts” (Elmore, 2002, p. 3).

National Trends

The sources of the national educational trends were traced back to a time when education was first seen as “integral to the national defense and as important weapons in the Cold War” (Bracey, 2002, p. 38). At the time, it was perceived that schools in the United States were not creating the necessary graduates that would allow the U.S. to compete globally. In 1957, the Soviet Union’s space Sputnik satellite further reinforced the idea that the education system was inadequate and “accused schools of many other failings” (Bracey, 2002, p. 40).

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* became the next focal point related to school accountability. Released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the report indicted the U.S. public education system for an inability to educate its students

(Bracey, 2002, p. 40). In order to focus the nation's schools on the necessity of producing results, *Goals 2000* was introduced and established broad performance goals for United States schools (Rudalevige, 2003). Signed into law by President William Jefferson Clinton, this legislation "provided grants to help states develop academic standards" (Rudalevige, 2003, p. 1).

In 1994, a change in accountability for schools was created "with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)" (Rudalevige, 2003, p. 63). As reported by Rudalevige (2003) this reauthorization

signaled a nationwide commitment to standards-based reform. The reauthorization required states to develop content and performance standards for K-12 schools. Congress also adopted the notion of adequate yearly progress that later became the linchpin of accountability in No Child Left Behind. States were required to make "continuous and substantial" progress toward the goal of academic proficiency for all students. State standards were supposed to be in place by 1997-98; assessments and final definitions of adequate yearly progress by 2000-01. (p. 2)

The reauthorization of this act developed the terminology and standards which would be adopted into the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation referred to as NCLB. The reauthorization provided no deadlines for states to adopt the provisions of the law and only limited consequences for those failing to meet the expectations (Rudalevige, 2003).

With the election of President George W. Bush in 2000, the emphasis on educational accountability was further increased. In January of 2001, a 30-page blueprint for education reform that became NCLB called for:

the annual testing of students in grades 3-8 and the release of state and school report cards showing the performance of students disaggregated by ethnic and economic subgroups. States would be required to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) each year as a double check on the results from state assessments, and schools receiving Title I compensatory-

education funds would be required to show that disadvantaged students were making adequate yearly progress. The proposal did not spell out the requirements for “corrective action” when a school or district continued to fail, but public school choice and, later, “exit vouchers” toward private school tuition or for supplemental services were to be included. Schools and states that succeeded “in closing the achievement gap” would receive funding bonuses from the federal government; those that did not would lose funding for administrative operations. (Rudalevige, 2003, p. 3)

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and with its passage, the function of the federal government was expanded in the country’s public school systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). With the passage and merger of federal and state legislation, government interjected itself “directly into public school performance and the professional careers of public school principals and superintendents” (Rammer, 2007, p. 67).

Prior to NCLB, the federal government provided only symbolic involvement in the operation of public schools. The new accountability legislation created deadlines for all students being proficient (2014), disaggregation of student performance, and sanctions including school improvement plans, school restructuring, and public school choice (Rudalevige, 2003). This accountability legislation, though focused on the individual states, “placed the burden for improved academic achievement squarely on the shoulders of school principals” (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007, p. 219).

Florida Trends

At the same time federal legislation was developed to deal with accountability, the state of Florida was also developing its own standards for student achievement. In 2001, the State of Florida developed a rigorous set of K-12 learning outcomes,

subsequently known as the Sunshine State Standards (SSS). These standards reflected what a student should know and be able to demonstrate annually, from kindergarten through 12th grade (Florida Department of Education, 2001a). At the same time, an examination was developed to measure the mastery of the SSS and would become known as the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). These standards and the resulting test data which measured the outcomes of student learning would become the foundation of the Florida A+ School Accountability System. (Florida Department of Education, 2001a).

In 1998, newly elected Governor Jeb Bush released statistics related to the status of Florida's education system: Only 50% of Florida's fourth graders were able to read at grade level; and the high school graduation rate hovered at just over 51% (Florida Department of Education, 2001a). Increased public awareness of this information, combined with an emerging national climate of increased accountability, created the conditions necessary for educational reforms that would become the Florida A+ School Accountability System.

The Florida A+ School Accountability System issued school grades utilizing the "Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) as the primary criterion" for those calculations (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 1). Each individual school earned a letter grade based on the following criteria:

1. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in reading.
2. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in mathematics.
3. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring at or above FCAT Achievement Level 3 in science.

4. One point for each percent of students who meet high standards by scoring 3.5 or higher on the FCAT writing assessment. In the event that there are not at least 30 eligible students tested in writing, the district average in writing is substituted.
 5. One point for each percent of students making learning gains in reading.
 6. One point for each percent of students making learning gains in mathematics.
 7. One point for each percent of the lowest performing students making learning gains in reading. In the event that there are not at least 30 eligible students, the school's reading learning gains are substituted.
 8. One point for each percent of the lowest performing students making learning gains in mathematics. In the event that there are not at least 30 eligible students, the school's mathematics learning gains are substituted.
- (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 3)

Accumulated points were then combined and converted into a school grading scale where A = 525 or above, B = 495-524, C = 435-494, D = 395-434, and F = less than 395.

In addition to the accumulation of points, and in order to have received an A grade from the state, a school was required to test more than 90% of their eligible students (Florida Department of Education, 2008c). Schools earning a C grade or higher also had to demonstrate adequate yearly progress for the lowest students in reading. This was defined by at least 50% of the lowest students in reading making an annual learning gain. Learning gains were demonstrated when students improved their level of achievement, as measured by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), in one of the following ways: (a) raising their previous year's achievement level (1 -5), (b) maintaining a high level of academic achievement, or (c) demonstrating "more than one year's worth of academic growth" (Florida Department of Education, 2008c, p. 11). If schools did not meet these criteria, they were penalized by a reduction of one letter grade. These calculated school grades were utilized as a measure of school performance,

publicly advertised, and integrated into the standards measuring a principal's effectiveness (Florida Department of Education, 2008c).

In March of 2008, the United States Department of Education announced a plan to differentiate accountability which allowed specific states to vary the intensity and types of interventions for schools. The new model of accountability, defined by NCLB, created Schools In Need of Improvement or SINI schools (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). The state of Florida, citing its desire to continue to close the achievement gap between white and minority students, applied for and agreed to become one of the six states to enter into an agreement which increased the level of school accountability and merged the Florida A+ School Accountability System with NCLB and its AYP standard (Florida Department of Education, 2008a).

The new Differentiated Accountability (DA) model retained the Florida A+ School Accountability System school grading procedures but focused more significantly on subgroups and the data related to making adequate yearly progress. The objectives of the DA model included:

1. more school-wide assistance and direction for schools at or in restructuring to improve school performance and maintain success;
2. targeted and/or school-wide support and intervention for schools not yet in restructuring to prevent the need for complete restructuring;
3. focused assistance for schools that have previously been identified for improvement but have demonstrated recent improvement and have the opportunity to exit "in need of improvement" status.
(Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. i)

The resultant model merged the federal accountability standards with the state accountability system. By merging with the federal accountability standards, Florida created a new system of accountability which focused on progressive support of schools

while increasing requirements and interventions as school grades or the percentage of AYP declined (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). “Schools in need of improvement (SINI)” were categorized, and levels of support and intervention were applied based on student achievement results beginning with a minimal amount of state and district involvement and increasing as needed (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. 12). The DA model created a five-tier intervention program, “Prevent I, Correct I, Prevent II, Correct II, and Intervene” (Florida Department of Education, 2008, p. 12). This model divided Florida schools based on their annual school grades and adequate yearly progress into the five categories displayed in Table 5.

The application of these differentiated measures of support and intervention were defined by the following elements:

specific intervention for attaining benchmarks and executing the school improvement plan; roles for the school, district, and state in preparing, directing, implementing and monitoring the plan and reporting progress; measurable benchmarks for determining the progress of the plan; and consequences for non-compliance with requirements. (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. 11)

To focus those interventions, the state of Florida developed a comprehensive intervention and support plan for each of the five intervention levels or SINI tiers. The interventions applied to eight areas of improvement: “improvement planning for the school and district, school leadership, educator quality, professional learning, curriculum alignment and pace, continuous improvement, choices and supplemental educational services, and monitoring” (Florida Department of Education, 2008a, p. 12). Each intervention was supported by measureable benchmarks and interventions differentiated based on each SINI tier contained within the model.

Table 5

Differentiated Accountability (DA) Model Categories

DA Category	Level of Intervention	Grade/AYP Criteria
Prevent I	School directs intervention. District provides assistance. State reviews progress.	A, B, C, or ungraded schools that have missed AYP for two consecutive years or a subsequent third year and have met at least 80% of AYP criteria.
Correct I	School complies with district measures. District directs intervention. State reviews progress.	A, B, C, or ungraded schools that have missed AYP for four or more years and have met at least 80% of AYP criteria.
Prevent II	School complies with district measures. District directs intervention and provides planning and assistance. State provides assistance, monitors and reports.	D schools that have missed AYP for fewer than two consecutive years. D schools that have missed AYP for two consecutive years or a subsequent third year. A, B, C, or ungraded schools that have missed AYP for two consecutive years or a subsequent third year and have met less than 80% of AYP criteria.
Correct II	School complies with district-directed interventions. The district complies with state-directed interventions. The state directs interventions through the district, monitors and reports.	All F schools regardless of AYP status. D schools that have missed AYP for four or more years. A, B, C, or ungraded schools that have missed AYP for four or more years and have met less than 80% of AYP criteria.
Intervene	The school complies with district-directed interventions. The district complies with state-directed interventions. The state directs interventions through the district, monitors and reports.	Current F schools that have earned at least four F grades in the last six school years. D or F schools that meet three of the four following conditions: <u>the</u> percentage of non-proficient students in reading has increased over the past five years; the percentage of non-proficient students in math has increased over the past five years; 65 % or more of the school's students are not proficient in reading; 65 % or more of the school's students are not proficient in math.

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2008a, p. 12)

School leadership was identified as a designated area for improvement. As the student achievement levels dropped within a particular school building, the school leader was affected. Increasing levels of intervention, based on student achievement, were

required beginning with district intervention related to the school leader and expanding to state intervention requiring the restructuring of the school leadership team. The information in Table 6 provides the various levels of intervention related to the position of school principal.

Table 6

SINI Categories and Required School Leadership Interventions

SINI Category	Leadership Interventions
Prevent I	Principal has prior record of increasing student and school achievement; district monitors hiring of leadership team.
Correct I	Principal has prior record of increasing student achievement and targeted subgroups not making AYP; district reviews/hires school leadership team.
Prevent II	All leadership team members have prior record of increasing student achievement in AYP subgroup areas; district reviews/hires school leadership team.
Correct II	Leadership team must have demonstrated success in school improvement in a similar setting; district reviews/hires school leadership team.
Intervene	District reviews and hires leadership team with Department of Education.

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2008a, p. 13). SINI = Schools in need of improvement.

Though the school district and superintendent remained in control of the hiring process, each level of the DA model created additional oversight from the state of Florida. If a school was unable to improve, the district was required, along with input

from the state to restructure the school building and leadership team (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). The Florida Department of Education (2008) created a plan for low performing schools in which, “the state will take a much more active role in the approving the hiring of school administration, oversight of professional learning and training, and planning the schools improvement strategy” (p. 28).

The advent of the DA model created an avenue for direct intervention into public school performance and the professional careers of public school principals. This type of legislation created a need for school leaders who were able to navigate the additional complexities of school accountability and produce results and “outlined serious consequences” (Rammer, 2007, p. 67) for those who did not meet the standards. If school principals could not positively affect student achievement for all students, their removal was to be anticipated (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). The new accountability standards changed the roles of school principals and their relationship with superintendents who were ultimately responsible for their performance, supervision and assessment.

Role of Superintendent

As accountability increased, principal leadership standards were redefined and pressure increased to produce measureable results, the role of the superintendent also grew more complex. With the advent of NCLB and other legislative accountability mandates, superintendents faced new dilemmas related to the professional performance of principals (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The predicament for

superintendents was how to provide the time and protection for school principals when accountability standards required results sooner rather than later. Not only did superintendents have a traditional leadership role to perform, but they dealt with legal requirements and public fallout related to school leaders and schools that did not produce results (Florida Department of Education, 2008c). A challenge for superintendents was leaders needed to be identified to manage school operations, and produce student and school wide achievement gains (Lindsay, 2008).

Hiring Authority

Though the mission of finding and supporting the development of an effective school leader remained a positional responsibility, the leadership shortage and accountability legislation created additional obstacles (Herrington & Wills, 2005). For the superintendent, the choice of principal and the resulting effectiveness of that choice were subject to increased scrutiny (Rammer, 2007). By legal statute, it was the school board who utilized its authority as a hiring agent and took the appropriate action to hire a principal but, “the superintendent was the individual who made the decision and final recommendation as to who is hired.” (Pijanowski et al., p. 86). Therefore, the selection and retention of principals had become the single most important decision a superintendent could render. In this process superintendents’ “aligned actions with shared values” and they “enlisted others in a common vision” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 26).

Mutual Expectations

Davis (1997) reported that “principals are faced with the unrelenting task of maintaining structure and order within increasingly hostile, unpredictable, and conflict laden environments” (p. 73). One variable that allowed school principals to succeed has been the development expectations and outcomes via mutual understanding of performance standards and expectations (Waters & Marzano, 2006). The superintendent-principal relationship guided by open communication, mutual learning, and partnerships has been noted as key and vital to principal success (Boris-Schacter, 1998). The development of these collegial and professional relationships was successful in removing the fear of failure experienced by many new principals. Matthews (2002) observed that superintendents needed to understand the traits of successful principals to guide the selection process, but they also needed to afford school leaders multiple learning opportunities and mentorships along with clear and accurate feedback on performance from multiple sources. In addition, according to Kaplan et al. (2005), superintendents needed to provide principals with “meaningful assessments designed to generate information for professional growth” (p. 42) and support as they attempted to create the improvements required by legislation.

Decisions related to retaining a principal have required superintendents to integrate policy with what was known about effective leadership development (Knuth & Banks, 2006). Superintendents, as the individuals responsible for school district performance, needed to balance their own complex set of leadership dimensions. Researchers investigating the superintendency have indicated that the job description and

expectations for the school superintendent were also being impacted by increased accountability complexities (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

Waters and Marzano's (2006) research for the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning Organization (McREL) identified "27 studies conducted since 1970 that used rigorous and quantitative methods to student the influence of school district leaders on student achievement. These studies involved 2,817 districts and the achievement scores of over three million students" (p. 3). Waters and Marzano (2006) "utilized a research technique called meta-analysis" (p. 9), to create the "largest-ever quantitative examination of research on superintendents" (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p.

1). The following four questions guided the research:

1. What is the strength of the relationship between leadership at the district level and average student academic achievement in the school district?
2. What specific district level leadership responsibilities are related to student academic achievement?
3. What specific leadership practices are utilized to fulfill these responsibilities?
4. What is the variation in the relationship between district leadership and student achievement? (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 7)

Green and Salkind (2007) offered that if two variables were highly related, a coefficient "Index ranges from -1 to +1 (or -1.00). Waters and Marzano (2006) found that leadership at the district level was positively correlated ($r = .24$) to student achievement. They noted that the superintendent was a critical component in outcomes related to student achievement.

Waters and Marzano (2006) reported three major findings related to the superintendency and student achievement. These findings included "district leadership mattered, goal setting related to student achievement was vital, and superintendent tenure

was positively correlated with student achievement” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, pp. 3-4). The research suggested that superintendents needed to continually monitor district goals and provide the resources of time, money, support, and materials to reach their objectives.

To create the conditions necessary for student achievement, Waters and Marzano (2006) “identified five district level responsibilities that all have a statistically significant correlation with student achievement” (p. 3). Those responsibilities began with “collaborative goal setting” (p. 4). “Effective superintendents included all relevant stakeholders in establishing district goals” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 3). Two areas which were termed non-negotiable included student achievement and classroom instruction. Effective superintendents were found to have devised annual achievement goals, along with their respective school boards, related to (a) student achievement, (b) alignment of resources, and (c) consistent “use of research-based instructional practices” known to improve student achievement (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4). Effective superintendents also continually monitored the school’s progress related to these goals to ensure that student achievement remained the priority for the school leaders (Waters & Marzano, 2006).

To maintain student achievement as a priority, Waters and Marzano (2006) found what was determined to be a significant factor which impacted the relationship between a superintendent and the school principal. The key to a successful principal/superintendent relationship was a term defined by the researchers as “defined autonomy”. Waters and Marzano (2006) found a conflict in their research: in one study, building autonomy had a

.28 positive correlation with student achievement, but site based decision making had a negative correlation. Waters and Marzano (2006) examined this conflict and concluded the difference was that effective superintendents provided school principals with defined autonomy. Superintendents provided defined autonomy for principals when they “set clear and non negotiable goals for learning and instruction, yet provided school leadership teams with the responsibility and authority for determining how to meet those goals” (Waters & Marzano, 2006, p. 4). By doing so the superintendent developed a critical relationship with the school and its leader which encouraged principals to assume responsibility for school outcomes. Defined autonomy led to a principal’s internalization of the district expectations and the necessary support to lead a school toward the defined school district outcomes.

The research of Waters and Marzano (2006) and the definition of defined autonomy were supported by Kultgen (2010) who utilized the “single case study” which sought “qualitative data on the effects of the superintendents’ organizational approach to student success” (p. 45). The purpose of the study was “to determine how defined autonomy and the goal implementation process as an element of the superintendent’s organizational approach impacted student success” (Kultgen, 2010, p. 135). “Data were collected through interviews, observations and analysis of documents” (Kultgen, 2010, p. 63). It was concluded that the defined autonomy approach of a school superintendent did impact student success. The actions of the district superintendent related to the relationship with principal and the goal setting process created definitive goals for student achievement and held principals accountable for developing plans to reach the standards.

In reporting the data Kultgen (2010) noted superintendents who created a defined autonomy approach to student achievement exhibited the ability to:

1. develop a shared vision,
2. implement district goals,
3. consistently communicate expectations,
4. allow principals to implement,
5. hold principals accountable through monitoring. (Kultgen, 2010, p. 139)

Kultgen (2010) believed that the actions of the school superintendent “impacted student success through the goal implementation process” (p. 136). The common theme that emerged in Kultgen’s (2010) study was that principals became attuned to a superintendent’s behavior, message, and expectations concerning student success and the data collection process.

Researchers have stressed the importance of mutual understanding of performance standards and expectations and defined autonomy within their school sites (Kultgen, 2010; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Effective superintendents have ensured that each school regularly examine its progress toward stated outcomes. They have interpreted deviations from the expected results as need for change or a more focused effort to impact achievement (Kultgen, 2010).

Florida Principal Leadership Standards

Public education leaders, specifically school principals, have faced additional scrutiny of governmental institutions seeking increases in accountability, e.g., measureable student learning gains (Rammer, 2007). Demand for accountability, along with “additional responsibilities related to student achievement,” created multiple

performance indicators to measure the success of building leaders (O'Donnell & White, 2005, p. 57). Assessment of principal effectiveness and impact was historically focused on competencies related to management and business practices (Knuth & Banks, 2006). At the time of this study, however, this was no longer true. The new national and state accountability standards changed the role of the school principal and if that individual could not positively impact student achievement, their removal could be anticipated (Florida Department of Education, 2008a).

Early Leadership Standards Development

The definition of a principal's work and educational leadership began in Florida long before accountability. "In 1928, an out-of-state group conducted a statewide survey of public education" (Mead, 1950, p. 282). Utilizing the survey results, a group comprised of lay professionals and non-professionals "proposed a new educational code and secured its enactment" (Mead, 1950, p. 283). As Florida's population increased and changed, so did educational institutions. A study of leadership development trends from 1933 to 1950 found Florida to be one of the most progressive states in defining, advancing, and strengthening school leaders (Mead, 1950). Citing recent influxes of "people from foreign countries, New England and the middle states," Mead (1950) concluded that Florida had begun to move "from a rural-conservative and educationally backward group, to a group of more cosmopolitan character" (p. 282).

