PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS' USE OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS AS A
PREDICTOR OF QUALITY PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES: A QUANTITATIVE
SURVEY APPROACH

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
of
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

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Date Submitted __August 11, 2022__   Date Approved __September 30, 2022__

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ABSTRACT

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Cynthia M. Fitzgerald

The hiring of qualified staff that believe in the vision and mission of the school in which they have applied can be seen as the most important and significant decision a school principal can make. Poor hiring decisions can affect a school's culture and climate for many years, as well as significantly impact the academic prowess of its students. Inadequate interview practices poorly vet job candidates resulting in a lack of performance in newly hired administrators, leaving schools vulnerable to mediocre teaching and low student achievement.

The research looked to recognize the changing role of the school principal and to determine what leadership skills and abilities are important to a school when hiring a new principal. The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership were the principles used to measure leadership skills, while the research sought to determine if the PSEL had any influence on the selected candidate satisfaction.

The survey instrument was a 28-question survey. Twenty-seven questions were multiple choice using a Likert scale, and one question was an optional, free response question. The sample population was personnel administrators from across New York State. The statistical analysis of the collected data was entered into SPSS for the purpose of conducting a multiple regression. In an effort to determine if there was a significant

relationship between the importance of the PSEL to a district, and the deliberate

assessment of a candidate's capacity to meet the PSEL during the interview, on the

district's satisfaction with the candidate. Spearman Rho Correlations between the

variables were conducted.

Personnel administrators found the standards extremely or very important and

moderately assessed the standards during the interview process, however, no relationship

was evident to their satisfaction with the successful candidate. This suggests that the

importance and use of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership during the

interview process does not predict a district's ultimate satisfaction with its principal

candidate of choice.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the smartest woman I know, my mother, Patricia Lore. You were sitting beside me with every word I typed on the page. I spoke to you as though you were in the room with me, and I know you helped me write this from Heaven. I feel your love all around me always and that love gave me the strength and reassurance I needed to complete this work. Your endless faith in me made me believe that I could accomplish anything. Thank you for preparing me all my life for this. I miss you everyday Mom, and I am forever grateful to you.

your calling in life, and you are truly a gift to St. John's University and the students that have had the honor of studying under you. I thank you for answering every email, for your steadfast guidance, your tough love, and for contributing to this research. I am indebted to you, and you have a lifetime of my respect and gratitude.

Finally, to my loving husband Andy, you are my everything. Every breath I take is so that I can love you for another moment. You stood by my side through every second of this work with nothing but encouragement, hope, and inspiration. You wiped every tear, talked me through every frustration, and made it simply impossible for me to fail. You are a gift to this life and to everyone who knows you, and you are the greatest joy of my life. Your gentle way, your forgiving spirit and your relentless patience pulled me through this work. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. Your smile is all I will ever need. I thank you for the man and husband that you are, for never giving up on me, and for believing in me endlessly. You are the music in my soul, my reason for everything. It is an absolute honor to be your wife and truly my greatest accomplishment.

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CHAPTER ONE

If leadership is seen as moving people from compliance to commitment, from

acceptance to active engagement and from task completion to professional

involvement, then inter-personal intelligence is the vital medium. It is impossible

to conceptualize any model of leadership that does not have inter-personal

intelligence as a key component. (West-Burnham, 2001, p. 13)

Effective principals are accountable for student success in today's educational climate.

With the implementation of *No Child Left Behind by the U.S. Department of Education in*

2001, schools faced new requirements to meet increased accountability measures,

coupled with serious consequences for those that did not meet the new standards. As a

result, student achievement has become the hallmark of effective schools, with building

principals now viewed as the cornerstone of effective schools. The influence of principals

over practices and beliefs in schools is tremendous. The school principal shoulders the

burden of the improvement of school effectiveness and achievement, and they are the

most powerful force in achieving excellence. However, accountability has been added to

the long list of responsibilities of the school principal, and the public looks to student

achievement as proof the principal is performing successfully. This requires new forms

of leadership, carried out under intense scrutiny, while attempting to maintain the day-to-

day operations of a public school. (Muse & Abrams, 2011, p. 49)

It is not surprising, then, that the National Policy Board for Educational

Administration (2015) expressed in the introduction to their *Professional Standards for*

Educational Leaders that:

The global economy is transforming jobs and the 21st century workplace for

which schools prepare students. Technologies are advancing faster than ever. The

conditions and characteristics of children, in terms of demographics, family

structures and more, are changing. On the education front, the politics and shifts

of control make the headlines daily. Cuts in school funding loom everywhere,

even as schools are being subjected to increasingly competitive market pressures

and held to higher levels of accountabilities for student achievement. (p. 1)

As the new age of student achievement and the principal's role in successful

schools became the vernacular of the early 2000s, superintendents were required to

respond by honing their hiring practices to secure leaders that could lead their 21st

century schools. Crews and Weakly (1995) noted:

Show me a good school, and I'll show you a good school leader. When you poke

into the inner workings of a successful school, you will find - without fail – a

skillful leader who understands how to transform educational practice, not just

transact educational business. The flip side is also true. Show me a school that is

failing, and I'll show you a school hungry for leadership. If leadership isn't the

magic bullet, it's the oil that makes the mechanism fire. Put a strong leader in a

troubled school, give that leader flexibility to make the important decisions, then

watch the school rise to the top of the heap (p.5).