By 1945, Mead pointed to six factors which grew from these trends and the development of a new, legislatively enacted, school code which strengthened the development of better schools, teachers, and school leaders. These factors included:

1. The County Superintendents' Conference Program.
2. The Teacher Education Advisory Council.
3. Higher Standards for Certification.
4. The Principals' Conference Program.
5. The Classroom Teachers' Conference Program.
6. The Supervisors' Development Program. (Mead, 1950)

These programs and interventions focused on professional development of the various individuals who impacted schools and student learning. Educational programs were developed cooperatively with district stakeholders and universities to improve the skills of the various professionals employed within a school system.

One particular intervention, The Principals' Conference Program, provided in-service to develop strong leadership among the school principals in each of Florida's 67 counties. At the time of implementation, "there was no source to which the state could go to find well prepared supervisors in the numbers that were needed" (Mead, 1950, p. 285). Additionally, the State of Florida recognized the school principal as the "strategic point in the development and administration of good school programs" (Mead, 1950, p. 285).

In 1956, in an attempt to further define effective principal behavior, Grobman and Hines (1956) conducted a study related to principal behaviors within the state of Florida utilizing a principal behavior checklist. The 86-item check list included situations common to the principalship such as an irate parent or a teacher with a classroom management issue. The principals' responses were examined to determine trends related

to personality, educational level, and school size. The researchers found that the skills, personality trends, and behaviors of school principals were not easily categorized.

However, one sorting tool did prove effective.

When examining the survey responses, the researchers sorted answers based on a five-point democratic-non democratic scale. Grobman and Hines (1956) concluded that successful principals were more likely to be democratic in their decision making.

Though no variable could be directly attributed to improved student performance, factors that appeared to have a positive impact on the school climate included shared decision making, situational leadership, and community orientation (Grobman & Hines, 1956).

The researchers concluded the principal's role and the success of a school resulted from an inter-dependency of certain practices.

During the 1960s and 1970s, an increasing number of national school systems were using some form of evaluation process for principals and other administrators on an annual basis (Redfern, 1972). Although the number of national principal and administrative evaluation programs in operation had grown from 50 to 84 by the 1970s, they continued to be focused on four major purposes: (a) identifying areas in need of improvement, (b) measurement of current performance against prescribed standards, (c) establishing evidence related to dismissal, and (d) enabling an individual to develop performance objectives (Redfern, 1972).

Redfern (1972) reported that 75% of the responding school systems evaluated administrators by a means of predetermined performance standards, but the remaining 25% adopted methods of evaluation that were cooperatively tailored and determined.

Individual states, including Florida, were beginning to mandate principal evaluation by statute (Redfern, 1972), and successful schools were observed to have resulted from the inter-dependency of certain practices within the school organization. Essential characteristics found to exist in successful schools were strong instructional leadership, instructional program development and planning, high performance expectations, and a belief that all students can learn the basics (Redfern, 1972).

Florida's Management Training Act

In 1977 the Florida Legislature commissioned a national task force to examine the educational reform movements enacted in prior years (Croghan & Lake, 1984). The key findings focused on the fact that management reforms enacted in the 1970's were only partially successful. As a result, "the Florida Legislature established the Management Training Act to provide for a state, regional, and district support system to ensure that principals and other educational managers have the skills, experience, and academic background necessary to be effective leaders" (Office of Program Policy, 2001, p. 1).

The Florida Legislature created "three entities to achieve the intent of the act:

1. The Council on Educational Management (FCEM), assigned to the Department of Education, was charged with identifying, validating, and developing performance measures for competencies associated with high-performing principals;
2. The Academy for School Leaders was charged with providing in-service training for school managers at all levels within Florida's public school system;
3. The Center for Interdisciplinary Advanced Graduate Study was to pursue advanced education opportunities and to conduct research to provide further improvement of school principals." (Office of Program Policy, 2001, pp. 1-2)

“The act authorized school districts to train district and school-level administrators in the competencies the council deemed necessary for effective school management” (Office of Program Policy, 2001, p. 2). The district training programs were subject to review by the Department of Education. District school boards were authorized to provide salary supplements to principals who successfully completed such training. Florida law required school principals to be certified to ensure that they had the competencies needed to be strong, competent, administrative and instructional leaders who would be successful at improving public schools” (Office of Program Policy, 2001. p. 1).

The architect of this legislation and leader of the Florida Council on Educational Management was William Cecil Golden who utilized his position as chairman to “identify high performing principals, validate their competencies scientifically, and use such competencies as a basis for training, development, selection, certification and compensation” (Croghan & Lake, 1984, p. 2). Golden employed researchers who reviewed over 300 studies related to principal competencies and concluded the research on leadership was never validated against any performance criteria (Croghan & Lake, 1984). In response, the Florida Council on Educational Management (FCEM) designed a research study and methods to seek to identify high performing principals.

Florida Council of Education Management Study

Lake, as reported by Croghan and Lake (1984), conducted the first Florida Council of Education Management (FCEM) study in which school data were collected on each of the 2,200 schools within the state of Florida. Student and school performance

were analyzed utilizing indicators of socioeconomic status. Employing a standard regression analysis, schools performing one standard deviation above the mean were identified and from that data the researchers were able to combine 23 of the 67 school districts into the same population (Croghan & Lake, 1984).

Superintendents within those 23 districts were asked to rank order their principals based on effectiveness. Utilizing student performance data from national exams and the effectiveness ratings of the superintendents, groups of moderate to high performing principals were created (Croghan & Lake, 1984). These individual principals were then subjected to intensive interviews using behavioral indicators. From these interviews, it was concluded that certain essential or basic competencies were required in order for principals to perform adequately (Croghan & Lake, 1984). These competencies, as reported by Croghan and Lake (1984) included: “(1) high concern for school mission, (2) a concern for school image, (3) an ability to manage by consensus and (4) an ability to direct quality improvement” (p. 4).

The FCEM study noted that higher performing principals demonstrated above average reasoning skills, control, objectivity, and commitment to quality (Croghan & Lake, 1984). It was also noted that more effective principals utilized time to their advantage and were able to increase their school funds above those by their school districts (Croghan & Lake, 1984).

Competency and Dimensions Development

In 1984, utilizing the research of the FCEM study, Croghan and Lake analyzed additional research which focused on the behaviors of Florida school principals. The researchers reviewed previous studies which sought to differentiate the actions of high performing and moderately performing principals identified in the FCEM study and develop a set of competencies that were judged to have the greatest validity in principal performance. Croghan and Lake (1984) relied on the following types of studies to conduct their research:

1. The highest weighting is given to experimental studies in which high performing principals were differentiated from average performing principals on the basis objectively defined criteria of high or excellent performance.
2. The next highest weighting was given to similar experimental studies which identified differentiating competencies between high and average performing managers in non-school environments.
3. Validity studies in which assessment rating of principals were validated against ratings of on the job performance by those principals and the organizational climate of the school administered by those principals.
4. Behavioral observation studies.
5. Job analyses.
6. Other Experiences. (p. 7)

These methods were developed to ensure an outcome of competencies which accurately reflected the characteristics of effective school principals. The researchers also sought to differentiate between those actions of high performing and average school leaders, by validating the findings utilizing outside resources from non- educational leadership studies (Croghan & Lake, 1984).

Croghan and Lake (1984) began their study by examining three Florida counties that were already utilizing competency or dimension-based job descriptions and assessments for their school principals. These performance dimensions were created by

the school districts based on years of study and the research conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The results of their analysis for the three Florida school districts are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Comparison of Florida Principal Assessment Dimensions by School District

Broward County Public Schools	Dade County Public Schools	Lee County Public Schools
Tolerance of Stress Control		Stress Tolerance
Decisiveness/Judgment Leadership	Decisiveness Leadership	Judgment Leadership
Technical and Professional Knowledge Planning and Organization	Planning and Organization	Organizational Ability Sensitivity
Sensitivity Oral Communication Analysis	Oral Communication Perception	Oral Communication Problem Analysis
Job Motivation Initiative Impact	Decision Making Interpersonal Adaptability	Personal Motivation Decisiveness

Note. Adapted from Croghan & Lake (1984)

The researchers not only found that the three Florida school districts had different dimensions in place, but differences existed in how those dimensions were defined and utilized to determine principal performance. When the definitions and district attributes for leadership performance were examined, the researchers found an embedded and common set of “unidimensional attributes” which would become known as the Florida dimensions (Croghan & Lake, 1984, p. 13). The examination of the definitions for each

particular school district's principal performance dimensions allowed the researchers to discern 15 universal categorizations: information gathering or search, concept formation, concept flexibility, decisiveness, sensitivity, delegation, developmental orientation, organizational skills, management control, managing interaction, proactive orientation, oral communication, tolerance of stress, intrinsic satisfaction, and persuasiveness (Croghan & Lake, 1984).

To validate these dimensions, Croghan and Lake (1984) examined previous research conducted by Boyatzis (1982) in which he had differentiated between high performing and average performing non-education managers. The comparison of the dimension definitions, supported by Boyatzis' research and those of Florida school districts, validated seven of the Florida dimensions found by Croghan and Lake (1984). The comparison of the Florida Dimensions and Boyatzis' competencies of non-educational managers, presented in Table 8, illustrates the commonalities in definitions. The comparison of the competency definitions of Boyatzis (1982) and the work of Croghan and Lake (1984) supported the validity of seven of the Florida dimensions utilized by the three counties and the research "conducted by National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)" (p. 21).

To further validate what Croghan and Lake (1984) referred to as the Florida dimensions, an examination of the FCEM study was conducted in order to identify competencies which delineated "average and high performing principals in public schools within the state of Florida" (Croghan & Lake, 1984, p. 22). Croghan and Lake (1984) were able to validate 10 of the Florida dimensions.

Table 8

Commonalities of Boyatzis' Competencies and Florida Dimensions

Boyatzis Competencies	Florida Dimensions
<p><u>Perceptual Objectivity:</u> Is able to view and event from multiple perspectives simultaneously; identifies the pros and cons of each decision which could be made. Can accurately describe another person's views and positions.</p>	<p><u>Conceptual Flexibility:</u> Is able to use alternative or multiple concepts when thinking, problem solving, making a judgment or decision. Can view an event from multiple perspectives.</p>
<p><u>Conceptualization:</u> Recognizes patterns of information, develops concepts which describe a structure which is perceived in a set of events or data.</p>	<p><u>Interpersonal Search:</u> Can accurately describe another person's views and positions. <u>Concept Formation:</u> Is able to form concepts, hypotheses, ideas on the basis of information; sees relationships between patterns of information; sees relationships between patterns of information from different sources and form ideas; is able to link information, a logical process of reaching and idea based on information from different sources.</p>
<p><u>Self Confidence:</u> Is ready to make decisions and to live with them. Is forceful and expresses little ambivalence about a decision which has been made.</p>	<p><u>Decisiveness:</u> A readiness to make decisions and commit oneself to decide and take action.</p>
<p><u>Developing Others:</u> Views developing others as part of the manager's job.</p>	<p><u>Developmental Orientation:</u> Develops the skills of self and subordinates in order to improve performance. Takes and encourages responsibility for development.</p>
<p><u>Managing Group Process:</u> Demonstrates group process skills in group interaction, stimulates others to work together, able to get individuals or groups to resolve conflict and cooperate.</p>	<p><u>Managing Interaction:</u> Able to stimulate others to interact; uses own and others ideas to stimulate dialogue, problem solving between others; has other interact about conflict and can move others toward mutual understanding.</p>
<p><u>Proactivity:</u> Initiates action to accomplish tasks; internal control; readily takes responsibility for success or failure in task accomplishment.</p>	<p><u>Proactive Orientation:</u> Sees self as in control and internal control orientation; readily takes full responsibility for all aspects of the situation-even beyond ordinary boundaries.</p>
<p><u>Use of Oral Presentation:</u> Accepts role of communicator; effectively uses symbolic, non-verbal communication and visual aids and graphics to get the message across.</p>	<p><u>Oral Communication:</u> The ability to make clear oral presentations using effective verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate.</p>

Note. Adapted from Croghan & Lake (1984, pp. 21-22).

Table 9 displays the FCEM optimal (O) and basic (B) competencies and Florida dimensions. This comparison with the FCEM study identified three additional competencies not embedded in the Florida dimensions (Croghan & Lake, 1984). The competencies were interpersonal sensitivity, persuasive skills and achievement, and while not present in the Florida dimensions, they were identified in Boyatzis' research (1982) as "significantly differentiating between average and high performing managers" (Croghan & Lake, p. 20).

Other optimal competencies provided by FCEM study that were not matched with the Florida dimensions of Croghan and Lake (1984) were:

Tactical Adaptability: States the rationale for using particular strategies; tailors style of interaction to fit the situation and changes style if not successful.
Commitment to School Mission: Holds a set of values about the school; welfare of students; fairness to staff and behavior is consistent with these values despite barriers.
Concern for Image: Shows concern for the image of the school via the impressions created by the students and staff and manages these impressions and public information about the school. (p. 25)

Based on the information gained from these studies, Croghan and Lake (1984) proposed the following competencies as ones that differentiated high performing principals: "proactive orientation, decisiveness, interpersonal search, information search, concept formation, conceptual flexibility, managing interaction, persuasiveness, achievement motivation, management control, organizational ability, and self presentation" (p. 26).

Table 9

FCEM Optimal (O) and Basic (B) Competencies and Florida Dimensions

FCEM Competencies	Florida Dimensions
<p><u>Monitoring (O)</u>: Gathers information about problems, uses formal and informal observation and interaction to gather information and understand the environment.</p>	<p><u>Informational Gathering or Search</u>: The breadth (number of sources) and the depth (what is learned from each relevant source) of information search.</p>
<p><u>Ability to Recognize Patterns (O)</u>: Forms concepts, ideas; identifies trends or cause and effect relationships on the basis of discrete behaviors observed or information gathered; can reorder information into ideas.</p>	<p><u>Concept Formation</u>: The ability to form concepts, hypothesize ideas on the basis of information; to see relationships between patterns of information from different sources and to form ideas, to link information, to reach and idea based on information from different sources. Such concepts form the basis for making judgments and decisions.</p>
<p><u>Analytic Ability (O)</u>: Is able to use two or more concepts to ideas about situations in order to reach an understanding or a decision; looks to the pros and cons of multiple options.</p>	<p><u>Conceptual Flexibility</u>: Is able to use alternative or multiple concepts when thinking, problem solving, making a judgment or decision. Can view an event from multiple perspectives.</p>
<p><u>Focused Involvement in Change (O)</u>: Initiates activities for task accomplishment—get activities underway—or to utilize resources more effectively, focuses efforts on the task, on things needing improvement.</p>	<p><u>Organizational Ability</u>: Sets plans and priorities to accomplish goals, schedules activities and uses human and other resources to reach goals.</p>
<p><u>Sense of Control (O)</u>: Initiates action and takes full responsibility for the organization, for learning about the environment, for securing resources; goes beyond the givens in taking responsibility for task accomplishment.</p>	<p><u>Proactive Orientation</u>: Sees self as in control and internal control orientation; readily takes full responsibility for all aspects of the situation-even beyond ordinary boundaries.</p>
<p><u>Participatory Style (B)</u>: Involves internal staff and outside resource people to plan and problem solves; delegates responsibility to others who are capable of doing the job and keeps others informed about the actions he or she has taken.</p>	<p><u>Proactive Orientation</u>: Sees self as in control and internal control orientation; readily takes full responsibility for all aspects of the situation-even beyond ordinary boundaries.</p>
<p><u>Participatory Style (B)</u>: Involves internal staff and outside resource people to plan and problem solves; delegates responsibility to others who are capable of doing the job and keeps others informed about the actions he or she has taken.</p>	<p><u>Managing Interaction</u>: Able to stimulate others to interact; uses own and others ideas to stimulate dialogue, problem solving between others; has other interact about conflict and can move others toward mutual understanding.</p>
<p></p>	<p><u>Delegation</u>: Delegates authority and responsibility clearly and appropriately in the utilization of human resources.</p>

Coaching Skills (B): Holds high expectations about others (students, staff), works with others to improve performance and provides positive feedback for specific accomplishments.

Firmness in Enforcing Quality Standards (B): Provides feedback about failure to meet standards in a timely manner and dismisses or transfers staff members who cannot meet those standards.

Developing Others (B): Views developing others as part of the manager's job.

Managing Group Process (B): Demonstrates group process skills in group interaction, stimulates others to work together, able to get individuals or groups to resolve conflict and cooperate.

Proactivity (B): Initiates action to accomplish tasks; internal control; readily takes responsibility for success or failure in task accomplishment.

Use of Oral Presentation(B): Accepts role of communicator; effectively uses symbolic, non-verbal communication and visual aids and graphics to get the message across.

Developmental Orientation: Develops the skills of self and subordinates in order to improve performance. Takes and encourages responsibility for development.

Management Control: Devises opportunities to receive adequate and timely feedback about the progress of work accomplishments of others.

Developmental Orientation: Develops the skills of self and subordinates in order to improve performance. Takes and encourages responsibility for development.

Managing Interaction: Able to stimulate others to interact; uses own and others ideas to stimulate dialogue, problem solving between others; has other interact about conflict and can move others toward mutual understanding.

Proactive Orientation: Sees self as in control and internal control orientation; readily takes full responsibility for all aspects of the situation-even beyond ordinary boundaries.

Oral Communication: The ability to make clear oral presentations using effective verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate.

Note. Adapted from Croghan and Lake (1984, pp. 23-25). FCEM = Florida Council for Educational Management

At the same time, basic competencies of principal effectiveness were also identified. Included were: “commitment to school mission, concern for image, tactical ability, developmental orientation, delegation, written communication, and organizational sensitivity” (Croghan & Lake, 1984, p. 40).

The 19 Florida Principal Competencies

The work of Croghan and Lake (1984) to develop and define the complex nature of a principal's technical and adaptive work was supported and clarified with the adoption of their research into the 19 Florida Principal Competencies (FPC) in 1985. The 19 FPCs defined the difference between high moderate performing principals and served not only "as a basis for selecting, training and certifying school leaders, but assessing their performance as well" (Snyder & Drummond, 1988).

The FPCs were an attempt to measure "a set of complex relationships between the principal's intent and action and the resulting intended and unintended outcomes of that action" (Snyder & Drummond, 1988, p.48). To determine whether an individual principal possessed a competency, observers dealt with both the intent of the action and its outcome. The FPCs allowed for flexibility, as individual principals could choose alternative ways of responding to various situations by choosing alternative behaviors and being measured against the outcomes (Snyder & Drummond, 1988).

The 19 FPCs were clustered in four categories which included "Purpose and Direction, Cognitive Skills, Quality Enhancement, Organization and Communication" (Croghan & Lake, 1984, p. 42). Table 10 displays the competencies organized by Snyder and Drummond (1988).

Table 10

The 19 Florida Principal Competencies

Category	Competency	Definition
Purpose and Direction	Proactive Orientation (HP)	Takes the role of being fully in charge. Initiates action and takes responsibility for all aspects of the organization.
	Decisiveness (HP)	Displays a readiness to takes action, make decisions, render judgments.
	Commitment to School Mission (B)	Holds a set of values about the school and behavior is consistent with values despite barriers.
Cognitive Skills	Interpersonal Search (HP)	Able to understand and recognize the thought and ideas held by others. Behaves in a manner to ensure the feelings of others.
	Information Search (HP)	Utilizes formal and informal processes to gather various forms of information to understand an event or problem.
	Concept Formation (HP)	Displays a logical process for forming ideas based on information for a variety of sources at different times.
	Conceptual Flexibility (HP)	Able to view persons or events from different perspectives and considers information before arriving at a decision.
	Managing Interaction (HP)	Ability to have others interact, work as productive groups, and reach mutual agreement.
	Persuasiveness (HP)	The ability to persuade or influence others utilizing multiple techniques.
	Concern For Image (B)	Shows concern for the image of the school and manages both the impressions and public information about the school.
	Tactical Adaptability (B)	Has clear rationales for utilizing particular strategies and tailors strategy to fit situations.
	Quality Enhancement	Achievement Motivation (HP)
Management Control (HP)		Devises opportunities to provide and receive feedback related to the progress of work and accomplishments of self and others.

	Developmental Orientation (B)	Develops high expectations about others potential, providing feedback about performance, and allows individuals to take personal responsibility.
Organization	Organizational Ability (HP)	Sets goals and plans to accomplish goals. Focuses on deadlines and how to get the job done.
	Delegation (B)	Delegates authority and responsibility, both clearly and appropriately, to accomplish organizational goals.
Communication	Self-Preservation (HP)	The ability to present one's own ideas and those of others in a genuine and open manner.
	Written Communication (B)	Clear, concise and properly structured written communication.
	Organization Sensitivity (B)	The awareness of one's own actions and decisions and how the effect others within and outside of the organization.

Note. Adapted from Croghan & Lake, 1984.

In addition to the FPCs, Florida's principal certification required individuals to demonstrate “at least three years of teaching experience; completion of a master's degree in educational administration, administration and supervision, or educational leadership; pass the Florida Educational Leadership Examination (FELE); and complete a state-approved district-level principal preparation training program” (Office of Program Policy, 2001, p. 3). Individual school districts were also required by legislative action to develop assessment and evaluation instruments supporting these defined performance competencies in order to annually assess the performance of their principals (Office of Program Policy, 2001).

Accountability and Leadership Standards

As the accountability reform movements and legislation previously described increased, the principal evaluation instrument was also refined to reflect the increased focus on student achievement and standards-based learning and accountability (Office of Program Policy, 2001). As the job demands for the school principal changed with accountability legislation, the school was recognized as an instrument of change and the school principal became responsible for management of the school building, instructional leadership, and implementation of improvement plans related to student achievement (Katzenmeyer, 1996). In 1995, the FCEM conducted a study to revisit the work led to the development of the 19 Florida Principal Competencies and to examine their relevance to emerging accountability trends (Katzenmeyer, 1996). As stated in the final report, school principals were “being called upon to live in two worlds” (Katzenmeyer, 1996, p. 422). The competencies that had been established in the 1980s were determined to no longer provide a standard sufficient to meet the challenges of education in 1995 and beyond.

“In 1999, the Florida legislature passed House Bill (HB) 751 which directed the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) and the Florida Department of Education to conduct a review of the Management Training Act” (Office of Program Policy, 2000, p. 1) OPAGGA’s recommended changes to the act included: eliminating the FCEM and transferring “the responsibilities to the Florida Department of Education; providing the Commissioner of Education” with the responsibility to assume the councils responsibilities related to principal training,

certification and competencies; employing the use of stakeholder groups to aid review of principal competencies and certification requirements; and reviewing the principal certification process to create alternative routes to the principalship for individuals who were non-certified but possessed strong leadership skills (Office of Program Policy, 2000, p. 3).

In 2000, the Florida Legislature acted upon these recommendations and adopted EDUCATE 2000, which repealed the Management Training Act (Office of Program Policy, 2001). “EDUCATE 2000 eliminated the Council on Educational Management (FCEM) and” its subsidiary organizations and assigned the functions of those councils and organizations to the Department of Education (Office of Program Policy, 2001, p. 1). In 2001, the Education Governance Reorganization Implementation Act was passed, and a transition task force was formed to examine revisions to Florida’s state cabinet system and provide recommendations for new structure (Florida Department of Education, 2001b). The Commissioner of Education appointed a “taskforce to identify and validate competencies of high-performing principals in public schools; identify standards and procedures for evaluating their performance; identify criteria for principal selection; and establish an educational management network to facilitate communication, involvement, and mutual assistance among educational managers” (Office of Program Policy, 2001, p. 1). The advent of accountability had required the State of Florida to change its approach to education in terms of how principals were being prepared, certified and assessed (Florida Department of Education, 2001a).

Florida Principal Leadership Standards

By April of 2005, “the State Board of Education adopted the Florida Principal Leadership Standards in State Board Rule 6B-5.012 after a two-year process of developing and vetting the standards with all stakeholders across the state” (Florida Department of Education, 2007, p. 2). By April of 2005, “the State Board of Education adopted the Florida Principal Leadership Standards in State Board Rule 6B-5.012 after a two-year process of developing and vetting the standards with all stakeholders across the state” (Florida Department of Education, 2007, p. 2).

The FPLS comprised the necessary skills and abilities high performing principals’ needed to possess in order to be rated as successful in their positions (Florida Department of Education, 2007). The new FPLS provided additional support for the increased complexity of the principal position in the age of accountability and reflected the national and state legislative changes that had occurred in previous years. The new standards, displayed in Table 11, were comprised of 10 dimensions and focused on three areas of expertise: “instructional leadership, operational leadership, and school leadership” (Florida Department of Education, 2006, p. 1).

By 2005, the impact of NCLB, AYP and school grades within the state of Florida had required a systemic redefinition of principal expectations and in doing so created a new principal assessment process (Florida Department of Education, 2007). Principals were expected to demonstrate high performing competence in all of the FPLS (Florida Department of Education, 2005). Florida had redefined and shifted its focus away from

basic and high performing standards to the expectation that all school leaders would be high-performing (Florida Department of Education, 2005).

Since the early 1900s, Florida has sought to determine and define effective school leadership practices and hold individuals accountable (Mead, 1950). The development of 19 Florida principal Competencies (FPC) and their legislatively enacted evolution into the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) created a measurable understanding of the complexity of the school principal position in the age of accountability. These frameworks and matrices of skills were now being utilized to develop school leaders, accurately determine effective leadership skills, provide necessary feedback, and assess performance of those individuals holding the title of school principal (Florida Department of Education, 2005). The FPLS became the tool superintendents used to navigate the complex demands of emerging legislation and evaluate their educational leaders (Florida Department of Education, 2005). With accountability standards and legislation requiring schools and principals to produce measurable student achievement results, superintendents now faced the predicament of utilizing these standards in their entirety or concentrating on particular dimensions that were focused directly on student achievement.

Table 11

Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS): Leadership Dimensions and Definitions

Leadership Dimensions	Definitions
1.0 Vision	High performing leaders have a personal vision for their school and the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop, articulate and implement a shared vision that is supported by the larger organizations and school community.
2.0 Instructional Leadership	High performing leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program, and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.
3.0 Management of Learning Environment	High performing leaders manage the organization, operations, facilities and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal and effective learning environment.
4.0 Community & Stakeholder Partnerships	High performing leaders collaborate with families, business, and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, work effectively within larger organizations and mobilize community resources.
5.0 Decision-Making Skills	High performing leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous school improvement.
6.0 Diversity	High performing leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school and the local community.
7.0 Technology	High performing leaders plan and implement the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research and communication.
8.0 Human Resource Management	High performing leaders recruit, select, nurture and, where appropriate, retain effective personnel, develop mentor and partnership programs, and design and implement comprehensive professional growth plans for all staff - paid and volunteer.

9.0 Learning, Accountability & Assessment	High performing leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment, align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance, and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process.
10.0 Ethics	High performing leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.

Note. Adapted from Florida Department of Education (2006, p. 1)

Florida Principal Assessment

The roles of the school principal and the superintendent changed with the advent of accountability, and the increased focus on student achievement affected both positions. Though having clearly expressed and communicated goals has been viewed as vital to organizational outcomes, the ability to assess the performance of a school principal and that individual's impact on those goals has increased in its complexity. Hoyle et al. (2005) noted that assessments and evaluations were essential to school leadership as "plans and goals are pointless without an appraisal system to determine their success or failure" (p. 171). Principal evaluation systems, especially rating systems, have often been seen as practices disconnected from the actual work and as such have not been helpful in informing principals or superintendents of needed improvements (Conca, 2009).

At the time of the present study, and with the increase of student achievement the stakes for effective school leaders are high in today's climate of system-wide accountability." (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 20). Though schools and their resulting student achievement data have never been more closely monitored and scrutinized, "leadership assessment and evaluation have received far less attention and research" (Goldring et al.,

2009, p. 20). As the development of measurable school based student achievement goals has matured, superintendents have counted on those individuals in school leadership positions to help achieve the defined organizational outcomes. The assessment of individual school leaders by the district superintendent, based on those outcomes, has provided a critical link to organizational performance (Goldring et al., 2009).

Goldring et al. (2009) viewed assessment of principal and school based leadership as an essential part of meeting the expectations of a state's student achievement accountability system. Improvement of organizational performance through evaluation was possible if assessment procedures were developed were appropriately aligned to outcomes and implemented in a manner which enhanced the leader's ability to perform to the expected outcomes. Goldring et al. (2009) indicated that assessments were best utilized when determining principals' essential functions related to performance and the identification of gaps between existing conditions and desired organizational outcomes. Assessment of school leaders provided the necessary accountability for individuals and school wide performance goals as well as creating a vital link to the organizational goals related to student achievement. If targets were developed with mutual understanding of the expected outcomes for student achievement, annual assessments and evaluations would enable school leaders to focus on outcomes and behaviors associated with student achievement (Goldring et al., 2009).

Types of Assessment

Principal evaluations can be grouped by norm referenced ranking systems, criterion referenced rating systems, or narrative processes which focus on the entire range of principal performance (Hoyle et al., 2005). Each evaluation system has been determined to be best utilized when the organizational goals of the system have been matched to individual performance. In the case of school systems or districts, according to Hoyle et al. (2005), effective superintendents review the system of evaluation to determine its usefulness related to organizational outcomes and the information that was provided to both the employee and the supervisor. “A well-designed evaluation system for employees recognizes and allows for a wealth of information that the superintendent can gain from carrying out administrative duties” (Hoyle et al., p. 173). Platter (2010) supported this observation. The research indicated that an effective employee appraisal system allowed a superintendent to be confident that an evaluation of principal performance was “aligned with the goals of the district and that it provides important feedback to both the employee and supervisor for reaching those goals” (Platter, 2010, p. 36). Common principal performance evaluation practices have included rating systems, management by objective, and portfolio assessment.

Rating Systems

Rating systems typically listed specific qualities or performance standards and were accompanied by a numerical or other rating system to determine the extent to which an individual has satisfied the expectation (Conca, 2009). Implementation of a rating

model usually included a meeting of the supervisor and employee to discuss the expectations contained within the appraisal process. Once the scale and rating system were understood, the evaluation began. The outcomes were based on how well each expectation was satisfied by the individual being evaluated (Conca, 2009). Rating systems have often been utilized due to the ease of management and implementation, but these systems of evaluation have been criticized as lacking specific performance feedback and limiting the principal's ability to enhance performance (Conca, 2009).

Management by Objective

The Management by Objective (MBO) approach required a collaborative approach between the principal and superintendent who mutually agreed to performance standards and measurable outcomes to be instituted for a period of time and measured on an annual basis (Green, 2004). The MBO process required superintendents and principals to meet based on agreed timelines and discuss progress toward intended outcomes. During these meetings, discussions related to strategies and resources took place to assist the instructional leader in meeting the established objectives (Green, 2004). Upon conclusion of the time period, the superintendent and principal met to determine the extent to which the principal had reached the established goals. This system of evaluation required a greater effort in implementation as well as continued discussion and monitoring throughout the process about mutually agreed-upon outcomes. Advantages to MBOs have been cited as providing greater insight into principal performance and better feedback to enhance future principal performance (Conca, 2009).

Portfolio Assessment

Another method of assessing principal performance was portfolio assessment. The process began with an in depth reflection related to past performance and the identification of areas of performance that establishment of goals (Conca, 2009). Principals and superintendents determined goals and outcomes by mutual agreement. These goals and outcomes were measured on an annual basis, and the principal gathered documentation and evidence to indicate satisfactory goal attainment. The advantage to such a process of evaluation was it required considerable reflection throughout the appraisal process during which principals took an active role in their professional development related to outcomes and student achievement (Conca, 2009). Green (2004) noted that portfolios should not be the sole source of evaluation. Instead, portfolios would be better utilized as additional information in an assessment process that provided context to the principal's effort to impact student achievement (Green, 2004).

Requirements for Assessment in Florida

The state of Florida outlined its requirements for the assessment and evaluation of all educational personnel in Florida Statute §1012.34 (2010). The stated purpose of the statute was to improve the quality of educational personnel and therefore the quality of the public schools within the state. The statute required superintendents to develop and institute procedures and instruments of assessment for all individuals charged with the education of students (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010). Each individual school district assessment system was to be designed in conjunction with the goals of the school district

and the individual school improvement plans. Individual districts were required to “provide appropriate instruments, procedures, and criteria for continuous quality improvement of the professional skills of instructional personnel” (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010, p.1). Each school district was required to align its assessment program to the guidelines provided by the Florida Department of Education and train all employees in order that the assessments and procedures of the school district were implemented with fidelity (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010).

Florida assessment guidelines have required school districts to base evaluation and assessment systems primarily on “the performance of the students assigned to the classrooms and schools” (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010, p.1). Assessments have also been required to be conducted on an annual basis, be developed around current research and education practice, include parental input, and account for student FCAT performance and other student assessment data (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010). The direct supervisor of the employee has been deemed responsible for evaluating the employee’s performance. Final assessments were to be submitted in writing to the district superintendent after discussion of the assessment with the employee. Additionally, each school district has been encouraged to provide peer assistance programs or other programs to help individuals whose performance was below expectations or personnel who requested assistance (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010).

As stated within the Florida statute, individuals not performing the duties of their position in a satisfactory manner needed to be informed, in writing, of the resulting performance rating. Upon notice of an unsatisfactory performance rating, employees

were entitled to a description of the performance which was not satisfactory and “the evaluator must confer with the employee, make recommendations with respect to specific areas of unsatisfactory performance, and provide assistance in helping to correct deficiencies within a prescribed period of time” (Fl. Statute §1012.34, 2010, p. 1).

Principal performance and assessment within the state of Florida was further defined within the State Board Rule 6A-5.08 (Florida Administrative Code, 2010). Utilizing the procedural requirements outlined by Fl. Statute §1012.34 (2010), the assessment of a Florida principal has additional required standards. State Board Rule 6A-5.08 determined that the annual assessment of school principals was to be based on the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (2010). The rule (6A-5.08, p. 1) stated that “Florida’s school leaders must possess the abilities and skills necessary to perform their designated tasks in a high-performing manner” (Florida Administrative Code, 2010). The following were the required standards for which school principals must demonstrate competency:

The school principal, based upon ability and authority and commensurate with job requirements and delegated authority, shall demonstrate competence in the following standards:

1. Instructional Leadership.
 - a. Instructional Leadership. High performing leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.
 - b. Managing the Learning Environment. High performing leaders manage the organization, operations, facilities and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal and effective learning environment.
 - c. Learning, Accountability and Assessment. High performing leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment; align the curriculum, instruction and assessment

processes to promote effective student performance; and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process.

2. Operational Leadership.
 - a. Decision Making Strategies. High performing leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous school improvement.
 - b. Technology. High performing leaders plan and implement the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research and communication responsibilities.
 - c. Human Resource Development. High performing leaders recruit, select, nurture and, where appropriate, retain effective personnel; develop mentor and partnership programs; and design and implement comprehensive professional growth plans for all staff, paid and volunteer.
 - d. Ethical Leadership. High performing leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.
3. School Leadership.
 - a. Vision. High performing leaders have a personal vision for their school and the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop, articulate and implement a shared vision that is supported by the larger organization and the school community.
 - b. Community and Stakeholder Partnerships. High performing leaders collaborate with families and business and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, work effectively within the larger organization and mobilize community resources.
 - c. Diversity. High performing leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school and the local community. (Florida Administrative Code, 6A-5.08, 2010, p. 1)

These standards and dimensions of leadership have been required to be incorporated into Florida's principal development, certification, assessment and evaluation systems. For Florida public school district superintendents, the standards provided the basis on which principal performance must be determined.

Studies Related to the Removal of School Principals

Oregon 1991

In order to better understand why school principals lost their leadership position, Martin (1991) investigated the issues and concerns associated with principals who were involuntarily removed from their positions. A definition of involuntary removal was provided whereby a principal was unwillingly removed from the school leadership position by one of the following actions: terminated, transferred, or counseled from the position. The research conducted by Martin (1991) initially began with a set of interviews with 30 Oregon superintendents. The information established from the interviews was utilized in the development of a questionnaire which was then administered to 185 superintendents from small, mid-size, and large school districts in the state of Washington.

Responding superintendents were asked to focus on 14 behaviors of school principals and determine if those actions had high impact, some impact, or no impact on principal performance. Superintendents from all school districts, regardless of size, identified two high impact factors related to unsuccessful principals. These factors were influence over staff and avoidance of difficult situations. The first factor included the ability of the principal to work collaboratively with school staff toward defined goals. Specifically, superintendents identified a lack of principal leadership skills “which provide influence over staff” (Martin, 1991, p. 141). The second factor focused on principal’s actions in various situations which impacted the learning environment or

perceptions of the school. Superintendents reported that principals in career threatening conditions either failed to act or made poor decisions (Martin, 1991). Additionally, superintendents from large districts identified behaviors of omission as a high impact behavior that impacted the decision to label a school principal unsuccessful (Martin, 1991).

Ohio 1995

Deluca (1995), building on the research of Martin, researched career threatened principals in a survey of 660 public school superintendents in the state of Ohio. Superintendents were asked to complete a questionnaire which required them to base their responses on their “most significant experience with a principal who encountered career threatening problems” (p. 60). The survey asked superintendents to review a set of 23 competencies and determine if those competencies had a “No Impact (1), Some Impact (2), or High Impact (3)” related to the principal’s at-risk condition (Deluca, 1995, p. 65). Using over 302 responses from superintendents, an at-risk profile was developed.

The demographics of the career threatened principal indicated the majority of principals were male, had an average age of 43 years, and had served as a principal for at least six years (Deluca, p. 61). Other established factors related to the pool of at-risk principals were they had been elevated to the position of school principal from (a) another principalship (33.8%), (b) the teaching ranks (32.4%), or (c) an assistant principal position (22.5%). Deluca (1995) found that certain competencies had a greater effect on the perception of the principals at risk condition than did other competencies. The

superintendents' perceptions regarding the impact of competencies, ranked by mean score, are displayed in Table 12.

The competencies perceived by superintendents as having the highest impact to the principal's at-risk condition included the ability to solve problems effectively, working cooperatively with staff, and make sound decisions. Areas such as coping with stressful situations and positive school climate were also seen by respondents as high impact items. Budget and evaluating student educational progress were factors which received the lowest impact rankings by superintendents in determining a principal's at-risk condition (Deluca, 1995).

Table 12

Deluca's Superintendents' Rankings: Impact of Competencies by Mean Score

Competency	Mean Score	N
Solves problems effectively.	2.37	291
Works cooperatively with faculty and staff.	2.33	294
Makes sound decisions.	2.30	297
Foster positive school climate.	2.28	294
Communicates effectively in a verbal manner.	2.24	297
Copes with stressful situations.	2.21	295
Attends to difficult tasks.	2.20	296
Develops positive community relations.	2.18	297
Demonstrates flexibility and accepts change.	2.16	296
Monitors and evaluates staff members.	2.06	297
Positive relations with board members/central office.	2.03	297
Delegates responsibilities appropriately.	1.98	295
Conveys school mission and expectations.	1.86	295
Maintains student discipline and order.	1.86	295
Plans adequately and sets appropriate goals.	1.86	296
Exhibits good work habits and personal qualities.	1.84	296
Provide leadership in curriculum and instruction.	1.84	297
Organizes work effectively.	1.77	297
Relates to students positively.	1.77	297
Communicates effectively in writing.	1.76	297
Provides staff development.	1.70	297
Manages school budget, facilities and operations.	1.55	294
Evaluates student educational progress.	1.52	296

Note. Adapted from Deluca (1995, pp. 66-67). 1 = No impact; 2 = Some impact; 3 = High Impact.