"The role of the school administrator in successful schools has transcended the

traditional notions of functional management, power, behavior style, and instructional

leadership style" (Normore, 2006, p. 45). A narrow and clear definition of the principal

role existed in the mid-1970s. Principals were burdened with three major areas of

responsibility: building management, student discipline and liaison to the Superintendent's office (Normore, 2006). The 21st century school leaders of today have a much different job description than their colleagues of years past.

Increased state assessment requirements, new teacher evaluation systems, increased student performance benchmarks and unfunded mandates are the hallmarks of public education in the state of New York. As teaching professionals navigate the landscape of their vocation, they often look to their building leader to support, guide and disentangle the web of educational expectations. "Principals work with, for and through teachers as they lead schools and to accomplish shared educational objectives" (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2014, p. 68). The role of the school leader has significantly been transformed for schools who value 21st century leadership skills. "More recently, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB 2001) and the federal initiative entitled Race to the Top have further increased the accountability of leadership positions in K-12 education" (Muñoz & Barber, 2011, p. 131-132).

"Studies on school effectiveness, school climate, and student achievement all reveal one commonality, the fact that good happenings in schools depend to a great extent on the quality of school leadership" (Norton, 2002, p. 50). Contemporary principals are presumed to move away from the conventional, managerial roles of past decades into 21st century modern visionaries. School leaders are now expected to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process, align curriculum to state and national standards, accommodate diverse learners and facilitate teacher evaluation processes.

Today's principal is faced with the complex task of creating a schoolwide vision being an instructional leader, planning for effective professional development, guiding teachers, handling discipline, attending events, coordinating buses, tending to external priorities such as legislative mandates, and all the other minute details that come with supervising a school. (Hertling, 2001, p. 1, as cited in Norton, 2002, p. 51)

Leadership positions now require administrators to be change agents and embrace instructional leadership. "The nature of the work, long workdays, conflict, and criticisms from inside and outside the education arena, all impact the desire to seek administrative positions. Further, in an era of increasing accountability, leadership of change is essential but a heavy burden for school leaders" (Murphy, 1994; Shen et al., 2000, as cited in Whitaker & Vogel, 2005, p. 6).

The applicant pool for qualified principals is shrinking and problematic for America's public schools. Public school systems in New York State are under tremendous scrutiny and what feels like constant reform. Interestingly, research suggests a shrinking applicant pool, but college preparatory programs are experiencing typical enrollment in their programs.

One aspect of the applicant pool shrinkage that is perplexing educational leaders and scholars is that there are sufficient number of public-school educators entering principal certification programs, and becoming principal-certified, to provide sufficient numbers of nominally qualified applicants for existing principal vacancies. However, a majority of educators who earn principal certification – at considerable cost to themselves or their financial sponsors (e.g., school districts,

universities) – do not apply for position vacancies (Winter et al. 2002, as cited in

Stark-Price et al., 2007, p. 69)

Research has attempted to understand the problem and has found that the

retirement of the baby boomers and the attractiveness of more lucrative positions outside

of the field of the education can account for the shortage of qualified applicants. (Winter

et al., 2002). Furthermore, some researchers consider changes in the role of principal as a

possible source of the problem. As Winter et al. note, characteristics of this changing role

may include "higher expectations related to student outcomes, a 60–80-hour work week,

supervision of evening activities, mandated state and district paperwork, and the

difficulty of getting veteran teachers to change their instructional methods (Murphy &

Beck, 1994)" (p. 129).

Problem Statement

"Highly qualified candidates may fail to apply for careers in administration based

on potentially unattractive administrator job attributes such as working with angry

parents, addressing large amounts of paperwork disciplining students and evaluating

teachers" (Rebore 2001, as cited in Muñoz & Barber, 2011, p. 132). These modern shifts

are affecting the principal shortage and has led to the districts' dissatisfaction of newly

hired principals, as they do not possess the qualities to lead in a 21st century educational

model. Perhaps the dissatisfaction with principal candidates correlates to the

misalignment of hiring practices to the new responsibilities of the building leader. The

hiring processes for the principalship does not explicitly explain nor assess the modern-

day skill set, which includes not only skill and ability, but one's personal qualities. The

absence of such detail in the hiring process is resulting in weak applicant pools that do not reflect the needs of the school district.

> When a university, or any organization, and its recruiting firm set out to find a new leader, they usually begin and end in a delusion. They declare their intention to find the best person for the job and, once all the sorting and sifting are done, they announce that they have indeed found the best person for the job. The odds are they have done no such thing - and more to the point, there is no way of knowing how good the last man or woman left standing after the interrogations, checking, and hazing really is. (Trachtenberg, 2010, p. 1)

Needless to say, the multiple stages required for the recruitment of principals and assistant principals, such as attracting, screening, and determining the final candidates fit for the demands of an administrative position, presents a complex challenge to school districts (Pounder & Merrill 2001; Young & Castetter 2004).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to recognize the changing role of the school principal, determine what leadership skills and abilities are important to a school district when setting out to hire a new principal, and evaluate whether the valued skills and abilities are adequately assessed during the interview process. Schools will better identify the importance of the interview process in assessing the new skills needed to be successful in the role of 21st century school principal, which will ultimately strengthen hiring decisions and satisfaction with selected candidates.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The success of any learning organization extends far beyond the schoolhouse walls. Of course, rigorous curriculum, robust pedagogy and dedicated and talented educators play a part in the success of all, however this is simply not enough. Organizations are living, complicated systems that need specific strategies to guide their practice and performance. One could suggest that the successful hiring of a school principal rests on the foundations of Peter Senge's concept of shared vision.

This concept provides the theoretical framework guiding this study. Senge's definition of shared vision would support the notion that, in addition to possessing the skills necessary to carry out the job responsibilities, newly hired principals must share the values and beliefs of the organization. The shared vision would be the coming together to accomplish a common goal as part of the organization. To begin to work towards or contribute to a shared vision, you must hire the right people that fit the mission and vision of a given school or district.

Senge (2006) suggests that a collective vision and direction is necessary for employees to go from compliance to commitment. As he explains:

> A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further – if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person- then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. (p. 192)

In the hiring process, shared vision allows the assessment of a candidate's individual vision to determine its alignment with the district's shared vision. "When people truly share a vision, they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration" (Senge, 2006, p. 192). The focus and energy for a learning organization is a vital part of shared vision.

"You cannot have a learning organization without shared vision. Without a pull toward some goal which people truly want to achieve, the forces in support of the status quo can be overwhelming. Vision establishes an overarching goal" (Senge, 2006, p. 195).

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, districts must have the three essential elements as seen in Figure 1 to attract and hire a school leader that they believe has the necessary skills to perform successfully as principal. First, school districts must clearly define their own vision as described by Senge. They must understand their trajectory and goals so they can attract and retain principals that will share in that vision. In order to begin their search for their next building principal, the must examine their own values and beliefs, providing a framework to select a candidate that will share and carry out that vision. They must invest the time and attention into understanding their needs, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the building principal.

Secondly, school district must take the time to identify the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) that they feel are important for the successful candidate to possess to run their schools effectively. They must accurately and articulately describe these skills, and understand their meaning, to determine the suitability of a candidate for the position. Districts must

clearly define not only the job itself, but also the skills and values they are looking for in the successful candidate, as they relate to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership. Lastly, the hiring process will look at a candidates' skills and abilities as it relates to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership to determine if the skill set possessed by the candidate if sufficient to fulfill the role.

The research conducted in this study will attempt to demonstrate a positive relationship between all elements. When all three elements are present, the interview process can predict with accuracy if a candidate for a principalship will be successful in the school district, as well as the district's satisfaction with their hiring decision *(see Figure 1).*

Figure 1

Essential Elements to Attract and Hire School Principals
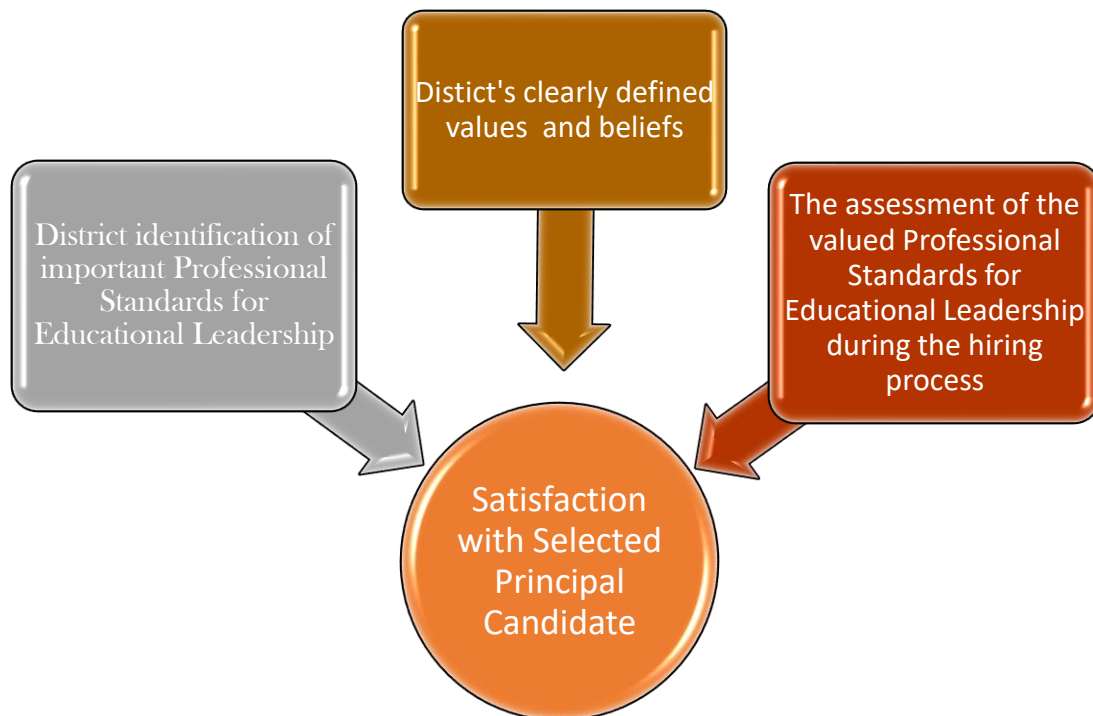
Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to inform the hiring practices of school district officials when making personnel decisions regarding the recruitment of school principals. School districts will accurately defend the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership needed to be a building principal, as well as recognize whether or not those skills are assessed through the interview process.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the district value the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL)?