California 1998

In 1998, Davis conducted a study regarding superintendent perspectives and the most frequent reasons why school principals lost their positions which supported the findings of Martin (1991) and Deluca (1995). Davis (1998a) initially conducted telephone interviews with 11 California superintendents in which interviewees were queried about the following variables of interest: stated reasons for the principal's loss of position, the relationship between years of experience and the at-risk designation, the relationship of the at-risk designation and factors such as school size, school level,

community type (rural, suburban, urban), as well as the socioeconomic status of the community in which the principal served. Interview responses were analyzed and yielded 22 key reasons for principal failure. High ranking reasons included poor interpersonal skills, flawed decision processes, deficient political awareness and skills and the inability to provide a focus or direction to the school building in which they were principal (Davis, 1998a).

Data from the telephone interviews were used to develop and field test a questionnaire with 10 superintendents. The resulting information from the pilot study required Davis (1998a) to revise the questionnaire dividing the reasons for principal failure into two categories: duties of the principalship (performance) and human interaction (personal relations). Utilizing random sampling procedures to ensure diverse district and community representation, Davis (1998a) administered the survey to 200 California superintendents. A total of 105 (53%) of the superintendents responded, of which 99 reflected superintendent experiences with an unsuccessful principal.

Results from the statistical analysis conducted determined five statistically significant reasons most often cited by superintendents when dealing with the involuntary removal of a school principal (Davis 1998a). Those reasons included: failure to communicate in a manner that built positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders; inability to ascertain levels of informational importance which impacted the ability to make sound or defensible decisions; incapacity to manage the political demands of the position combined with the failure to build strong bases of support among the

various stakeholders within the school community; and the inability to establish trust and confidence among students, teachers, and parents (Davis, 1998a).

Just as important was the identification of five reasons which were not associated by the responding superintendents as vital when determining to involuntarily remove a school principal. Those reasons included: management of ethnic diversity; use of time, acceptance of change or utilization of innovative ideas; safe and orderly environment; and failure to meet student achievement expectations (Davis, 1998a). Davis' research (1998a) determined that principals lost their positions due to the inability to manage and interact with the human element, and superintendents perceived effective principals as those who were able to establish and maintain positive relationships with the various stakeholders of the school.

Virginia 2001

In 2001, Fisher re-examined the issue of career threatened principals by surveying the 133 public school superintendents within the state of Virginia. Drawing on the prior work of prior researchers (Deluca, 1995; Davis, 1998a; Martin, 1991), a survey was utilized to examine leadership competencies related to career threatening conditions of school principals within rural, suburban, and urban districts representative of all socioeconomic strata. As in previous research, individual superintendents were asked to rate administrative principal competencies based on their most significant dealings with a career threatened principal.

Fisher (2001) made two significant changes in her research from that of prior researchers. First, a five-point Likert type scale was utilized for each competency ranging from 1 = low competence to 5 = high competence. Second, since Fisher chose to rank competence of particular skills and not impact, the indication of a lower mean score reflected greater ineffectiveness in the individual competency. This differed from previous studies where superintendents were asked to rank competencies by impact on principals' at-risk status. For Fisher (2001), lower mean scores reflected lower competence in the particular areas which led to the perception of the individual principal as career threatened by the superintendent.

A total of 107 (80.5%) surveys were returned, and 75 of the responding superintendents indicated experience with career threatened principals. The researcher used quantitative methods and statistical analyses to rank the 22 administrative competencies and describe sources of information about the career threatened principal, interventions to assist in correcting the career threatening problems, and final career outcomes for the principal who was identified (Fisher 2001). Demographic data related to the school principals and responding superintendents were also collected. The results of Fisher's research (2001) are presented in Table 13.

Fisher (2001) was able to ascertain that career threatened principals within the state of Virginia were predominately male (70%), served as principals of high schools (44%), had fewer than four years of experience, and "had experienced career threatening problems for an average of two years" (p. 137). Additionally, Fisher (2001) reported the mean scores and standard deviations for the 22 administrative competencies, thereby

revealing particular competencies as factors in determining individual principals who might be at risk.

Table 13

Fisher's Principal Competence Mean Score Rankings and Standard Deviation

Competency	Mean Score	N	SD
Managing budget and facility.	3.91	75	.94
Organizing work.	3.20	75	.89
Having good work habits.	3.05	75	1.13
Maintaining student discipline.	2.95	75	1.10
Relating to students.	2.95	75	1.05
Conveying school mission.	2.79	75	1.03
Evaluating student progress.	2.79	75	1.07
Communicating in writing.	2.74	75	1.30
Communicating verbally.	2.61	75	1.16
Attending to difficult tasks.	2.52	75	1.07
Planning and goal setting.	2.52	75	.94
Maintaining relationship with school board.	2.51	75	1.06
Coping with stress.	2.44	75	1.08
Leading curriculum and instruction.	2.33	75	1.21
Evaluating staff members.	2.31	75	.90
Working with faculty and staff.	2.19	75	1.01
Developing community relations.	2.15	75	1.04
Making sound decisions.	2.15	75	.87
Delegating responsibility.	2.13	75	1.00
Demonstrating flexibility.	2.11	75	.95
Solving problems.	2.09	75	.79
Fostering a positive climate.	2.00	75	.97

Note. Adapted from Fisher (2001, pp. 72-73). 1 = low competence; 5 = high competence.

Closer examination of the 22 administrative competencies revealed similar results indicated by previous researchers. Virginia superintendents rated career threatened principals as having low competence in seven specific areas. Those competencies included “delegating responsibility, demonstrating flexibility, developing community

relations, fostering a positive school climate, making sound decisions, solving problems, and working with faculty and staff” (Fisher, 2001, p. 137). Additionally, Fisher (2001) was able to determine the five highest areas of competence were managing budget and facility, organizing work, having good work habits, maintaining student discipline, relating to students, and conveying school mission.

The results of this study determined that principals who were not proficient in areas related to interpersonal skills were clearly at risk of involuntary removal (Fisher, 2001). These results were supported by Martin (1991) and Hymowitz (1980) who determined the inability to influence people and “inability to get along with others was the single greatest reason for leadership failure” (Fisher, 2001, p. 139). Additional support was provided by the results of Deluca (1995) and Davis (1998a) who found that interpersonal skills and sound decision making were important factors in superintendents’ perceptions regarding at-risk principals.

Tennessee 2002

In 2002, these outcomes were further supported by the research of Matthews who replicated Davis’ 1998 research study. Working with the public school superintendents of Tennessee (N = 95), Matthews (2002) reached similar conclusions, namely, that principals lost their jobs because they were unable to execute the most basic of human relation tasks. The results of the competency rankings of superintendents are shown in Table 14. Competencies having the highest impact on creating an at-risk condition for a

school principal remained the ability to work cooperatively with staff, make sound decisions, and solve problems effectively (Matthews, 2002). Areas such as budget and evaluating student educational progress remained low impact factors among superintendents when determining the principal's at-risk condition (Matthews, 2002).

Table 14

Matthews' Superintendents' Rankings: Impact of Competencies by Mean Score

Competency	Mean Score
Works cooperatively with faculty and staff.	2.39
Makes sound decisions.	2.37
Solves problems effectively.	2.33
Develops positive community relations.	2.38
Communicates effectively in a verbal manner.	2.26
Copes with stressful situations.	2.24
Demonstrates flexibility and accepts change.	2.20
Fosters positive school climate.	2.20
Attends to difficult tasks.	2.13
Provides leadership in curriculum and instruction.	2.00
Positive relations with board members/central office.	1.96
Delegates responsibilities appropriately.	1.91
Exhibits good work habits and personal qualities.	1.91
Monitors and evaluates staff members.	1.87
Conveys school mission and expectations.	1.85
Plans adequately and sets appropriate goals.	1.86
Maintains student discipline and order.	1.78
Provides staff development.	1.78
Organizes work effectively.	1.76
Relates to students positively.	1.77
Communicates effectively in writing.	1.63
Evaluates student educational progress.	1.63
Manages school budget, facilities and operations.	1.59

Note. Adapted from Matthews (2002, p. 40). 1 = No impact; 2 = Some impact; 3 = High impact.

Factors in the Matthews (2002) and Fisher (2001) studies were similar regarding competencies that created the perceptions among superintendents of a career threatened or at risk principal. They also shared similarities in regard to the ranking of student educational progress. Even in Matthew's (2002) replication, student achievement or educational progress competencies were not viewed as important as many of the human interaction competencies in the development of the perception of an at-risk principal. Fisher (2001) noted that this was a continual theme in all of the research previously conducted and one explanation could be that many states, had not yet implemented, or were just beginning to implement annual student performance assessments. Fisher (2001) and Matthews (2002) concluded a lack of quantifiable student achievement data may have contributed to the higher ranking of this particular principal competency, as a measurement tool did not yet exist with which to determine principal performance.

Summary

The additional accountability measures implemented after 2001 fostered new implications related to the Florida principal performance indicators as they applied to the annual assessment and evaluation of school principals (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The increased public accountability at the state and federal levels (Florida Department of Education, 2008a), impacted the professional lives and the relationships between school district superintendents and school principals. Though principals had historically cited student achievement as the reason why they lost their leadership position, this has rarely been the case (Deluca, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Martin, 1991). In

fact, though superintendents and principals were experiencing increased pressure related to student achievement, principals continued to lose their positions due to ineffective handling of interpersonal and political situations. (Matthews 2002).

Within the state of Florida, annual assessment procedures of principal performance and career outcomes were guided by state law and the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards were developed to deal with the increased accountability (Florida Department of Education, 2005). On an annual basis, superintendents were required to evaluate principals based on their ability related to each of the research based standards (Florida Statute 1012.34, 2010).

At the time of the present study and in the midst of a looming leadership crisis (Whitaker, 2001), superintendents have been required to consider the complicated decision as to when or how a principal should be removed with more frequency than was the case in prior decades (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). When principals have failed, there has been great personal and community costs (Knuth & Banks, 2006). The results of this study should provide superintendents, principals, and principal candidates a greater ability to understand the impact of accountability on the Florida Performance Leadership Standards and career outcomes. The information gathered could be used to guide school district principal preparation programs and leadership development programs in higher education impacting the schools, students, families, as well as the career outcomes of both current and future principals and superintendents.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The school principalship has been viewed as one of the critical positions impacting student achievement within schools and school districts (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). The involuntary removal of the educational leader of a school has directly impacted not only the individual, but the students, teachers, and the community of the school which the principal served. Previous research related to the involuntary removal of a school principal was conducted prior to the advent of school accountability legislation. This study investigated involuntary removal of principals and to determine how the 67 public school superintendents within the state of Florida prioritized the Florida Principal Leadership Standards when making the decision to remove a school principal.

This chapter describes the methodology utilized in the study. This chapter is organized to provide the statement of purpose, a description of the population, the research questions, and the methods and procedures utilized within the study. Data sources and instrumentation used in the data collection process are discussed, and the statistical procedures used to analyze the data are detailed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by Florida superintendents when removing school

principals from their positions. The utilization of the FPLS provided an objective and research-based framework to determine superintendents' viewpoints as they related to effective leadership practices and the assessment of principals within the state of Florida. These standards created a structure for examining principal performance and insight into superintendents' priorities when they decided to remove a school leader.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the school principal, (K-12 school level, gender, years of experience, years under threatening condition, number of staff, student enrollment, previous position, and school/district population) who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?
2. What are the relationships between the problems encountered by the principal and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed by a principal within the state of Florida?
3. What Florida Principal Leadership Standards are most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?
4. Were years of experience in the school principal position a predictor of principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as

reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?

5. What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?
6. What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to remove a principal within the state of Florida?
7. What career outcomes were most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

Population

The study population was defined as the current district superintendents in the 67 public school systems in the state of Florida. Florida districts not included in the population were Florida A & M University Laboratory School, Florida Atlantic University Schools, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, Florida Virtual School, and the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School due to their specific innovative approaches, specificity of services and their lack of a regional school district, county-based configuration.

The selected school districts and their respective superintendents were responsible for over 2,628,428 students (Florida Department of Education, 2009). The districts represented were diverse in both student enrollment and settings, and all socio-economic

levels were represented within the 67 school districts (Florida Department of Education, 2009). Descriptive statistics for the population of Florida school districts by name, district grade, graduation rate, enrollment and free and reduced lunch percentage are provided in Appendix E. Each public school superintendent (N=67) within the state of Florida was a potential respondent and provided the data related to principals who were involuntarily removed.

Instrumentation

A survey, originally developed by Martin (1990) and refined by Fisher (2001), was modified in order to identify perceptions of each Florida school superintendent (Appendix A). Permission to use the questionnaire with modifications was obtained (Appendix B). The instrument required superintendents to respond to their most significant case regarding removal of a principal in order to prevent a composite profile created from multiple experiences. The survey contained eight separate sections related to the removal of school principals including: superintendent demographic data, principal demographic data, problems encountered by the principal, competence of the principal based on the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, sources of information concerning principal performance, interventions prior to removal, outcome and open responses.

Following the guidelines of previous researchers, the modified version of the survey was pilot-tested in a cognitive interview process. In January of 2010, five professional educators who were not identified as subjects for the final study provided feedback and recommendations concerning each survey question. Each of the individuals

completed the survey, commenting aloud as they responded to survey items, in the presence of an interviewer (Dillman et al., 2009). This process provided a greater understanding of how each item was being interpreted, if the intent of the item was realized, and if further refinement of the survey was necessary (Dillman et al., 2009).

In February of 2010, the refined survey was converted to a web-based format and again subjected to further feedback using the cognitive interview process. The on-line survey was administered to 10 educational administrators who directly and indirectly supervised principals but were not included in the final survey target group. Participants discussed their interpretation of the survey directions, questions, and the response tables provided during the time they were completing the survey.

In addition to the aforementioned process, the pilot-test participants were asked to provide feedback regarding the on-line survey's readability, clarity, exclusivity, and exhaustiveness. While the ease of reading the survey (readability) and how the survey questions were perceived or understood (clarity) were self explanatory, exclusivity and exhaustiveness were defined in the following manner. Exclusivity was defined as intending to exclude many from consideration. This definition was utilized to determine if a respondent remained focused on a single supervisory experience as indicated in the surveys directions. Exhaustiveness was defined as a thorough examination of the situation. This definition was used to determine if any questions or topics regarding the removal of a school principal had been omitted. The feedback regarding the online survey results are displayed in Table 15. Following the feedback received from the cognitive interview process, minor adjustments were made in the directions for Sections

B-G of the survey. A standardized format was devised to include an identical opening statement for each section.

In February, 2010, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (Appendix C) to administer the survey to the 67 superintendents within the state of Florida. Prior to initial contact with the superintendents, the survey was reviewed once more to ensure web formatting had not affected content and the survey was ready to be administered electronically to the superintendents. In June of 2010, the first request to complete the survey was distributed to the superintendents through the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS).

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The survey instrument had been previously utilized by three researchers in their doctoral research (Deluca, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Martin, 1990). Martin (1990) noted the consistency and alignment of the data throughout the process which included interviews, review of literature, a pilot study, and the final administration of the survey. Expanding on Martin's (1990) and Deluca's (1995) research, Fisher (2001) reported respondent mean averages for each section of the survey based on a Likert-type scale ranging from a low rating of 1 to a high rating of 5 for each item. Those results, reported in the last administration of the survey (Fisher, 2001), provided mean averages for clarity (4.8), readability (4.9), exclusivity (5.0), and exhaustiveness of (5.0). Utilizing the same process in this implementation of the survey, overall mean averages for clarity (4.9), readability (4.93), exclusivity (4.86), and exhaustiveness (4.86) were reported (Table 15).

This survey, as with those in the past, relied upon respondents to self-report valid data which yielded consistent and aligned data. The research process for this study included a review of literature, cognitive interviews, pilot studies, and the final administration of the survey.

Table 15

Results of Pilot Test of Survey Instrument

Item	N	Readability		Clarity		Exclusivity		Exhaustiveness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Directions	10	4.90	.42	4.80	.42	4.90	.32	4.80	.42
Section A	10	4.90	.34	4.80	.34	4.80	.35	4.80	.47
Section B	10	4.95	.16	5.00	.00	4.90	.34	4.90	.34
Section C	10	4.90	.32	4.90	.32	4.80	.48	4.90	.32
Section D	10	4.95	.16	4.96	.13	4.70	.48	5.00	.00
Section E	10	4.90	.34	4.80	.35	4.80	.34	4.80	.47
Section F	10	5.00	.00	4.96	.13	4.90	.34	4.90	.32
Section G	10	4.90	.32	5.00	.00	5.00	.00	4.90	.32
Section H	10	5.00	.00	4.90	.32	5.00	.00	4.80	.47
Mean Average	10	4.93	.04	4.90	.08	4.86	.10	4.86	.07

Data Collection

Prior to initiating the data collection process, the researcher sought sponsorship for the process in order to improve the likelihood and volume of superintendent responses. Official sponsorship of survey research can drastically improve the response rate among individuals and organizations that might not otherwise be inclined to respond (Dillman et al., 2009). In the Fall of 2009, it became apparent that the success of this research study and response to the survey would be better served by the addition of an official sponsor.

Initial phone calls were placed to active Florida superintendents who were personally known to the researcher regarding support for the research. Contacts, providing positive feedback regarding the topic, suggested that the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) might be the best organization to sponsor the research. A phone call contact was initiated requesting a meeting with the President of the Board of Directors for FADSS. The resultant meeting in October of 2009 yielded a promise to contact the state offices of FADSS and the Executive Director regarding the research.

In January of 2010, a meeting at the state headquarters of FADSS was held with the Chief Executive Officer, the Associate Executive Officer, the researcher, and a member of the dissertation committee. The purpose of the meeting was to propose official sponsorship of the survey regarding the involuntary removal of school principals. FADSS officers were amenable to the organization's participation and reinforced the need for their involvement as it was their belief that superintendents would be unlikely to respond without their participation. The meeting concluded with a decision to forward the issue to the executive committee for final approval in February 2010. Final approval of sponsorship was provided in April of 2010.

In addition to sponsorship, FADSS agreed to email all of the superintendents and their executive assistants and provide all follow-up reminders as necessary. In June of 2010, email scripts were completed and the first request for survey responses went to the Florida superintendents on June 3, 2010 (Appendix F). The messages included a randomly generated username and password for use in entering the survey via a web-

based link. This allowed the researcher to track the number of participants and target for follow-up only those who did not respond.

Approximately every two weeks, and at a minimum of two times per month, the superintendents who had not yet completed the survey were re-contacted by the researcher through a FADSS email regarding their participation (Appendix G). The messages provided an update as to the progress in terms of data collection, a reminder of the survey's web link, and the individual's username and password. Some individual communication (N = 7) occurred with superintendents and assistants regarding access to the survey web site. Primarily, the issues or concerns surrounded accessing the survey site via the username and password. In six cases, potential respondents were attempting to access the site by entering the information manually rather than copying and pasting as was encouraged in the email. In one case, the issue preventing access to the survey remained undetermined. The username and password appeared to be operational for all but the superintendent in question. Rather than risk increasing frustration, a new username and password were generated, and the survey was successfully completed.

Two final reminders of the final date for participation in the survey were sent in September of 2010. Following the final reminder of September 9, 2010, the researcher contacted each non respondent's office via phone to encourage a response to the survey. The time period during which the survey could be completed concluded on October 2, 2010 with 85% of the superintendents (N = 57) responding.