2. To what extent does the district assess a candidate's capacity to meet the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) standards through the interview process?

3. What is the relationship between the value placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership by a district and the assessment of a candidate's ability to meet these standards on candidate selection satisfaction?

   a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction with newly hired principals

   b. Independent Variables: Value place on PSEL, interview committee assessment

Definition of Terms

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders: Formerly known as the ISLLC Standards, (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium) these standards were updated in 2015 to provide guidance for educational leaders to make strides in both academic achievement and the well-being of students. The standards are meant to provide

benchmarks for leaders that envelope what school leadership means is the 21st century.

Published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, the PSEL was

created after a two-year process using a team of current researchers, as well as empirical

research. (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

NYSASPA: New York State Association of School Personnel Administrators.

CHAPTER TWO

The ability to hire and retain the right people is a key characteristic of a high-performing organization. The need for excellent teachers (and administrators) has never been greater as escalating demands are placed on schools to reform their structures and practices, improve student achievement, and narrow the achievement gaps between white and non-white students. Hiring is frequently rushed, competing with end-of-the-school-year activities or summer vacation plans. There are costs associated with poor hiring decision and the mediocre learning that ensues. (Platt et al., 2015, p. 279)

Theoretical Framework

The work of Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* speaks to the idea of shared vision. Senge suggests that no school can be successful without the leaders and educators in that school working toward a common goal and greater purpose. The hallmark of shared vision is that it is not simply dictated by those at the top, but rather believed in the hearts and minds of all those involved. It is a shared vision – where everyone is on the same path, for the same reason. "You cannot have a learning organization without shared vision. Without a pull toward some goal which people truly want to achieve, the forces in support of the status quo can be overwhelming. Vision establishes an overarching goal" (Senge, 2006, p. 195).

Senge (2006) describes building "learning organizations" as "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). He speaks

eloquently of the idea that no one person can shoulder the responsibility for an organization. A learning organization must focus on the collective idea and the progressive work toward that idea to experience any true success.

> Most of us at one time or another have been part of a great team, a group of people who functioned together in an extraordinary way – who trusted on another, who complemented on another's strengths and compensated for one another's limitations who had common goals that were larger than individual goals, and who produced extraordinary results. (Senge, 2006, p. 4)

Among other things, it is here Senge speaks of shared vision.

Senge's theoretical framework uncovers the idea that inspired organizations have a quality in common – they have a picture for the future that they collectively work towards. "When there is a genuine vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar 'vision statement'), people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to" (Senge, 2006, p. 9). This idea of shared vision identifies the principals of highly successful groups. A common goal breeds commitments where an individual goal simply breeds compliance. The act of learning and working together on goals brings a sense of belonging to the group and allows all in the learning organization to take ownership of both successes and failure.

> When people in organizations focus only on their position, they have little sense of responsibility for the results produced when all positions interact. Moreover, when results are disappointing, it can be very difficult to know why. All you can do is assume that "someone screwed up. (Senge, 2006, p. 19)

In education it can be argued that shared vision is the glue that holds the learning

environment together and moves the learning forward.

> The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of
>
> the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than
>
> compliance. In mastering this disciple, leaders learn the counter productiveness of
>
> trying to dictate a vision no matter how heartfelt. (Senge, 2006, p. 9)

Shared vision is not a top-down approach to student achievement, but rather a

system-wide philosophy. Shared vision throughout a learning organization is built from

within and sustained by the very enthusiasm that created it. "When people truly share a

vision, they are connected, bound together by a common aspiration" (Senge, 2006, p.

192). The larger purpose becomes the organization's mission as all set out to accomplish

the greater purpose. The excitement lies in the unlimited potential for student

achievement in schools that operate under the premise of a shared vision.

Review of Related Literature

Roles and Responsibilities

> The signing into law of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) 2001 reauthorized
>
> the longstanding Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and immensely
>
> changed the education landscape. This landmark event ushered in an era of
>
> accountability for students, teachers, and administrators, and notably caused the
>
> job of principals to increase in complexity and pressures. Growing evidence
>
> suggesting that principals both directly and indirectly affect academic
>
> achievement, combined with these increasing accountability measures, translate to
>
> potentially serious consequences for principals if they fail to find a way to adeptly

address the multi-faceted demands of their jobs. (ESEA, Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Boyland et al., 2015; Davis et al., 2005; Voelkel et al., 2016, as cited in Gilbert, 2017, p. 1)

It has become evident in 21st century education that principals are expected to move away from the conventional, managerial roles of past decades into 21st century modern visionaries. School leaders are now expected to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process, align curriculum to state and national standards, accommodate diverse learners and facilitate teacher evaluation processes. Leadership positions now require administrators to be change agents and embrace instructional leadership. These modern shifts are affecting the principal shortage and have led to the dissatisfaction of districts with newly hired principals, as they do not possess the qualities to lead in a 21st century educational model.