In completing the survey, respondents provided information concerning the demographic data for both the school principal and the superintendent; specific problems

encountered by the school principal, level of competence of the principal related to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS), sources of information concerning a principal's performance, the various actions and interventions utilized to help a principal improve, and the career outcome of the principal considered for the purposes of the survey. Survey responses and data were collected and entered into an SPSS database for further statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized to develop descriptive statistics and conduct various statistical tests (alpha level = .05) to create a profile of principals who were involuntarily removed, the superintendents who supervised them, and the competence of those principals based on the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS). Survey items contained in Sections A and B were utilized to develop a descriptive, statistical profile for the principal and the superintendent in regard to district size, size of school, gender, years of experience, type of school, student enrollment, staff size, years served prior to termination, and position held prior to appointment as principal.

A Spearman correlation was used to determine if a relationship existed between the problems encountered by the principal (Section C) and the competence of the principal (Section D). Simple linear regression analysis was utilized to determine if years of principal experience (Section B) was a predictor of a principal level competence with the FLPS (Section D). Descriptive statistics were utilized in the investigation of the

Florida Principal Leadership Standards to determine which standards were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in their reasoning to remove a school principal within the state of Florida (Section D).

Additional descriptive statistics were elicited to determine the most valuable sources of information (Section E) and most likely interventions (Section F) that superintendents utilized prior to their decisions to remove a school principal. Finally, various descriptive techniques were used in determining the most likely career outcome for the involuntarily removed principal (Section G). Table 16 displays the linkage between (a) research questions, (b) specific survey sections and items, and (c) statistical analyses used to answer each research question.

Table 16

Relationship of Research Questions, Survey Sections/Items, and Statistical Analyses

Research Questions	Survey Sections/Items	Statistical Analysis
1. What are the demographic characteristics of the school principal, (K-12 school level, gender, years of experience, years under threatening condition, number of staff, student enrolment, previous position, and school/district population) who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?	Section A: Items 2-6 Section B: Items 1-7	Descriptive Statistics
2. What is the relationship between the problems encountered by the principal and Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed by a principal within the state of Florida?	Section C: Items 1-10 Section D: Items 1-10	Spearman Correlation
3. What Florida Principal Leadership Standards are most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section D: Items 1-10	Descriptive Statistics
4. Do years of experience in the school principal position predict principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section B: Item 3 Section D: Items 1-10	Simple Linear Regression

5. What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?	Section E: Items 1-11	Descriptive Statistics
6. What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to involuntarily remove a principal within the state of Florida?	Section F: Items 1-10	Descriptive Statistics
7. What career outcome was most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?	Section G: Items 1-9	Descriptive Statistics

Summary

The methodology used to conduct the study has been described in this chapter. Included were a statement of the problem and a description of the population. The research questions which were used to guide the study were enhanced by hypotheses. Also discussed was the instrumentation used in the study and its reliability and validity. Finally, data collection and analysis procedures were explained. The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Chapter 4 reports the analysis of the data obtained in a survey of Florida public school district superintendents as to their perceptions concerning principals involuntarily removed from their positions. The data are reported based on the order of survey responses. The sections that follow present the survey return rate information, superintendents' demographic information, open response data, and a summary of the data analysis relevant to the seven research questions which guided the study. The results are presented using tabular displays and accompanying narratives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by Florida superintendents when removing school principals from their positions. The utilization of the FPLS provided an objective and research-based framework to determine superintendents' viewpoints as they related to effective leadership practices and the assessment of principals within the state of Florida. These standards created a structure for examining principal performance and insight into superintendents' priorities when they decided to remove a school leader.

Population

The study population was defined as the current district superintendents in the 67 public school systems in the state of Florida. Florida districts not included in the

population were: Florida A & M University Laboratory School, Florida Atlantic University Schools, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, Florida Virtual School, and the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School. These schools were excluded due to their specific innovative approaches, specificity of services, and their lack of a regional school district, county-based configuration.

The selected school districts and their respective superintendents were responsible for over 2,628,428 students (Florida Department of Education, 2009). The districts represented were diverse in both student enrollment and settings, and all socio-economic levels were represented within the 67 school districts (Florida Department of Education, 2009). Descriptive statistics for the population of Florida school districts by name, district grade, graduation rate, enrollment and free and reduced lunch percentage are provided in Appendix E. Each public school superintendent (N = 67) within the state of Florida was a potential respondent who could provide the data related to principals who were involuntarily removed.

Superintendent Demographics

Of the 67 Florida superintendents surveyed, 85% responded (N = 57). The initial survey question required superintendents to respond regarding their experience in involuntarily removing a school principal. Superintendents responding “Yes,” were asked to respond to additional questions to collect various demographic characteristics of the population of interest. For superintendents responding “No” to this question, the survey was considered complete, and no further information was collected. Of the

responding superintendents, 43 (75%) noted working with principals who they had involuntarily removed from their position. A total of 14 (25%) superintendents indicated that they had no experience in removing a school principal from a leadership position. Of those superintendents (N = 14) the majority were male (67%) and served in rural or suburban school districts (83%). The average years of experience were four years or less (96%).

Using the data gathered from the 43 respondents, a demographic profile of Florida superintendents who had removed a school principal involuntarily was created which included years of experience, gender, and size of the school district defined as rural, suburban, or urban. These data are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Superintendents' Personal, Professional and School District Characteristics (N = 43)

Experience	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Years of experience		
0-4 Years	19	44.2
5-9 Years	14	32.6
10 or more years	10	23.3
Gender		
Male	29	67.4
Female	14	32.6
District size		
Urban (Total Population 50,000+)	7	16.3
Suburban (Total Population 10,000 - <50,000)	18	41.9
Rural (Population <10,000)	18	41.9

Note. Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

Of the 43 respondents, 19 (44%), reported being in the position of superintendent for fewer than 5 years. A total of 14 (32.6%) superintendents reported holding their positions between five and nine years, and 10 (23.3%) reported holding the position for 10 years or more (23.3%). There were 29 (67%) males and 14 (32%) females. Of the responding superintendents, 18, more than 83%, identified the size of their school district as suburban or rural. The seven remaining superintendents (16%) identified their school districts as urban.

Florida Legislative Initiatives Impact

A total of 37 (86%) of the respondents identified that the decision to involuntarily remove a school principal was not impacted by Florida legislative statutes. Only 6 (14%) indicated that the decision had been impacted by legislative initiatives. These data obtained from Survey Section A, Question 2 responses are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Decision as Related to Florida Legislative Initiatives (N = 43)

Response	<i>n</i>	%
No	37	86.0
Yes	6	14.0

Analysis of Data

This section of the chapter has been structured around the seven research questions which guided the study. In each case, the research questions are stated and followed by a presentation of the data using tables and descriptive narratives.

Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of the school principal who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?

Data concerning the principals who had been involuntarily removed were collected (Section B, Questions 1-7) and reported using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies. The data included the principals' school level and district size, gender, years of experience as a principal, number of years served under career threatening conditions, total number of staff supervised, average student enrollment, and the position title held immediately prior to assuming the role of school principal. These data are displayed in Tables 19 and 20. The information gathered allowed for an understanding of the population of principals selected by responding superintendents as the subjects for the remaining questions contained within the survey.

Table 19 presents data regarding the school level, gender, years of experience and years of experience under threatening conditions. The school level of the identified principals who were involuntarily removed by district superintendents were predominately employed at the high school level (N = 20, 46.5%). The lowest percentage regarding school level identified by the responding superintendents was at the middle school level (N = 7, 16.3%).

Table 19

Personal and Professional Demographics of Principals (N = 43)

Descriptors (Section-Item)	<i>n</i>	%
School level of principal (B-1)		
Elementary	16	37.2
Middle	7	16.3
High	20	46.5
Gender (B-2)		
Male	26	60.5
Female	17	39.5
Years of experience (B-3)		
1-2 Years	7	16.3
3-4 Years	17	39.5
5-7 Years	12	27.9
8+ Years	7	16.3
Years of experience under threatening conditions (B-4)		
1-2 Years	34	79.1
3-4 Years	6	14.0
5-7 Years	2	4.7
8+ Years	1	2.3

Of those principals subjected to removal due career threatening conditions, responding superintendents identified 26 (60.5%) of the principals as male. A total of 17 (39.5%) of the principals identified for removal due to career threatening conditions were female.

Over 80% of the responding superintendents identified the principals who were removed as having held the position for 7 years or less. Most of the principals identified had been in the position as a principal for 3-4 years (N = 17, 39.5%) followed by those serving in the positions for 5-7 years (N = 12, 27.9%).

When responding to the length of time a principal served under career threatening conditions, 34 (79%) of the superintendents identified their principals as having served one to two years under such threatening conditions. Of the remaining principals, only six (14%) principals had served three to four years and three (7%) had served under career threatening conditions for more years than five years.

Table 20 presents data related to the number of staff supervised by the principal, average student enrollment in the principal's school, and the position held immediately prior to the principalship. Of the principals identified by the responding superintendents, 31 (72.1%) supervised a school staff of 1 to 100 people. A total of 21 (48.8%) supervised a staff of 51 to 100 persons, and only 10 (23.3%) supervised a staff of 50 or below. Only five principals were identified as serving a school staff exceeding 150 (11.6%).

Five categorical responses for student enrollment were identified for the responding superintendents to report enrollments for the principal who was involuntarily removed. The greatest number (N = 15, 34.9%) of principals served student populations of 501 to 1,000 students. A total of 11 (25.6%) served student populations of 500 or less, and 16 (37.2%) served populations ranging from 1,001 students to 2,000 students. Only one (2.3%) of the principals identified by the responding superintendents served a population of more than 2001 students.

A variety for survey responses were identified by superintendents regarding the position held immediately prior to an appointment as school principal. Over half (N = 25, 58.1%) of the involuntarily removed principals held the position of assistant principal prior to assuming their roles as principals. The position most often identified was an

assistant principal within the same school level (N = 13, 30.2%), followed by assistant principals from another school level (N = 8, 18.6%) and assistant principal in the same school (N = 4, 9.3%). Five (11.6%) of the principals identified for removal by the responding superintendents held the position of principal immediately prior to assuming their role which led to involuntary removal.

Table 20

School and Prior Position Demographics of Principals (N = 43)

Descriptors (Section-Item)	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Number of staff supervised (B-5)		
1 to 50	10	23.3
51 to 100	21	48.8
101 to 150	7	16.3
151 to 200	4	9.3
200 or More	1	2.3
Average student enrollment (B-6)		
1 to 500	11	25.6
501 to 1,000	15	34.9
1,001 to 1,500	8	18.6
1,501 to 2,000	8	18.6
2,001 or More	1	2.3
Position immediately prior to principalship (B-7)		
Classroom teacher	2	4.7
Assistant principal in school	4	9.3
Assistant principal in same school level	13	30.2
Assistant principal in another school level	8	18.6
Principal in same school level	7	16.3
Principal in another school level	5	11.6
Central administration	3	7.0
Other	1	2.3

Research Question 2

What are the relationships between the problems encountered by the principal and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed a principal within the state of Florida?

This research question was addressed in the superintendents responses to the items included in both Section C and Section D of the survey instrument with a series of Spearman correlation analyses. The superintendent responses for problems encountered (Section C) were paired with the matching FPLS competency (Section D) (Appendix D). Each of these items was on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Low Competency) to 5 (High Competency). The resulting ordinal variables were compared for each of the 10 pairs and normality was neither assumed nor tested. The choice of the Spearman correlation was made over the Pearson as the Spearman correlation makes fewer assumptions about the data and this relationship was tested as a construct for the results reported in Research Question 4.

All of the correlations were positive and significantly related. The highest correlations were between problems encountered modeling the effective use of technology and the display of competency in technology ($r = .86, p < .001$), the problems encountered with manifesting a professional code of ethics and display of competence in ethical leadership ($r = .83, p < .001$) and the problems encountered with the establishment of relationships external to the school and the display of competency with community and stakeholder partnerships ($r = .77, p < .001$). The lowest correlations were between problems encountered providing a safe learning environment and the managing the learning environment competency ($r = .61, p < .001$), problems encountered in

empowerment of others and the human resource management competency ($r = .58, p < .001$) and problems encountered in making defensible decisions and the decision making strategies competency ($r = .46, p = .002$). Table 21 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 21

Spearman Correlations Between Problems Encountered and Competence

Problem Encountered	Competency	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Provided safe learning environment	Managing the learning environment	.61	< .001
Established relationships external to school	Community and stakeholder partnerships	.77	< .001
Made defensible decisions	Decision making strategies	.46	.002
Relayed school mission and expectations	Vision	.71	< .001
Interacted effectively with diverse groups	Diversity	.69	< .001
Modeled effective use of technology	Technology	.86	< .001
Used data for instructional development	Instructional leadership	.77	< .001
Improved student achievement	Learning, accountability, and assessment	.68	< .001
Empowered others to achieve organizational goals	Human resource management	.58	< .001
Manifested a professional code of ethics	Ethical leadership	.83	< .001

Research Question 3

What Florida Principal Leadership Standards are most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

Superintendents considering their most significant supervisory experience with a career threatened principal rated each of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) contained within Section D of the survey. Each of the 10 competencies were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (Low Competence) to 5 (High Competence). Therefore, the item with the lowest mean would be considered as the standard rated most important in determining a reason for a principal's removal.

The competencies, which were ranked by mean score from lowest to highest, are displayed in Table 22. The lowest rated competencies, the skills at which the group of involuntarily removed principals showed the least competence, were human resource management ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.75$), decision making strategies ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.78$), and instructional leadership ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.99$). In contrast, the three competencies the principals seemed to struggle with the least were ethical leadership ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.29$), diversity ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.01$), and technology ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.21$).

Table 22

FPLS Competencies Influencing Principal Removal

Competency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Human resource management	2.05	0.75
Decision making strategies	2.09	0.78
Instructional leadership	2.14	0.99
Managing the learning environment	2.28	0.93
Community and stakeholder partnerships	2.40	0.93
Learning, accountability, and assessment	2.49	1.12
Vision	2.67	1.19
Ethical leadership	2.74	1.29
Diversity	2.79	1.01
Technology	3.02	1.21

Research Question 4

Were years of experience in the school principal position a predictor of principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?

This research question was addressed through a simple linear regression with one dependent variable (principal competence) and one independent variable (years of experience). Competence, the dependent variable, was represented by the average score for the ten questions in survey (Section D), which asked the superintendent to rate the

competence of the principal on a scale ranging from 1 (Low Competence) to 5 (High Competence).

The independent variable, years of experience as principal, remained ordinal in nature. In order to be appropriately used in the linear regression analysis, this categorical variable with four different responses (1-2 years of experience, 3-4 years of experience, 5-7 years of experience, and 8 or more years of experience) was collapsed into three binary dummy variables.

Various assumptions needed to be considered prior to running the statistical analysis on this ordinal variable including the examination of outliers, linearity, normality, and homogeneity of variance. In a regression analysis, influential points can affect the way a line fits with the rest of the observations making it necessary to examine for outliers. All of the Cook's distances were well below 1 (.22 was the maximum). Additionally, centered leverage values were also all below 1 (.12 was the maximum). Therefore, outliers were not an apparent issue.

The linearity assumption for regression analysis was also met as the standardized residuals versus the predicted values and the independent variables were plotted within an acceptable range and fell in an approximately random fashion. The residuals were also considered to be normally distributed as the standardized residual (Skewness = .13, Kurtosis = -.22) and unstandardized residual fell within the acceptable range (Skewness = .10, Kurtosis = -.21). A Shapiro-Wilk Test also resulted in non significant results for the unstandardized residuals ($W = 0.98$, $df = 43$, $p = .74$) and standardized residuals ($W =$

0.98, $df = 43$, $p = .79$). Because further indication of non-normality was not shown by histograms, Q-Q plots, and boxplots, normality of the data was assumed.

Finally, in plotting the standardized residuals versus the predicted value and the independent variables, there was no major indication of the spread increasing or decreasing (independence) nor did any particular patterns arise regarding the standardized residual versus the predicted value (homogeneity). Therefore, independence of the distribution and homogeneity of variance were assumed.

Years of experience did not serve as a particularly strong predictor of principal competence ($F(3, 39) = 2.46$, $p = .08$). Table 23 contains the coefficients and their individual values of significance. Both the 3-4 and 5-7 years of experience dummy variables were on the borderline of significance ($p = .059$), while the 8+ years of experience variable was not significant ($p = .81$). However, the positive coefficients for all of the variables indicated that having any experience beyond the 1-2 years of experience range (the control value) increased the value of competence (the dependent variable) to some extent. Although the model was in a borderline range of statistical significance based on the overall F test, a notable degree of practical significance was indicated based on R^2 values. The correlation coefficient, $r = .40$, suggested a moderately positive relationship between competence and years of experience and a total of 16% ($R^2 = .16$) of the variance in competence was accounted for by years of experience.

Table 23

Regression Analysis for Principal Competence and Years of Experience

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.04	0.24		
3-4 Years of experience	0.59	0.29	.43*	.05
5-7 Years of experience	0.63	0.31	.42*	.05
8+ Years of experience	0.09	0.34	.05	.81

Note. $F = 2.46$. $R^2 = .159$

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Research Question 5

What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?

Responding superintendents identified and ranked the top five sources of information which led to their awareness of the involuntarily removed principal's performance (Section E, Questions 1-11) from 1 (Least Important) to 5 (Most Important). Items not selected received a score of zero. Descriptive statistics including the percentage of any importance, mean, and standard deviations were reported for this section. The item with the highest mean was considered as the most important source of information.

The survey's responses included central office administration, community members, parents, budgetary issues, leadership decisions, school grade, AYP status, test scores, school staff, ethical improprieties and other. The majority of superintendents

identified leadership decisions ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.92$), school staff ($M = 1.95, SD = 1.79$) and central office administration ($M = 1.79, SD = 1.60$) as the top sources of information leading to awareness of struggling principal. Budgetary issues ($M = 0.60, SD = 1.47$), school AYP status ($M = 0.98, SD = 1.68$), and ethical improprieties ($M = 1.26, SD = 2.01$) were rated as the least important reasons.

Table 24 displays the results of the analysis ranked by mean score. Also included is the percentage of the respondents who rated an item of any importance at all. The rankings of these percentages follow fairly closely to the total means. Using these two metrics in combination provided a better idea as to whether an item was consistently ranked and considered important, not frequently ranked but considered important by the select few who ranked it, or frequently ranked but not considered to be a highly important item.

Table 24

Sources of Information Influencing Principal Removal

Source	Rating Percentage Of Any Importance	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Leadership decisions	76.7	2.60	1.92
School staff	67.4	1.95	1.79
Central office administration	69.8	1.79	1.60
School grade	46.5	1.51	1.87
Parents of students	65.1	1.44	1.44
Test scores	44.2	1.35	1.77
Community members	44.2	1.33	1.77
Ethical improprieties	30.2	1.26	2.01
School AYP status	48.3	0.98	1.68
Budgetary issues	18.6	0.60	1.47
Other	4.6	0.19	0.88

Research Question 6

What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to remove a principal within the state of Florida?

Responding superintendents identified and selected all of the interventions provided to principals prior to removing them from their position (Section F, Questions 1-10). This question could be best answered through descriptive statistics using

frequencies and percentages. Superintendents were asked to identify any interventions used with the career threatened principal. Since these responses were binary in nature (either present or not present) and more than one item could be checked at a time, using frequencies and percentages provided the best portrait of the interventions. Due to the ability to check more than one response, percentages for each individual item had a maximum of 100%.

Table 25 presents the results of the analysis. The most popular interventions included conferences with the principal (N = 42, 97.7%), negative performance evaluations (N = 29, 67.4%), setting goals for improvement, and professional improvement plans (N = 28, 65.1% for each). Written reprimands (N = 12, 27.9%), and provision of a mentor (N = 19, 44.2%) were not preferred interventions for the responding superintendents.

Table 25

Interventions Provided to Principals Prior to Removal

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Conference with the principal	42	97.7
Negative performance evaluation	29	67.4
Setting goals for improvement	28	65.1
Professional improvement plan	28	65.1
Verbal reprimand	26	60.5
Establishment of peer support	21	48.8
Outside counseling of the principal	19	44.2
Provision of mentor	19	44.2
Written reprimand	12	27.9
Other	2	4.7

Research Question 7

What career outcomes were most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

In Section G of the survey, superintendents were asked to choose one career outcome from a set of nine responses. The responses provided to the superintendents included dismissal or termination, maintained a position as principal, non-renewal of a principal's contract, resignation from the school district, retirement from education,

transferred to another administrative position, transferred to principalship in a different school, transferred to a teaching position within the district, and an open response labeled other. This question could be best answered through descriptive statistics, in the form of frequencies and percentages. Because these responses were of a nominal nature, using frequencies and percentages provided the best portrait of the most and least popular outcomes. All of the percentages combined totaled 100%. Table 26 provides a full summary of the data of career outcomes.

Table 26

Career Outcomes of Removed Principals

Reason	<i>n</i>	%
Transferred to another administrative position in district	12	27.9
Nonrenewal of principal's contract	11	25.6
Retired from education	5	11.6
Resignation from school district	4	9.3
Transferred to principalship in different school	4	9.3
Transferred to teaching position within district	4	9.3
Dismissal or termination	3	7.0

The most common career outcome reported was a transfer to another administrative position within the school district (N = 12, 27.9%). The least likely career outcomes reported were maintaining the principal in the same school (0%), transferring

to another school (N = 4, 9.3%), a teaching position within the district (N = 4, 9.3%), and outright dismissal or termination (N = 3, 7.0%).

Open Responses

The final section of the survey (Section H, Questions 1-2) provided responding superintendents an opportunity for two open responses regarding the impact of accountability of the decision making process and the opportunity to provide advice to other superintendents who faced the same situation with a career threatened principal. Of the responding superintendents, 43 provided a response to Question 1, and 43 provided a response to Question 2. Responses to the questions are grouped by themes that became apparent when reviewed and are provided in Tables 27 and 28. Complete lists of the responses are provided in Appendix H.

Open Response Question 1

How have accountability standards affected your decision making process when it comes to career threatened principals?

The overall theme in response to Question 1 was that accountability standards had, to varying degrees, impacted superintendents' (N = 43) decisions to remove a school principal. A total of 10 (25.5%) of the responding superintendents noted accountability as a critical factor, and 11 (22.5%), though noting the importance of accountability, viewed it as only one factor in the decision leading to the removal of a school principal. Only five superintendents (11.6%) noted in their narrative comments that accountability had only a moderate or no effect on their decision making process related to a career

threatened principal. Just over 11% of the responding superintendents noted that accountability removed the emotional aspects regarding the decision to remove a school principal and in fact made the process easier as the student achievement data provided a logical framework for proceeding with the removal. Groupings of the superintendents' comments are presented in Table 27. The complete list of superintendents' comments is contained in Appendix H.

Table 27

Superintendents' Responses: The Effect of Accountability Standards on the Decision Making Process Regarding Career Threatened Principals

Emerging Themes	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Accountability is important, but not the only expectation.	11	25.5
Accountability is the critical, major factor and critical component making the decision.	10	23.2
Accountability provided important evidence or made the decision easier.	5	11.6
Accountability has changed and/or increased the importance of the school principal.	5	11.6
Accountability and state mandated models limited the responses of district leaders.	5	11.6
Accountability has had only moderate or no impact.	5	11.6
Accountability has focused the role of the school principal on student achievement.	2	4.6

Open Response Question 2

Please provide information that would be helpful to other superintendents faced with a career threatened principal?

For Question 2, the responses (N = 43) were reviewed and examined for themes. The most common response provided by 13 (30.2%) of the responding superintendents was related to supporting the career threatened principal and making the decision as quickly as possible. Seven superintendents (16.2%) noted that providing all of the necessary time, assistance, and interventions were important before making the decision to remove a school principal. Nearly the same number of responding superintendents (N = 6, 13.9%) noted student achievement as information another superintendent would find helpful when facing the same issues. Finally, the need for documentation was noted by five superintendents (11.6%) as important advice when deciding to remove a school principal. Groupings of the superintendents' comments are included in Table 28, and a complete list of their comments is provided in Appendix H.

Table 28

Superintendents' Responses: Helpful Information to Other Superintendents Faced With a Career Threatened Principal

Emerging Themes	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Confront and support, but be willing to remove when necessary.	13	30.2
Provide time, assistance and all necessary interventions.	7	16.2
Focus on student achievement and data.	6	13.9
Importance of documentation.	5	11.6
No advice at this time.	5	11.6
Select the best candidates for the position.	4	9.3
Be aware of state accountability requirements.	2	4.6
Focus on the children and if you would place your own kids at the school.	1	2.3

Summary

This chapter was organized to address each of the seven research questions which guided this study. Data were analyzed to determine how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by Florida superintendents when removing school principals from their positions. The standards which were rated by Florida superintendents as lowest in competence when considering an individual involuntarily removed from the school principalship included (a) human resource management, (b) decision making strategies, (c) instructional leadership, (d) managing the learning

environment, and (e) community and stakeholder partnerships. Discussion of these findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) and how they were utilized by 67 public school superintendents within the state of Florida when deciding to remove school principals from their positions. This chapter contains a report of the analyses of data obtained on involuntarily removed principals as reported by their school district superintendents. Demographic information for the district superintendents and the involuntarily removed school principals were reported. Additional data obtained from a survey of superintendents addressed the relationship between problems encountered by the removed principals and the FPLS, principal competence surrounding the FPLS, and an examination of years of experience as a predictor of competence with regard to the FPLS. Other data obtained in the survey and reported in this chapter included the sources of information which led to the awareness of the principal's problems, interventions provided to the principal prior to the decision to remove, and the eventual career outcome.

The results of this study were intended to inform school leadership development programs including university educational leadership programs and Florida school district principal development programs at a time when accountability related to student achievement was increasing. This chapter includes a discussion of the findings of this study and recommendations for policy, practice. Also included are additional questions for future research which may impact such programs. This study's outcome could be

utilized to better prepare and inform building level school leaders and those responsible for their preparation.

Summary of Findings

Prior to reporting the data and results contained within this study, several limitations need to be revisited. For the purposes of this study it was assumed that all responding superintendents completed the Career Threatened Principal Survey honestly and to the best of their ability. It was further assumed that all principals included in the survey responses were originally chosen and hired in good faith. No survey data were collected to validate these assumptions. Additionally, an inherent weakness of this study was the inability to generalize findings beyond the thoughts and responses of the 67 Florida superintendents who were targeted for this study. Although the 85% response rate of the Florida superintendents was adequate (N = 57) and provided 43 usable surveys (64%), inferences regarding the obtained results to other states may not appropriate or should be utilized with caution.

Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of the school principal who was involuntarily removed by a superintendent within the state of Florida?

Principals involuntarily removed from their school leadership positions were predominately male (60.5%), led high schools (46.5%), and were employed in school districts which were likely to be either suburban or rural (83%). Over three-fourths (88.4%) of the principals identified in this study were responsible for a staff of 150 or

less, and 60.5% managed the learning environment for less than 1,000 students. A total of 86% of the involuntarily removed principals had served as assistant principals (N = 25, 58.1%) or principals (N = 11, 27.9%) immediately prior to the position which led to career threatening conditions. The results indicated that over half (55.8%) of the principals served for four years or less and had experienced career threatening conditions for two years or less before removal (79.1%).

Research Question 2

What are the relationships between the problems encountered by the principal and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards reported by the superintendents who involuntarily removed a principal within the state of Florida?

A hypothesis for this question would be that no relationship would exist, as reported by the responding superintendent, between the problems encountered by the career threatened principal and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. However, all of the correlations were positive and significantly related. The highest correlation was found between the level of problems encountered in modeling the effective use of technology and the display of competency in technology ($r = .86, p < .001$). The lowest correlation was between problems encountered in making defensible decisions and the decision making strategies competency ($r = .46, p = .002$).

Research Question 3

What Florida Principal Leadership Standards are most often cited and rated most important by superintendents when determining reasons to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

In reaching the determination to remove a school principal, responding superintendents indicated that there were varying levels of importance when examining the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS). Of the 10 FPLS rated for principal competence by the responding superintendents ($N = 43$), the five standards which rated the lowest were human resource management ($M = 2.05$), decision making strategies ($M = 2.09$), instructional leadership ($M = 2.14$), managing the learning environment ($M = 2.28$), and community and stakeholder partnerships ($M = 2.40$).

Research Question 4

Were years of experience in the school principal position a predictor of principal competence with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as reported by the superintendents who removed a school principal within the state of Florida?

Years of experience did not serve as a particularly strong predictor of principal competence ($F(3, 39) = 2.46, p = .08$) among the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS). Years of experience in the range of 3-4 and 5-7 bordered on statistical significance ($p = .059$), but 8+ years of experience was not significant ($p = .81$). The positive coefficients for all of the variables, however, indicated that having some experiences beyond the 1-2 years of experience range (control value) increased competence (dependent variable) to some extent. The correlation coefficient ($r = .40$)

suggested a moderately positive relationship between competence and years of experience, but only 16% ($R^2 = .16$) of the variance in competence was accounted for by years of experience.

Research Question 5

What sources of information were most often cited and rated most important by superintendents in providing awareness of principal problems which led to their involuntary removal?

Principals experiencing career threatening conditions leading to their involuntary removal were most often identified by leadership decisions (76.7%), central office administration (69.8%), school staff (67.4%), and parents of students (65.1%). These results were not surprising, since these were the individuals most directly impacted by the decisions made by the school principal.

Research Question 6

What interventions were most often provided to the school leader by the superintendent prior to the decision to remove a principal within the state of Florida?

Once a career threatening condition had been identified, principals were most often provided assistance or interventions beginning with a conference with the superintendent (97.7%) followed by a negative performance evaluation (67.4%), setting goals for improvement (65.1%), and a professional improvement plan (65.1%). More infrequently utilized as interventions with career threatened principals was the establishment of peer support (48.8%), outside counseling (44.2%), or the provision of a mentor (44.2%).

Research Question 7

What career outcomes were most likely to occur following a superintendent decision to remove a school principal within the state of Florida?

Of those principals involuntarily removed from the school only three were dismissed or terminated (7%). It was much more likely that principals experiencing problems who were involuntarily removed would be transferred to administrative positions within the school district (27.9%), or have their contract non-renewed (25.6%). It was equally likely that involuntarily removed principals would have tendered their resignations (9.3%), transferred to a principalship in other schools (9.3%) or be demoted to teaching positions (9.3%). Finally, it was apparent that Florida school superintendents did not consider it to be an option for principals to maintain their positions within the same school (N = 0, 0%).

Discussion of Findings

Presented in this section is a discussion of the findings of this study as they relate to the review of literature and prior research on career threatened principals, the role of the superintendent, and increased focus on school accountability (Davis, 1998a; Deluca, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Martin, 1991; Matthews, 2002). This information allowed for the findings to be more thoroughly examined and provided perspective related to the resulting results contained within the study.

Principal Demographic Data

The demographic profile of the involuntarily removed principal found within this study did not vary from those results provided by previous researchers. Fisher (2001) found similar results surrounding gender (male = 70%) and school levels (high school = 44%) in a study of Virginia superintendents. Deluca (1995) found that the pool of affected principals within the state of Ohio were also predominately male, but had served at the elementary level. In the present study, the majority of principals were male (63.6%) and had greater representation at the secondary levels (54.9%) unlike the results contained within the Deluca study (Florida Department of Education, 2010b). However, it is important to note over 39% of the principals involuntarily removed had previously served as assistant principals at the same school level (30.2%) or in the same school (9.3%). This result is notable, as high school principals were more likely to be removed from the principal position despite their learning and development occurring at high school level.

The finding that most involuntarily removed principals previously served as school based administrators, primarily assistant principals (58.1%), was not unlike the results of other prior studies. Fisher (2001) reported that of principals who were eventually removed, over 50% held the position of assistant principal (N = 38) and 14% were already principals (N = 11). The results of the Florida study can be expected as principal certification is primarily gained at the school district level through Principal Preparation Programs (PPP) (Florida Department of Education, 2006). However, these results were incongruent with the foundational requirement of the state of Florida's PPP

programs and other research which suggested the assistant principalship was among the best proving ground for the development of successful principals (Matthews, 2002).

The length of service of involuntarily removed principals both before and after the career threatening conditions arose was not unlike that found in previous studies. The results of this study indicated that more than half of the involuntarily removed principals (55.8%) had served for four years or less and continued in their positions for two years or less (79.1%) after experiencing career threatening conditions. Prior researchers found that a principal averaged six years of service both before and during the career threatening conditions which led to their removal (Deluca, 1995; Fisher 2001). Diegmüller and Richard (2000) had also noted that it takes up to “two years for principals to shape a vision for a school, gain the trust of staff members, and build a systematic process to foster improvement” (p. 1).

The apparent speed at which principals were removed also potentially indicated Florida superintendents may not fear a lack of suitable candidates as the research indicated (Pijnaowski et al., 2009; Roza, 2003; Whitaker, 2001). It is possible that superintendents within the state of Florida, due to district Principal Preparation Programs (PPP), perceived a quantity of acceptable principal replacements. As one superintendent stated in the open responses “In our district there is no shortage of persons ready to lead schools as principals.” A further review of the superintendents’ open survey responses indicated that superintendents were feeling the pressure to produce student achievement results placed on them by accountability standards (Table 27). Over 60% of the responding superintendents mentioned accountability as a factor which either impacted

the principalship or their decision to remove. The Florida Department of Education (2008a) supported this finding within the state of Florida in that the increase in accountability standards targeted school leadership as a designated area for improvement.

Principal Competence and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards

An interpretation of the results regarding principal competence and the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) would indicate that principals who are not competent in certain FLPS are at greater risk of becoming career threatened and involuntarily removed from the principal position. Competencies evidenced in this study for principals developing a career threatening condition leading to involuntary removal within the state of Florida included; (a) human resource management, (b) decision making strategies, (c) instructional leadership, (d) managing the learning environment, and (e) community and stakeholder partnerships. These findings were comparable to the findings of previous researchers who found that poor decision making, working with or influencing staff, communication with internal and external stakeholders, and fostering a positive instructional climate were all reasons which supported a superintendent's decision to remove a school principal (Deluca, 1995; Martin, 1991; Matthews, 2002).

Further support of these findings can be found in the research of Davis (1998a) and Fisher (2001). Each of these researchers determined that principals most often lost their positions due to an inability to manage and interact with the human element. In addition, superintendents perceived effective principals as those who were able to

maintain positive relationships with those individuals both inside and outside of the organization (Davis,1998a).

Another parallel finding in this research was the relative ranking of student achievement defined in the FPLS (Learning, Accountability, and Assessment). In previous research regarding evaluation of student progress and its impact on the decision to remove a school principal, Deluca (1995) and Matthews (2002) found student achievement ranked at or near the bottom and had little to no demonstrative bearing the superintendent's decision regarding principal removal. In the research conducted in the state of Virginia, principal competence regarding student achievement ranked no higher than fifth (Fisher, 2001). The results of this study regarding the FPLS (Learning, Accountability, and Assessment) mirrored the research previously conducted, as the reporting Florida superintendents (N = 43) ranked this principal's competency sixth ($M = 2.67$) among the 10 FPLS.

This result was unanticipated, as the increase in accountability at the federal level beginning with NCLB and expanding in Florida with the A+ Program and DA model has focused school districts on student performance and provided large amounts of objective and quantifiable data on student achievement (Florida Department of Education, 2008a; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This information was in opposition to Fisher (2001) who explained the relatively low ranking (5th) of competence concerning student achievement among responding superintendents was due to the "lack of objective and quantifiable data on student performance" (p. 140). Fisher (2001) noted an expectation of a developing trend toward the utilization of student achievement data by

superintendents which should have increased this particular measure of principal performance and had a greater impact concerning the decision to remove a school principal. The results from this study, however, ranked learning, accountability, and assessment at nearly the same level (6th).

Superintendent comments related to the impact of Florida legislation and DA model provided additional insight. Of the 43 respondents, only six superintendents (14%) indicated the removal of school principals were a result of legislative impact. Despite the increase in accountability measures both at the federal and state levels, including calling for the removal of the school principal (Florida Department of Education, 2008a), there remained some principal competencies that appeared to gain the attention of superintendents more quickly than others. “By identifying the strength of the relationships between specific principal behaviors and student achievement, educational leaders and politicians will gain a more accurate understanding of the leadership behaviors necessary to improve student performance” (O’Donnell & White, 2005, p. 57).

Experience as a Predictor of Competence

Years of experience did not serve as a particularly strong predictor of principal competence among the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) in this study. Though the correlation coefficient ($r = .40$) suggested a moderately positive relationship between competence and years of experience, only 16% ($R^2 = .16$) of the variance in competence was accounted for by years of experience. That time in the position of school principal did not emerge as an important factor which increased competence

within the 10 FPLS was not necessarily surprising. Research regarding longevity in the principal position has never suggested that time alone was a contributing factor to competence.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) indicated that increased time is necessary to develop the “principal’s role in shaping the schools direction through vision, mission, and goals” (p.187) and allows principals the opportunity to focus on meaningful activities and allocate additional time to instructional activities. As novice principals attained more time in the position, they were more likely to (a) understand the fundamental responsibilities of the position and focus on activities related to student achievement and (b) be more responsive and inclusive when solving problems related to student achievement (Van Vleck, 2008). This ability to be more inclusive of various stakeholders might, in part, mitigate some of the fundamental competencies identified by superintendents as reasons for the removal of a school principal.

This results of this study concerning experience as a predictor of competence supported the idea that time alone as a principal was not the only factor for success. Researchers have suggested that what was accomplished in terms of professional development during a principal’s time in the position appeared to be a more critical component. Dufour and Eaker (1998) suggested the principalship and development of professional learning communities provided opportunities for exposure to quality learning opportunities and over time impacted curriculum, instruction, and leadership. Diegmüller and Richard (2000) noted that time provided principals an opportunity for learning and development and permitted the acquisition of a set of professional skills

allowing them to develop collaborative school cultures. This idea was further supported by Rammer (2007) who noted that time in the position, combined with proper learning and development, were important factors in developing principals who could make an impact.

Sources of Information

The lowest rated competencies, human resource management and decision making strategies, provided insight into the sources of information utilized by a Florida superintendent when learning of a career threatened principal. Based on previous research conducted on career threatened principals it was not unexpected that principals experiencing career threatening conditions leading to their involuntary removal were most often identified by leadership decisions (76.7%), central office administration (69.8%), school staff (67.4%), and parents of students (65.1%). These individuals were the individuals most directly impacted by a principal's decisions.

The findings of Martin (1991) and Deluca (1995) were similar in that teachers were found to be a common source of information about a principal. Given that teachers are more than likely to be directly impacted by the working conditions and professional environment within a school, this was not unexpected. Fisher (2001) also found community members and parents to be an often cited source of information about the school principal. One possibility for these groups was their ability to be vocal with the superintendents through phone calls and email.

What was apparent in this study's findings was these sources of information were aligned with the competencies outlined as critical in developing a career threatening condition leading to involuntarily removal which were: (a) human resource management, (b) decision making strategies, (c) instructional leadership, (d) managing the learning environment, and (e) community and stakeholder partnerships. This alignment of competencies and information sources was also noted by previous researchers (Fisher 2001; Matthews, 2002). The lack of principal competence in these areas impacted both the internal and external stakeholders of the school community. These results associated with principal failure were often attributed to the inability to build confidence and trust among various internal and external stakeholders (Davis, 1998a). Matthews (2002) further supported these findings, indicating that principals were most likely to lose their positions when they were unable execute people skills, specifically working "cooperatively with faculty and staff" (p. 39).