The shortage of qualified effective leadership across the United States and Canada sparked Normore's (2006) theoretical perspective on the trends and issues surrounding school leadership recruitment and selection. He discussed the changed role of the school administrator, characterized by changes in demands, expectations, and accountability for student achievement. As the job of school leader becomes more challenging and increasingly complex, the recruitment and selection of quality leaders remain a barrier for school districts. "Today's principals face more complex expectations forged by a very different student population and a new generation dissatisfied with the educational status quo" (Normore, 2006, p. 47). The author takes a closer look at job complexity and workload, hiring from within and leadership preparation programs to explain the lack of

interest in school leadership. Normore (2006) argues that principals must adapt to different roles, needs and strategies, as public scrutiny looms.

The job roles and responsibilities of the school leader years ago differ significantly from the roles and responsibilities of the school leader today (Richardson et al., 2016).

Principals often find it difficult to remain focused on their fundamental purpose due to the nature of their job that requires attending to multiple and varied issues and problems throughout the school day. Principals must be able to work quickly, shift gears easily, and complete tasks in a compartmentalized way throughout the day. (Muse & Abrams, 2011, p. 51)

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2003) proposed that "conventional procedures for training and certifying public-school administrators in the United States are simply failing to produce a sufficient number of leaders whose vision, energy and skill can successfully raise the educational standard for all children" (p. 4). Previously, the main responsibilities school leaders centered around staff supervision, building management, and communicating and building relationships with parents (Hine, 2003). While these responsibilities remain in 21st century schools, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2003) noted that the role of the principal has evolved, with new responsibilities added, including:

- To develop a vision of learning
- To build a school culture and instructional programs conducive to learning for all pupils

- To manage staff, students, and parents with needs and problems that did not exist or were largely ignored in the past

- To produce excellent academic results as gauged by external measures such as state proficiency tests keyed to statewide academic standards (Hine, 2003, p. 267)

At the same time, Hine (2003) noted the increasing complexity of school budgets, along with additional regulations and mandates being instituted at all (federal, state, and local) levels. "Essentially, the position of school administration has become more daunting, and the salary for such work has not increased commensurately with the increase in responsibility" (Hine, 2003, p. 267).

The work of Walters et al. (2004) has adopted the effective principal characteristics. "The typical study in the meta-analysis used a questionnaire asking teachers about their perceptions of the principal's leadership behaviors. The authors identified 21 responsibilities of effective school principals and correlated each of the responsibilities to student achievement" (Rammer, 2007, p. 69). The 21 characteristics determined by Waters et al. (2004) as outlined in Table 1 can be seen in the principals of today.

Table 1

Responsibilities of Effective Principals

Responsibility	Definition
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failure
Change Agent	Is willing to actively challenge the status quo
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments

Responsibility	Definition
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and sense of community
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that detract from the teaching time or focus
Flexibility	Adapts leadership behaviors to the needs of the current situations; is comfortable with dissent
Focus	Established clear goals and keeps them in the forefront of the school's attention
Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schools
Input	Involves teachers in design and implementation of important decision and policies
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are award of the most current theories and practices; makes discussion of these a regular aspect of school's culture
Involvement in Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	Is directly involved in design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practice
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment
Monitoring/Evaluating	Monitors effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning
Optimizing	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders
Relationship	Demonstrates and awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff
Resources	Provides teachers with material and professional development necessary for successful execution of their jobs
Situational Awareness	Is aware of details and undercurrent in running the schools uses information to address current and potential problems.
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students

Note. Adapted from "McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework: Developing the

Science of Educational Leadership," by J.T. Waters, R. J. Marzano, and B. McNulty,

2004, *ERS Spectrum, 22*(1), p.4, as cited in Rammer, 2007, p. 70).

The role of the principals continues to grow as the expectations is that principals also function as good managers.

> They must be excellent communicators and use this strength to develop relationships with teachers, assistant principal's students, parents, custodians, secretaries, counselors, media specialists, bus drivers, central office personnel, and school resource officers. As the school manager, the principal must display respect for every individual who contributes to the school's success. Principals must think about what matters most, what makes sense to prioritize and always consider that work in education is ongoing with constant changes and choices. (Muse & Abrams, 2011, p. 51)

Walker and Qian (2006) note that the climb to a principalship has done little to prepare these new leaders for the journey before them. "In 1868, after 31 years in public office, Benjamin Disraeli began his first term as Prime Minister of Great Britain. Upon his appointment, he proclaimed, I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole" (p. 297). They argue that, like Disraeli, despite years of working in the field of education, beginning principals are unlikely to have the necessary training for the tasks they now face. As such, they discuss three distinct areas of principal induction: high expectations, the life of beginning principals, and preparation programs.

Walker and Qian dedicate their work to understanding where beginning principals are coming from, where they are going, and what they are expected to do along the way. They speak about the changing role of the principal across contexts and highlight the expectations of emerging principals and the apparent shortage of interested qualified

principals. They attribute the shortage not only to the demands of the job, but also to the dysfunctional systems of recruitment and preparation. New principals struggle with role clarification, limited technical expertise, and difficulties with socialization into the system.