Though not previously surveyed, another source of information reported by responding superintendents may indicate the growing impact of school achievement and accountability. The results of school AYP status (48.4%), school grade (46.5%), and test scores (44.2%) may be viewed as an additional source of information creating an awareness of principals' career threatening conditions leading to their involuntary removal. These percentages may be indicative of a growing accountability focus within the state of Florida and a superintendent's requirement to attend to such measures of school performance as outlined in the Florida A+ Program and DA model (Florida

Department of Education, 2008a). Waters and Marzano (2006) have noted the positive correlation to student achievement of a superintendent's own career outcome and tenure.

Interventions Provided to Career Threatened Principals

Once a principal's career threatening condition was identified, superintendents most often provided assistance or intervention with a conference (N = 42). The action of an individual conference with the principal was supported as the chief intercession strategy in the previous research conducted on "career threatened principals" (Deluca, 1995; Fisher 2001, p. 1; Martin, 1991). The other interventions utilized by responding superintendents, i.e., negative performance evaluations, setting goals for improvement, and the use of a professional improvement plan, were also supported in previously conducted research (Deluca, 1995; Fisher 2001; Martin, 1991; Matthews, 2002). This researcher, like his predecessor (Fisher, 2001), found that only a small number and percentage of the principals (N = 4, 9.3%) retained their positions. Therefore, the effectiveness of these interventions was subject to question.

Less frequently utilized interventions with career threatened principals were the establishment of peer support, outside counseling, or the provision of a mentor. This result was found despite the findings of Conca (2009) and Matthews (2002) that interventions such as outside counseling and the "establishment of peer support groups" were critical to principal success and should be actively investigated (p. 40). Interventions utilized by the responding Florida superintendents within this study seemed

to suggest, as did Deluca (1995), that mentorships, peer support, and outside counseling may be both time consuming and impractical.

Career Outcomes

In this study of those principals involuntarily removed from the school principalship, only three were actually dismissed or terminated (7%). However, 46% of the involuntarily removed principals met with career outcomes that were potentially career ending as evidenced by nonrenewal of the principal's contract (25.6%), a resignation from the school district (9.3%), and retirement from education (11.6%). The combination of the terminated and other career ending percentages equated to 53% of the principals leaving their positions with a career outcome that may negatively impact their ability to continue in the education profession. Additionally, no responding Florida superintendent (N = 43) maintained a principal in the same position where career threatening conditions were first noted.

This particular result was in stark contrast to the findings of prior researchers. Martin (1991) and Deluca (1995) noted that over 20% of the principals in Oregon and Ohio maintained their same positions as school principals. Fisher (2001) also reported that 14.7% of the career threatened principals in Virginia maintained their positions as principals within the schools in which their career condition was first noted. Matthews (2002) noted that "20 percent of the respondents reported that at-risk principals had been kept on the job" (p. 39). In this study, Florida superintendents were much more likely to select another career outcome for the affected school principal that included transfer to

another administrative position (27.9%), and nonrenewal of a principal's contract (25.6%).

More similar results were found, however, regarding other career outcomes. Deluca (1995) noted that 74% of the career threatened principals were transferred to another position, dismissed, or resigned. Fisher (2001) found that 56% of the principals left the position within their division through the same means. Matthews (2002) noted that 30% of the principals were provided teaching opportunities with their respective school districts and that another 50% were removed from their positions by other means including resignation, termination, transfer, and non-renewal of contracts.

Conclusions

Determining how and why any person comes to an unsuccessful career conclusion is extremely complex. The reason why school principals face unsuccessful career conclusions is equally daunting and complicated, as the position's relationship to multiple factors exponentially obscures a direct relationship to any one issue. At the inception of this study an expected conclusion was that the increased emphasis on student achievement and accountability would have an impact on the career outcome for school principals. Although there was some evidence that factors such as AYP, school grades, and test scores have had some impact, the results of this study indicated that principals were more likely to become career threatened when they were unable to effectively manage the human element of school leadership.

Despite the advent of increased accountability, the human element, and a principal's ability to negotiate that labyrinth, is vital to a successful career outcome. Human resource management, effective decision making, instructional leadership, managing the learning environment, and community and stakeholder partnerships remain as critical components to effective school leadership. As evidenced in this and prior research, the lack of these critical human resource competencies in a school principal can lead to an unsuccessful career conclusion (Davis, 1998a; Deluca, 1995; Fisher, 2001; Martin, 1991; Matthews, 2002).

Also apparent in the results was that serving as a high school principal made it more likely to experience career threatening condition leading to involuntary removal (46.5%). This result was despite responding superintendents (N = 43) identifying 39.5% of their involuntarily removed principals as previously serving within schools at the high school level. This prior service should have better prepared selected principals for success at the high school level (Florida Department of Education, 2006). This finding may speak to the complexity of high school leadership. Effective leadership at the high school level may require leaders who have already proven themselves as successful principals and is indicative of an apparent need for more specific support and professional learning for those selected to lead high schools.

What was less certain was the role of accountability in this process. Although the focus on student achievement has never been more pronounced (Rammer, 2007), it has not become the singular focus of principal performance among superintendents within the state of Florida. Accountability's impact on Florida school principals might affect a

principal's perceived amount of time to attain the goals outlined by both federal and state legislation (Florida Department of Education, 2008a; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Rammer (2007) noted that a principal must be able to navigate the complexities of school accountability. One of those complexities is time. Without time to accomplish the task, it is likely that a school principal could rush critical decisions and fail to obtain or build the necessary collaboration with stakeholders to successfully implement interventions regarding student achievement (Kruger et al., 2007). This potential rush to implement may circumvent a principal's most fundamental duties; to be responsive and inclusive when solving issues related to student achievement (Van Vleck, 2008). Failure to do so could contribute to problems defined as poor human resource management, instructional leadership, management of the learning environment, and ineffective decision making.

In addition, school grades, AYP status, and the test scores were reported as sources of information which may impact a superintendents' decision regarding the future career paths of their principals. What was not clear from the results is how or to what extent this information impacts the decision to remove a principal. One possible explanation is that student achievement data may attract the attention of school superintendents and upon closer examination of the principals competence, the reported FPLS may be noted as deficient. What is more apparent in this era of increasing accountability is superintendents no longer viewed maintaining career threatened principals within the school from which they originated as a viable option. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of principals who have been coached from the

profession resulting in termination, non-renewal, resignation, and retirement. “When a school principal fails, it comes at great social cost to the school’s students and families, at significant economic and often political cost to the school district, and at an extreme personal cost to the principal” (Knuth & Banks, 2006, p. 4). The implications are worse for new principals as they are almost certainly “lost to the profession forever” (Knuth & Banks, 2006, p. 4).

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The previously stated conclusions have important implications for both policy and practice. It is important to note that this researcher, like others before him, has not suggested the retention of ineffective principals. The position of school principal is extremely complex and requires excellent leaders who have the ability to attend to multiple tasks and are skillful in managing the multiple and complex frames of the educational organization (Deal & Peterson, 1994). However, understanding what is known about persons who arrive at unsuccessful career conclusions provides a more comprehensive portrait of how those individuals behave and communicate (Bennis, 1989). Although the new results that emerged in this study add to the principal competence and accountability knowledge base, what may be more important is how school districts and leadership programs use the information.

Superintendents and Principal Supervisors

Superintendents have an important role in this process. The work of a school district is guided by the expectations of the school district superintendent.

Superintendents should help their school districts realize the importance of their school principals by developing leadership development programs in which talented individuals can be identified. These individuals should be provided with professional development aligned and focused on human resource, decision making, and other competencies to support school leaders in the era of increased accountability. These actions will support the development of individuals who are better prepared for the increasing complexity of the school principalship.

Superintendents must also continue to hire effectively, stand behind their selections, communicate realistic time frames for success, and support principals as they make organizational changes required by accountability legislation. Waters and Marzano (2006) have outlined a method of defined autonomy for use by superintendents in this regard. Superintendents, according to these researchers, should create “non-negotiable goals for learning and instruction, yet provide school leadership teams with the responsibility and authority to determine how to meet those goals (p. 4).

This vision for organizational outcomes related to student achievement cannot be realized without support. Supervisors of school principals, superintendent or otherwise, must have a profound understanding of the goals of the organization, and the proven ability to support a principal in reaching these outcomes with the staff contained within the school (Matthews, 2002). This includes being equipped with an understanding of the

high impact competencies of involuntarily removed principals and the ability to model such competence. With this knowledge and ability, supervisors would be better able to support and assist principals who may be struggling with staff and or community resistance regarding the implementation of procedures, curriculum changes, and other programs aimed at improving student achievement. Additionally, individuals supervising principals should prioritize information gathered from district personnel, teachers, and parents and feedback to the principal so as to adjust the course of the principal's work and implementation of school plans (Matthews, 2002). Finally, those supervising principals "must know and implement methods and strategies for removing, rather than transferring, unsuccessful principals" (Matthews, 2002, p. 39).

To meet these ends, all district personnel, and especially school principals, should be provided strong and differentiated programs of professional development which take into account these organizational outcomes for student learning and how to meet explicit expectations. Directed learning and professional development should be utilized and aligned to developing the necessary and critical principal competencies with a focus on the growing impact of accountability. Additionally, high school principals may need specific interventions to support their development as effective leaders as the student populations, staff, and relative size of their respective school buildings increase the challenges related to job performance and accountability.

All principals should have the provision of a mentor or other educator from the very beginning of service. These individuals should be chosen with care and must have proven ability surrounding the competencies found to be a factor in the involuntary

removal of a school principal. Principals who appear to be faltering should have prescribed interventions which focus on identified deficiencies and include the provision of a mentor or other educator who should be kept abreast of individual progress and utilized to support the necessary changes required to effectively move the school toward the agreed organization outcomes.

School districts must examine, study, and possibly revise the principal evaluation process. Over 75% of the responding superintendents indicated they had worked with a career threatened principal. However, their actions were predominately punitive in nature once they determined a career threatening condition. An improved evaluation process, supported by differentiated professional development and the provision of a mentor would serve to identify problems early and lead to early interventions. Such an effective employee appraisal system would provide important information and support to the principal and aid in the future attainment of the organizational goals (Platter, 2010). What is still left to be determined, however, is how the Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), emanating from the federal government, will impact these assessments as the program is requiring accountability standards at a new level. New principal evaluations for states, including Florida, will require principals to demonstrate “multiple measures of performance and student learning must be used as a significant factor in determining effectiveness” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 21). These assessments and evaluations of principal performance are expected to inform instruction and return the United States to prominence in education. Only time and further research will determine this new evaluation system’s impact on the school principalship.

University Preparation Programs

University administrator preparation programs in educational leadership also have a role in creating a pool of high performing school leadership candidates who are ready to be successful in their chosen careers. An impending principal leadership shortage has been predicted for United States schools. At the time of the present study, over 40% of the current principals were nearing retirement age. A total of 54% of all U.S. principals were over the age of 50, and it has been predicted that over one-half of that group will begin to retire in 2011 (Knuth & Banks, 2006; Lovely, 2004; Potter, 2001). This problem can be expected to be compounded as “the perception of a principal shortage may be due in part to the pressure superintendents feel to find high-caliber candidates” who can deal effectively with the principal position (Pijanowski et al., 2009, p. 86).

Therefore, a recommendation for university preparation programs is to undertake an intense study of accountability standards and how they impact educational leadership programs designed to prepare entry level administrators. It is evident that legislative reforms focusing on student achievement have increased the complexity of the school environments and the position of school principal (Pijanowski, et al., 2009). Effective leadership education regarding collaboration and creating shared vision and trust among stakeholders are already embedded in the research and the university curriculum (Diegmueller & Richard, 2000). What is less evident is the impact of the accountability concerning the prospective principal’s requirement to create results sooner rather than later and to deal with the complexities of the school environment defined by accountability.

Accountability, how it impacts the perception of time to create organizational change, and what is known about the data on failed principals must be combined in the preparation process for school leaders. Rarely is the failure of leaders studied. From the results contained within this study and others, it appears that more principals face career outcomes from which there may be no recovery (Knuth & Banks, 2006). The examination of such unsuccessful outcomes provides critical non-examples to prospective principal candidates, allowing them a road map of the career threatening land mines that lie in their paths. Beyond the use of the results contained in research, universities could utilize superintendents, principal supervisors, teachers, and community members who have been impacted by involuntarily removed principals. The incorporation of these diverse viewpoints surrounding unsuccessful principals, their actions, and the impact of their decisions on various stakeholders would benefit prospective school leaders and better prepare them for service as school principals. An increase in the number of successful principals would not only have positive benefits for the preparing institutions but more importantly for the students, school district, and communities served.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results of this study concerning the involuntary removal of school principals has provided additional information regarding the reasons for unsuccessful career conclusions of school leaders, questions remain. Following are several

recommendations for additional research that have emerged from the findings of this study:

1. A future study could examine the interventions utilized by district superintendents following the identification of a career threatened principal. An investigation of the particular interventions utilized, who was included in those interventions, their roles, and why specific interventions were or were not utilized could lead to a more specific understanding of one of the dimensions included in this study. Particular emphasis could be placed on the use of outside counseling, peer support, and mentoring to determine their effectiveness or develop a better understanding of why such interventions are not often chosen by superintendents.
2. A follow-up study could be conducted with principals who have been involuntarily removed from their positions following career threatening conditions. Such a study could focus in whole or in part on the perceived impact of accountability on decision making and instructional leadership as well as career outcomes after removal from the principalship. Those outcomes could include information on current position, location, salary, and perceptions or expectations for further career growth.
3. A follow-up study could be conducted with the school staff, central office administration, and/or community members of a school whose principal was involuntarily removed. This study could focus on the principal competencies outlined in this study which impacted a superintendent's decision to remove

the school principal. The results could provide important insight into the career threatening condition and the school environment from those individuals most impacted by the principal's competence concerning human resource management, decision making, instructional leadership, and community and stakeholder partnerships. This information would be of particular importance as the groups targeted were also the most often cited as sources of information leading to a superintendent's awareness of the problem.

4. An examination of university educational leadership programs and district principal certification programs within the state of Florida could be conducted to better understand the use of current research regarding principal competence and the increasing level of accountability. The curriculum of the various programs could be studied to determine the amount of time spent on essential leadership characteristics, problems encountered by principals, unsuccessful career conclusions, and the impact of accountability on collaborative decision making.
5. An examination of Florida's principal evaluation process and the impact of Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) may be an additional topic worthy of investigation as a follow-up to this study. A study of the 67 school district appraisal and evaluation instruments and their supporting human resource policies could be conducted to examine how they are aligned with Florida law, the new expectations of the federal government, how and

why interventions are conducted and documented, and how these evaluations and appraisals are aligned with research regarding the development of effective school leaders.

6. A future study regarding the new federal school accountability models could be conducted to determine the impact of this next level of accountability and the resulting challenges to schools, principals, and superintendents. A specific examination of the number of implemented models (Turnaround, Transformational, Restart, and School Closure) could provide valuable data concerning principal career outcomes, as the models provide some flexibility in retaining a principal who has been in the position for two years or less. Because the models are linked to significant school improvement funding, an exploration of the superintendent's reasons for choosing a particular model, the retention or removal of the principal, and the results of the implemented models would be appropriate and expand the knowledge concerning the impact of accountability.

Summary

This study was conducted to investigate how the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) were prioritized by Florida superintendents when removing school principals from their positions. The utilization of the FPLS provided an objective and research-based framework to determine superintendents' viewpoints as they related to effective leadership practices and the assessment of principals within the state of Florida.

These standards created a structure for examining principal performance and insight into superintendents' priorities when they decided to remove a school leader.

It was the researcher's expectation, at the inception of this study, that an increase in the impact student achievement and increasing accountability had on the career outcome for school principals would be found. Although there was some evidence that factors such as AYP, school grades, and test scores have had some impact, the results of this study indicated that principals were more likely to become career threatened when they were unable to effectively manage the human element of school leadership.

This chapter has been structured to provide a summary of the findings for each of the research questions followed by a discussion of the findings. Based on the findings and discussion, conclusions were offered followed by implications for policy and practice and recommendations for future research.

APPENDIX A
CAREER THREATENED PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Florida Superintendents' Views Related to the Involuntary Removal of School Principals.

Dear Superintendent:

Thank you for taking time to participate in an important study about the involuntary removal of Florida principals. **The survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete.**

The study is confidential. The surveys are coded only to track which superintendents have completed and returned the survey. This code along with all the information gathered through the use of the survey instrument will be held confidential and discarded upon completion of the study. Demographic data will be asked only for the purpose of entering the responses into the database for statistical analysis.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from others in the publication. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you or your district. There is no penalty for not participating. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at anytime without consequence. Additionally, there is no compensation for participating in the study.

There are no anticipated risks or direct benefits by participating in this study. However, you may benefit indirectly. It is intended that your responses will fill the void in the research regarding the removal of school principals in the age of accountability. Your responses will also help to determine relationships between selected school demographics and the removal of school principals.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at (407) 259-1529 or by email at berniec@ocps.net. My faculty advisors will also be available for questions. Dr. Rosemarye Taylor may be contacted at (407) 823-1469 or by email at rtaylor@mail.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to UCF Institutional Review Board Office at the University of Central Florida, Office of Research and Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. The phone numbers are (407) 823-2901 or (407) 882-2276.

By completing and answering the survey, you are providing your informed consent. Please remember that you are free to withdraw your consent to participate at anytime without consequence and you do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bernier
Doctoral Candidate
University of Central Florida

SECTION A

BASELINE AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Directions: Please mark your answers in the box provided with an appropriate "X".

1. Have you ever supervised a principal who you involuntarily removed from their position?

Yes No

a. If you answered **YES** to Question #1, please **PROCEED** to Question #2 and complete the remainder of the survey.

b. If you answered **NO** to Question #1, **STOP HERE**. Please close the survey. Thank you.

2. Was the decision to remove the school principal a perceived requirement related to Florida legislative statutes (i.e. Differentiated Accountability Model)?

Yes No

3. Please indicate by making an "X" in the appropriate box your total number of years of experience as a public school district superintendent.

0 - 4 Years 5 - 9 Years

9 or more Years Not Applicable

4. If you marked not applicable to Question #2, please provide your position title below:

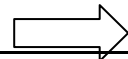
5. Please indicate your gender: (Place an "X" in the appropriate box)

Male Female

6. Choose only one of the categories below to indicate your school district population? (Place an "X" in the appropriate box)

Urban Suburban Rural

Please Continue to Next Page



SECTION B:

CAREER THREATENED PRINCIPAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. Please read each of the statements or questions below and place an “X” in the appropriate box.

1. Please mark the appropriate box that best corresponds with the school level of the principal. (Place an “X” in the appropriate box)

- Elementary
- Middle/Junior High
- High School

2. What was the gender of this principal? (Place an “X” in the appropriate box)

- Male Female

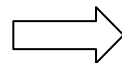
3. How many total years did this person serve in the role of principal within your school district? (Place an “X” in the appropriate box)

- 1 to 2 Years
- 3 to 4 Years
- 5 to 7 Years
- 8+ Years

4. Approximately how many years did this individual serve in the principalship under career threatening conditions? (Place an “X” in the appropriate box)

- 1 to 2 Years
- 3 to 4 Years
- 5 to 7 Years
- 8+ Years

Please Continue to Next Page



5. What was the approximate number of total staff under the principal's direction? (Place an "X" in the appropriate box)

- 1 to 50 Staff
- 51 to 100 Staff
- 101 to 150 Staff
- 151 to 200 Staff
- 201 + Staff

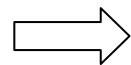
6. What was the approximate average student enrollment of the principal's school?

- 1 to 500 Students
- 501 to 1,000 Students
- 1,001 to 1,500 Students
- 1,510 to 2,000 Students
- 2,001 or more Students

7. What position did the individual hold immediately prior to the principalship described above? (Place an "X" in the appropriate box)

- a) Classroom teacher.....
- b) Assistant principal within that school.....
- c) Assistant principal within the same school level.....
- d) Assistant principal within another school level.....
- e) Principal within the same school level.....
- f) Principal within another school level.....
- g) Central administration position.....
- h) Other. Please specify _____

Please Continue to Next Page



SECTION C:

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY PRINCIPAL

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. Please read each of the statements below and place an "X" in the appropriate column to indicate the principal's level of competence for each item.

	COMPETENCE				
	LOW (1)	(2)	AVG. (3)	(4)	HIGH (5)
1) Provided a safe learning environment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Established relationships external to the school.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Made defensible decisions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Relayed school mission and expectations.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Interacted effectively with diverse groups.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Modeled effective use of technology.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Used data for instructional development.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Improved student achievement.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Empowered others to achieve organizational goals.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Manifested a professional code of ethics.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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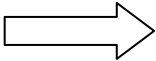
SECTION D:

COMPETENCE

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. Please read each of the statements below and place an “X” in the appropriate column to indicate the principal’s level of competence for each item.

	COMPETENCE				
	LOW (1)	(2)	AVG. (3)	(4)	HIGH (5)
1) Vision.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Instructional leadership.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Managing the learning environment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Community and stakeholder partnerships.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Decision making strategies.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Diversity.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Technology.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Learning, accountability and assessment.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Human resource management.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Ethical leadership.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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SECTION E

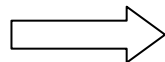
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. Please rank the top five (5) sources of information that led to your awareness of the situation and impacted your decision (1-least important-5 most important).

PLEASE RANK ONLY FIVE (1-least important to 5-most important)

- 1) Central office administrators.....
- 2) Community members.....
- 3) Parents of students.....
- 4) Budgetary issues.....
- 5) Leadership decisions.....
- 6) School grade.....
- 7) School AYP Status.....
- 8) Test scores.....
- 9) School staff.....
- 10) Ethical improprieties.....
- 11) Other. Please specify.....

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SECTION F:

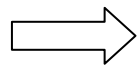
INTERVENTIONS

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. You initiated some course(s) of action when you became aware of the situation. Please place an “X” in all of the boxes that apply to this case.

MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

- 1) Conference with the principal.....
- 2) Outside counseling of the principal.....
- 3) Establishment of peer support.....
- 4) Provision of mentor.....
- 5) Negative performance evaluation.....
- 6) Setting goals for improvement.....
- 7) Professional improvement plan.....
- 8) Verbal reprimand.....
- 9) Written reprimand.....
- 10) Other. Please specify _____

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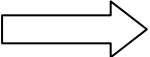
SECTION G:

OUTCOME

Directions: Consider your **most significant** supervisory experience with a PK-12 principal who encountered career-threatening problem. Place an “X” in the box related to the final outcome that pertains to this case. **(Please mark only one item.)**

MARK ONLY ONE ITEM: (Place an “X” in the appropriate box)

- 1) Dismissal or termination.....
- 2) Maintained a position as principal.....
- 3) Nonrenewal of the principal’s contract
- 4) Resignation from the school district.....
- 5) Retired from education.....
- 6) Transferred to another administrative position within the district.....
- 7) Transferred to a principalship in a different school.....
- 8) Transferred to a teaching position within the district.....
- 9) Other: Please Specify _____

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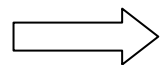
SECTION H:

OPEN RESPONSES

Directions: How have the accountability standards affected your decision making process when it comes to a career threatened principal?

Directions: Please provide information that would be helpful to other superintendents faced with a career threatened principal.

Please Continue to Next Page



SECTION I:

THANK YOU

Thank you for your assistance with this research project. I realize your time is valuable and appreciate your responses. If you are interested in receiving a report of the research when it is completed, please check the following box.

Yes, I would like a copy of the final results.

A summary of the results of this survey and research will be mailed to you upon completion of the project.

Thank you again for your participation!

Christopher S. Bernier

13116 Royal Fern Drive

Orlando, FL 32828

407-259-1529

chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu



STOP

APPENDIX B
SURVEY PERMISSION

Email Request

From: Bernier, Christopher S.
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 6:55 PM
To: cfisher@richmond.edu
Cc: Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Dissertation Survey

Good Evening,

I was such a pleasure to talk with you this evening. Talking with a fellow educator is always a positive experience.

As I said, my name is Christopher Bernier and I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida in the department of educational research, technology, and leadership. I would like to request written permission from you to use a modified version of your survey related to career threatened principals. It is my intent to use your survey with superintendents within the state of Florida in order to access their knowledge and information related to the retaining of school based leaders in this age of accountability as part of my dissertation.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration in this matter. If you would prefer to provide your permission by mail and I will send a self addressed envelope to a designated address of your preference. However, if you prefer to respond via email that will be acceptable as well. If you would like to speak with me personally, you may contact me at 407-306-8338

Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you!

Christopher S. Bernier
Principal
Chain of Lakes Middle School

From: cfisher [cfisher@richmond.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 7:08 PM
To: Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Re: Dissertation Survey

Hello. Very nice to talk with you.

I give permission for you to use a modification of the survey I used to collect data about career-threatened principals. I would appreciate a citation in your paper.

Best wishes for a excellent data collection experience. I would be happy to assist you in any way possible. Keep me posted on your results, they should be most interesting.

Cathy Fisher

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Christopher S. Bernier

Date: February 25, 2010

Dear Researcher:

On 2/25/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: FLORIDA SUPERINTENDENTS' VIEWS RELATED TO THE
INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
Investigator: Christopher S Bernier
IRB Number: SBE-10-06725
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: n/a

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 02/25/2010 11:11:59 AM EST

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX D
SURVEY ITEMS AND RELATIONSHIP
TO FLORIDA PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

Survey Items and their Connection to Florida Principal Leadership Standards

Florida Principal Leadership Standards	Question Section and Number
1.0 Vision	Section C: 4; Section D: 1.
2.0 Instructional Leadership	Section C: 7; Section D: 2;
3.0 Management of Learning Environment	Section C: 1; Section D: 3;
4.0 Community & Stakeholder Partnerships	Section C: 2; Section D: 4;
5.0 Decision-Making Skills	Section C: 3; Section D: 5.
6.0 Diversity	Section C: 5; Section D: 6.
7.0 Technology	Section C: 6; Section D: 7.
8.0 Human Resource Management	Section C: 9; Section D: 9.
9.0 Learning, Accountability & Assessment	Section C: 8; Section D: 8;
10.0 Ethics	Section C: 10; Section D: 10;

APPENDIX E
POPULATION OF FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICTS: 2007-2008

Population of Florida School Districts: 2007-2008

Name of School District	District Grade	Graduation Rate	Enrollment	Free Lunch %
Alachua	A	68.3	28,373	44.4
Baker	B	77.5	4,958	43.2
Bay	A	78.5	26,236	45.2
Bradford	C	75.4	3,576	55.0
Brevard	A	93.3	74,371	30.5
Broward	A	69.7	258,895	44.4
Calhoun	A	93.3	2,229	50.6
Charlotte	A	84.6	17,799	46.8
Citrus	A	77.8	16,174	41.8
Clay	A	77.6	36,125	25.1
Collier	B	75.8	42,721	44.3
Columbia	B	77.6	10,134	53.9
Dade	B	65.8	348,113	59.3
Desoto	B	66.5	5,012	66.3
Dixie	A	76.6	2,190	67.1
Duval	B	65.9	124,775	39.0
Escambia	B	75.7	41,855	59.5
Flagler	A	80.9	12,774	35.7
Franklin	C	57.8	1,246	55.4
Gadsen	C	56.1	6,516	71.1
Gilchrist	A	92.1	2,889	47.6
Glades	B	43.7	1,365	39.5
Gulf	A	89.1	2,171	44.6
Hamilton	C	60.0	2,018	71.0
Hardee	B	66.5	5,014	63.5
Hendry	B	74.0	7,308	61.6
Hernando	A	76.9	22,836	44.9
Highlands	B	71.2	12,445	59.7
Hillsborough	A	80.0	193,116	48.1
Holmes	A	84.3	3,430	58.3
Indian River	A	83.5	17,646	41.0
Jackson	B	85.7	7,363	52.9
Jefferson	D	57.5	1,154	76.6
Lafayette	B	92.0	1,089	50.4
Lake	A	79.3	40,710	41.1
Lee	B	77.8	80,541	46.2
Leon	A	81.2	32,471	32.5
Levy	B	72.1	6,228	61.5
Liberty	B	95.9	1,513	44.5
Madison	D	69.5	2,783	71.8
Manatee	B	79.3	42,524	44.5

Marion	B	73.8	42,565	53.9
Martin	A	91.9	18,109	28.8
Monroe	A	85.5	8,363	33.3
Nassau	A	81.5	11,079	33.5
Okaloosa	A	90.5	29,568	29.5
Okeechobee	B	70.7	7,037	55.4
Orange	A	75.6	174,136	47.4
Osceola	B	69.6	52,742	63.0
Palm Beach	A	75.6	170,844	41.2
Pasco	A	79.5	66,313	41.8
Pinellas	B	74.4	107,895	40.8
Polk	B	73.6	94,164	50.4
Putnam	C	78.0	11,808	67.6
St. Johns	A	89.4	27,867	20.2
St. Lucie	B	77.9	40,347	54.0
Santa Rosa	A	87.6	25,711	30.5
Sarasota	A	86.0	42,013	35.1
Seminole	A	91.1	65,355	31.8
Sumter	A	83.5	7,518	53.0
Suwannee	C	71.6	6,005	54.9
Taylor	B	74.0	3,389	60.2
Union	C	71.4	2,296	51.4
Volusia	A	81.9	64,570	42.5
Wakulla	A	81.6	5,178	37.8
Walton	A	81.5	6,967	46.1
Washington	C	83.1	3,590	54.7

Source: Florida Department of Education (2008b, p. 1).

APPENDIX F
INITIAL EMAIL SURVEY REQUEST

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Thursday, June 3, 2010 11:06 AM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveymethods.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

APPENDIX G
SUBSEQUENT SURVEY EMAIL REMINDERS

Reminder One

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 1:42 PM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Reminder

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

As you are aware, (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. An email message was sent to you two weeks earlier entitled “Survey-Dissertation Research” and a copy of that email is located below which includes the link to the survey, your user name and password. (Remember to copy and paste your information to avoid any typographical errors)

We are hopeful you will take just a small portion of your time to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Two

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2010 2:13 PM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Reminder

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

We certainly hope you had a great 4th of July weekend and since so many people were out of the office during this holiday period, we wanted to send you a reminder about the need for your participation in this research. As you are aware, (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability.

An email message was sent to you earlier entitled “Survey-Dissertation Research” and a copy of that email is located below which includes the link to the survey, your user name and password. (Remember to copy and paste your information to avoid any typographical errors). We are hopeful you will take just a small portion of your time to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Three

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Reminder

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

As July draws to a close, we are writing to you again to ask that you respond to the need for you to participate in ongoing research about principals in the age of accountability. Currently 40% of you colleagues have responded to the survey, but our records indicate you are not yet among them.

An email message was sent to you in June entitled “Survey-Dissertation Research” and a copy of that email is located below which includes the link to the survey, your user name and password. (Remember to copy and paste your information to avoid any typographical errors). We are hopeful you will take just a small portion of your time to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Four

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Namei@fadss.org]
Sent: Friday, August 13, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Reminder

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)

208 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

As you are aware, FADSS has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. Our records indicate that you have not completed the survey at this time. We are asking that you please do so at your earliest convenience.

An email message was sent to you earlier entitled “Survey-Dissertation Research” and a copy of that email is located below which includes the link to the survey, your user name and password. (Remember to copy and paste your information to avoid any typographical errors.)

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu.

Thank You!

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Five

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Namei@fadss.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Reminder

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

As you are aware, we have been emailing the superintendent regarding his/her participation in a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. Over 70% of the superintendents have responded but our records indicate [Name Removed] has not. As the executive assistant to the superintendent we are hoping to enlist your support regarding a response to the survey.

A copy of a previous email is located below which includes the link to the survey, your user name and password. (Remember to copy and paste your information to avoid any typographical errors.)

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu.

Thank You!

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Six

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research Closing Down

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

This is final reminder from FADSS requesting your support of confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. The survey you have been asked to respond to is about to close. While over 70% of the Florida Superintendents have responded to this research, our records indicate that you have not yet completed the survey. There is still time. We realize how busy you are, but this survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete. Please do so at your earliest convenience.

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

Reminder Seven

From: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity [mailto:Name@fadss.org]
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2010 9:36 AM
To: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Cc: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity; Bernier, Christopher S.
Subject: Survey - Dissertation Research FINAL REMINDER

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)
208 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Telephone: 850/488-5099 Website: www.fadss.org

TO: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity
FROM: Name Removed to Preserve Anonymity, Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Survey – Dissertation Research Reminder

This is final reminder from FADSS requesting your support of confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. The survey you have been asked to respond to will close on October 2, 2010. While over 75% of the Florida Superintendents have responded to this research, our records indicate that you have not yet completed the survey. There is still time. We realize how busy you are, but this survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete. Please do so at your earliest convenience.

Previous Email Message

The Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) has agreed to support a confidential survey related to the involuntary removal of school principals in the age of accountability. This electronic survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete and will provide valuable information related to the topic of school leadership in the age of accountability. An informed consent document is attached. To complete the survey, please use the following link <http://www.surveyhelpers.com/CB51010/> and enter the following credentials:

Username: Removed to Preserve Anonymity
Password: Removed to Preserve Anonymity

The use of a password is only to track which superintendents have completed the survey and will not be used to track responses back to individual respondents. The research design requires that these safeguards be in place.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Christopher Bernier at (407) 259-1529 or by email at chrisbernier@knights.ucf.edu. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thank you again for your participation.

APPENDIX H
SUPERINTENDENTS' OPEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

Superintendents' Responses to Question 1

1. Accountability standards are very important, but not the only important expectation, i.e., visibility on campus, sound judgment, modeling of appropriate behavior, punctuality, regular attendance.
2. Accountability is everything. Improving student achievement is the critical component.
3. The accountability standards are very important in evaluating a principal. However, especially for a High School principal there are so many other factors that determine their success, i.e. athletics, clubs, band, FFA advisor, teachers with political ties, school discipline and the list goes on.
4. It is a major element of the evaluation.
5. Yes, the standards have played an important part in the decision making process and has made it easier to make the needed changes.
6. Data has become the major factor in determining when principals need assistance. If continuous monitoring data indicate student performance is not increasing, intervention is needed.
7. Made the decision more important!
8. Based on the category in DA, pressure from the State to replace the principal of a low-performing school is mandated. I had to defy their request to retain a HS principal and they reluctantly agreed to allow one more year but will require removal this year if the school grade is not a C.
9. It has not affected my decisions at all. The decision to remove the principal would have been made in the absence of any accountability standards.
10. Not that much. Would have made this decision anyway.
11. Accountability standards have brought more pressure to the principalship. They must perform and produce results in student achievement (quickly).
12. It is one element of the decision-making process.
13. Made me hold principals to more rigorous accountability.
14. Principal must monitor staff and change expectations for students and staff. They must be the instructional leader.
15. The state DA model has greatly changed the amount of time to allow a principal time to develop.
16. Increase of the focus of pre support work needed for each Principal. diagnostic/prescriptive/monitoring model needed.
17. A++ and DA models have tied the hands district leaders. School principals have less time to be effective.
18. Provided leverage to make difficult decisions and required the use of data and student achievement to guide the decision.
19. Moderately
20. It has heightened the level of accountability for principals. Changed the evaluation tool to evaluate principals.
21. It has become part of the final evaluation.

22. Accountability is having an influence more and more each day
23. Increased reliance on test scores.
24. Leadership actions are an indication of standards progressing towards improvement or regression.
25. None at this time.
26. It has validated what has always been my belief which is all students must receive a quality education. All efforts must be made to provide that education and it starts with the school principal.
27. We look at test scores but it is not the sole source of information for our decision on renewing principal's contracts.
28. It is just one other tool to assist me in making the decision to dismiss or not.
29. None.
30. Decisions based upon data drive accountability.
31. State requirements make it extremely clear when action must be taken regarding a principal's assignment.
32. Using student achievement data takes away the emotional element.
33. None
34. Yes, we are all accountable for the required standards.
35. Provided needed evidence to address weaknesses and celebrate successes.
36. Accountability for a principal is a crucial part of his/her job.
37. Being held accountable and to a higher level is crucial when setting example for the staff and students.
38. We comply with all accountability standards. Principals are held accountable for improvement
39. The decision is made based upon many factors with the accountability standards being one factor.
40. Guidelines (DA) are clear when a principal may remain at a school or must be moved.
41. They have not.
42. Absolutely. We are becoming one-dimensional and student achievement is the only criteria. We are losing the many important aspects of education not tied to assessments.
43. They are a factor but have only been an important factor in one case.

Superintendents' Responses to Question 2

1. The principalship is the most important position in the school district. Superintendents must set high standards for the position and be willing to make changes when necessary.
2. Superintendents must stay focused on the student achievement goal. Leaders of our schools are the key to developing our students and staff
3. The last time I checked, the Regional Director for DOE was not elected by the citizens of any school district.
4. Confront early on.
5. Make sure that you have provided the support needed. However; do not wait too long to make needed changes.
6. Don't put off what you know needs to happen.
7. Ask one question ... will this school and student achievement improve with the current principal or will it continue to struggle?
8. It is very disconcerting to have a mandate to remove administrators based solely on test scores and AYP. The State provided weekly visits and professional development for the principal. It will be interesting to see if they will be co-accountable for the outcome.
9. Coach, mentor, evaluated honestly and then remove if needed....do your homework.
10. Make the move now rather than later if there is any doubt about the principal's ability.
11. Decisions we've made we have not regretted. It was difficult at first for the faculty, but once the change is made they are supportive.
12. It is a difficult process that consumes a great deal of time.
13. Don't wait too long to make the move. Damage is hard to correct at the school and community.
14. Make the move as soon as you know the situation will not improve without removal. Don't spend more time trying to fix the principal.
15. Selection of the best candidates is critical to success.
16. If the Principal remains a Principal what will be the short/long term effect on the achievements of the students at that school.
17. None.
18. None.
19. Ethical and accountability standards...student achievement.
20. Document all conversations with principals.
21. Have defensible documentation.
22. Finding time to complete observations and truly be aware of all facets of performance is critical.
23. Document, document, document.
24. Help them if receptivity towards intervention is exhibited. Be specific about the problem and how it affects their effectiveness

25. None at this time.
26. Know and understand the student achievement data. Be personally involved in using that data to make instructional decisions for your district.
27. Document and counsel, provide improvement plans and then dismiss.
28. Providing assistance and support for the principal through this process is extremely important.
29. Not at this time.
30. Be specific regarding your expectations then do not hesitate to follow up.
31. Make sure you fact find.
32. It is advisable to remove a principal who has been given adequate time to move student achievement and failed. If the principal has potential, another principal position opportunity seems fair, but must be done strategically.
33. Novice principals should not be placed in struggling schools.
34. None.
35. In our district there is no shortage of persons ready to lead schools as principals!
36. Continue to focus on the children at the schools and whether you would feel comfortable placing your own kids in the school.
37. Document....document....document!
38. The focus is on student achievement. There are many career options for sub performing principals
39. It is important to provide support to the leadership team and to identify the leadership strengths of the principal when making decisions regarding school placements. It needs to be a good fit. At times, a change in school is beneficial for the school as well as the professional. In other situations, the better fit is a position other than administration. Do your homework so that you are prepared to make the tough decisions that are also the right decisions for students.
40. Provide a mentor and a strong support team with specific guidelines and a plan for improvement as soon as the deficiencies are determined.
41. Do what is good for your student achievement.
42. I try to look at all aspects of the school when making hiring and career decisions.
43. Principals are on annual contracts and as long as there is time for improvement (at least a year unless it is for not following policy, statute, or having significant financial difficulties), I have no problem non-renewing a contract.

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