Leadership preparation continues to be an issue for new principals, who express frustration in not understanding their role and have been given little direction and/or clarity prior to their appointment. Graduate programs have enjoyed a monopoly on leadership preparation and certification for over 50 years. With nominal entrance requirements into such programs, tuition affordability could be seen as a greater prerequisite than cognitive ability or fitness for the role.

In the United States, professional associations have weighed in on the principal's role in 21st century education and have made recommendations to enhance leadership preparation programs and administrator capacity. Changes in the role of the school principal exist elsewhere, particularly Western countries, as well. These changes in the responsibilities of the job have influenced principal selection and retention efforts. "Effective recruitment and selection of school leaders continues to be one of the more challenging human resource functions" (Whitaker, 2003, p. 38).

Whitaker (2003) cites several role changes as documented in the literature, including tension between management and leadership, increased accountability, altered relationships with parents and community and school choice. This changing role, coupled with the shortage of applicants, has affected recruitment of new principals and the retention of ones who have already assumed the role. It is important to note that as responsibilities of principals have increased, salaries have not always been

commensurate. In short, "stress levels are greater, workdays and work years are longer, and the public's expectations are higher" (Whitaker, 2003, p. 47).

Kwan (2013) begins with a literature review that, in part, addresses the trend of the candidate pool for principal positions largely consisting of sitting assistant principals. As such, Kwan studies the assistant principal's perception of successful candidacy for the position of principal. The literature review cites research that suggests vice principals will seek out job opportunities in which they have high chances of being the chosen candidate. The literature further suggests that schools have set criteria they use to find the right "fit" for their positions, although Kwan mentions that there is a lack of consistency in the criteria. Adversely, the author cites studies that suggest why many vice principals do not apply for principalships at all.

21st Century Skills

The changed roles and responsibilities of the 21st century school principal has required a different set of skills and personal characteristics to successfully meet the expectations of this new position.

> The fundamental nature of education is to encourage teachers and students to collaborate in a knowledge-rich environment. It should accommodate both the new and identifiable needs of the modern world and the uncertain demands of the future. It should provide an environment that will support and enhance the learning process, encourage creativity and innovation and be a tool for learning. (Gore, 2013, p 13)

> "Recent research has shown that other qualities are commonly desired in prospective school administrators. These include managerial competence, vision,

perseverance, and experience, and an ability to create an effective school organizational culture" (Papa et al., 2002, as cited in Gore, 2013, p, 269). "21st century skills have become more important than knowledge and technical skill in the competitive job market, including the field of education (Gore, 2013, p. 7). "Twenty-first century skills is a construct well accepted within the international education policy world that refers to higher level cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal sills, seen as increasingly relevant to public education in a global economy" (Voogt & Roblin, 2012, as cited in Nehring et al, 2019, p. 5). The traditional managerial roles of the past have been significantly replaced by skills needed to lead a community of teaching and learning.

> Learning skills, innovative skills, creativity, critical thinking, project-based learning, internship student-driven research projects, problem solving, communication skills and teamwork have become most important than any other skills being acquired in the previous century. At the same time, learners are expected to be efficient in Information Technology (IT), communication technology and other important themes of the 21st century. This approach, which demands flexibility, adaptability, inventiveness, self-direction, social and cross-cultural communication, would guidance the prospective candidates. (Gore, 2013, p. 7)

Educational leaders must possess these skills to order to promote, support and impart such skills on the educators in which they supervise. Teachers must possess these skills as well, to provide content in a 21st century context. According to Gore (2013):

> Content should be delivered in the 21st century context. There are many areas which have to be attended to meticulously. The following aspects should be taken

22

into consideration: fundamental and practical content relevant to the present time, emotional and social connections to academic skills and content, taking students out into the real world, bringing the world into the classroom, creating opportunities for students to interact with each other, training the learners in authentic learning situations. (p. 8)

Therefore, principals must have the skills and 21st century competency to support the teachers in the classrooms.

Other studies indicate that due to increased public information on student performance and the associated accountability of school systems, leaders must demonstrate proficiency in two main areas. These are creating a vision and plan to guide their school's improvement, and to be effective in communication this vision to school employees and the public. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2003) reveals that leadership, resourcefulness, a sense of urgency and political savvy are important attributes for leaders of schools to possess (Teske & Schneider, 1999; Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003, as cited in Hine, 2003, p. 269)

Employers suggest they look for soft skills – those skills categorized by social intelligence and interpersonal skill - when hiring new employees.

Soft skills, people skills, intangibles – these words are frequently used to describe a set of skills that most would agree are important in any work environment. Articles on soft skills appear in a variety of disciplines as a trendy, but fuzzy topic. We often refer to these skills when we observe them missing in someone – a colleague, a supervisor a customer, or a service provider. There is something

appealing about a set of nontechnical, domain-independent skills that underpin

our behavior in the workplace. We universally recognize that soft skills are

important, but when pressed to describe particular soft skills, the concept becomes

murky. (Matteson et al., 2016, p. 71)

According to Gardner (1983), in order to manage or lead people, one requires,

among other things, two types of intelligence: interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to gauge other people and to identify their

mood, temperament, emotions, motives, and intentions, and to relate to all of

these. One can also call this ability "social intelligence" (Armstrong, 1994, p.

239); it contributes substantially to increasing output by fostering cooperation

among member of a community or group. (Schneider & Yitzhak-Monsonego,

2020, p. 40)

Hard skills, or technical skills refer to those obtained through training programs or

degree programs and formal education (Lavendar, 2019).

A skill set that is more difficult to define and one that potential employees often

lack is in the realm of intangible skills: communication, time management,

teamwork, etc. A review of several articles on the topic of soft skills identified the

following skills as those most commonly sought after by employers: 1.

Teamwork, 2. Communication, 3. Work Ethic, 4. Flexibility/Adaptability, 5. Time

Management. (Lavendar, 2019, p. 48)

The new educational landscape inspired the National Policy Board for

Educational Administration (NPBEA) as they crafted the Professional Standard for

Educational Leaders (PSEL) in 2015. Developed utilizing an in-depth look at empirical

research, including more than 1,000 school and district leaders, these new standards aimed to close the gap between the day-to-day tasks of educational leaders and the ISSLC standards of 2008. Furthermore, the PSEL apply to all levels of school leadership, emphasizing student learning and student achievement through an understanding the goal of educational leadership; namely preparing our students for the 21st century. The NPBEA (2015) further explains the PSEL "elevate areas of educational leader work that were once not well understood or deemed less relevant but have since been shown to contribute to student learning" (p. 2). Using a futures-based approach, these standards recognize human relationships as a vital element of educational leadership and envision future challenges educational leaders may face moving forward (NBPEA, 2015).

The PSEL consist of ten standards that "reflect interdependent domains, qualities, and values of leadership work that research and practice suggest are integral to student success" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 3). In detail, these ten standards are:

STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a share mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL REPONSIVENESS

Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being. (NPBEA, p.27)

Hiring Practices

The principal plays a critical role in any successful school (Rammer, 2007). Conversely, those that flounder often do so as a result of a principal that does not possess the leadership skills necessary to lead a 21st century school. Superintendents are an important part of the hiring process and, as a result, need to pay close attention to their hiring practices and the way in which they assess principal candidate skills and potential.

Research, however, has demonstrated a lack of focused design in the selection process for new leaders. Rammer (2017) found that while superintendents identified 21 responsibilities and characteristics of building leaders, they lacked "purposeful or intentional means to assess those responsibilities in principal candidates" (p. 73). As a result, Rammer found that

the success of the principal selection process may relate directly to the skills of the superintendent and his or her ability to identify the responsibilities in candidates if and when they are presented, as well as the superintendents understanding of his or her district. (p. 75)

Although superintendents valued the 21 items identified, they had not aligned that value to the interview process. In fact, there was no evidence of planned or intentional

methods used to identify the 21 responsibilities and characteristics of successful

candidates throughout the screening and hiring of new principals.

In addition, the recruitment and selection process remain an inexact science.

Human Resource professionals grapple with the challenges of hiring qualified leaders.

"Oftentimes the process is not as aggressive and thorough as one would imagine and

sometimes results in making 'bad choice'" (Normore, 2006, p. 49). A lack of clarity in

defining the image of a school administrator remains problematic.

Mendels (2012) outlined four essential elements to ensure quality principals are

prepared for and successful in leadership positions. Adopted by the school district in

Prince George's County, Maryland, this four-tiered process was introduced as a means to

boost the quality of leadership in their 198 schools as part of a six-year, $75 million

initiative to establish strong principal pipelines.

The first part of the four-part initiative described the need for clear and concise

job descriptions that explain without need for interpretation, what the principal will be

doing, referred to as "principal standards." The second of four essential elements called

for high quality training. This training began with the recruitment of leaders that showed

potential, and then offered extensive preparatory programs, whether through universities,

non-profits, or districts themselves.

The third element required selective hiring which was a three-stage process. First,

candidates were evaluated using the Gallup organization's 40-minute online Principal

Insight Assessment. This tool predicts a person's potential success as a principal. Those

who scored well advanced to the second phase of selective hiring, involving a formal

teacher evaluation and write-up, as well as responding to five scenarios such as "the pipes

burst on the first day of school." Lastly, principal supervisors interviewed the highest scoring candidates.

Finally, schools provided on-the-job performance and evaluation for the successful candidates in the fourth element of the initiative. Regular assessment of newly hired principals allowed for targeted professional development and the identification of needed areas of growth and support.

Richardson et al. (2016) suggested that current published job advertisements for principalships do not reflect the job responsibilities of the modern-day principal. The research premise began from a believe that school districts have difficulties filling principal positions in their schools, while superintendents find the quality and leadership abilities of newly hired principals unsatisfactory. Working from this starting point, the study sought to determine if current job advertisements for principals reflect the skills and qualities needed to lead schools experiencing modern shifts in expectations.

For advertised positions, selection committees are formed to appoint the most qualified candidate. Walker and Kwan (2012) set out to examine the strategies used by selection panels in their research, particularly regarding the recruitment, selection, and appointment of secondary principals in Hong Kong. Their process included distributing questionnaires to 93 school supervisors spanning 200 secondary schools in Hong Kong. These questionnaires sought to ascertain "the strategies employed by selection panels to identify and select the most suitable candidates from when applications were received to when a final decision was made" (p. 194). Additionally, Walker and Kwan interviewed participating (interview) committee members and drew upon their experience with the interview process.

As the principal shortage looms, districts are forced to look internally for their next fleet of qualified, interested administrators (Winter et al., 2002). Districts need to perform these internal evaluations to anticipate their staffing implications regarding school leadership. In this study, Winter et al. looked at appropriately certified personnel in a Kentucky school district, the 26th largest school district in the country, to determine if an internal pool of candidates may be helpful to districts seeking to fill administrative positions. The study also included an approach districts can use to evaluate their principal-certified staff and recommendations on how to restructure the position of principal to make the job more attractive for potential candidates.

As stated by Winter et al. (2002) few studies exist examining the internal applicants for principal positions. Their research showed that as few as 10% of the 194 certified personnel would be likely to apply for a principalship. Reasons for not applying included age, approaching retirement, and lack of job attractiveness. They provided implications for practice, including dedicating more human resources to principal recruitment from both outside the district and internally, aggressive mentoring of potential principals, and restructuring the principalship to make it more attractive.

As the search for the most capable candidate for school principal ensues, Klein's (2002) study attempted to predict success by measuring one's decision-making abilities. He agreed that the success of a school depends to a large extend to the effectiveness of the building leader. Speaking of the Principal Assessment Center of the National Association of Secondary Principals, which opened in 1976, Klein noted that the center provided candidates with examinations for

aptitudes and skills in the areas of leadership qualities, interpersonal relations, intellectual independence, readiness to accept change, motivation, ability to withstand stress, competence in problem-solving and decision-making, organization skills, decisiveness, facility of oral and written expression, and extent of the range of interests. (p. 118)

The assessment center was initially determined to have significant predictive validity, but later studies disproved this, claiming limited predictability.

Klein's study questioned 99 principals and had them respond to a questionnaire outlining two specific situations in which they were asked to make a decision. The 99 principals were categorized as highly successful, moderately successful, and unsuccessful. Upon conclusion of the study, Klein was able to identify the different decision-making strategies of the principals in each of the three categories. This study suggests that incorporating such measures into the screening process for school principals could predict those with greater potential for administrative success.

Shrinking applicant pools affect the recruitment of qualified administrators to serve in low performing schools. Although statistics from preparation programs indicate sufficient numbers of certified applicants for existing positions, those adequately prepared consistently fail to apply. Again, the lack of the attractiveness of the position is to blame for the shortage (Stark-Price et al., 2006).

Using student achievement data, Stark-Price et al. (2006) investigated "the impact of four factors on participant rating of a principal position at low-performing schools" (p. 71). The authors sought to determine if position attractiveness, current position, school support package, or student achievement had an impact on attracting personnel to the

position of principal. They used the "General Model of Job Search and Evaluation" as a theoretical framework to guide the study. "This model posits that personal characteristics of the job applicant are among the most salient influences on recruitment outcomes such as the decisions to apply for the job, accept an interview for the job, and accept the job if offered" (Stark-Price et al., 2006, p. 71).

The authors described this study as the only one of its kind, discussing how participants rate the principalship opportunity in low performing schools. The results of this study contribute to the body of knowledge as it is the first empirical study to investigate the recruitment of principals into low-performing schools, and the findings uncover the potential for internal candidates in low-performing schools to attain principalships.

In order to increase organizational effectiveness and competitiveness, scholars have stressed the need to look at Human Resources Management (HRM) strategically. HRM has typically evaluated performance individually, but research is lacking on the selection process. HRM practices have been organized into five areas: planning, staffing, appraising, compensating, and training and development. The 2006 study by Stark-Price et al. referenced above chose to explicitly examine staffing, namely recruitment and selection, and its relationship to organizational outcomes.

In their study, Terpstra & Rozell (1993) set out to determine if organizations that used more of the five staffing practices affected the organizational outcomes. It was presumed that firms that employed more of these practices (recruitment studies, validation studies, structured interviews, cognitive aptitude, and ability tests) would be more successful, show higher annual profit, profit growth, and sales growth than those

that did not. Ultimately, the authors found a positive relationship in the use of staffing practices and organizational success.

> Marzano et al. (2005) suggested: At no time in recent memory has the need for effective and inspired leadership been more pressing that it is today. With increasing needs in our society and in the workplace for knowledgeable, skilled, responsible citizens, the pressure on schools intensifies. The expectation that no child be left behind in a world and in an economy that will require everyone's best is not like to subside (p. 123). (as cited in Rammer, 2007, p. 70).

CHAPTER THREE

When a school principal fails, it comes at a 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. A failed principalship destabilizes the school and often disrupts the school district and community. Furthermore, early career principals who are unsuccessful are frequently lost to the profession forever. (Knuth et. al., 2006, p. 4)

The process for hiring the right leader must include the assessment of not only one's abilities and competencies, but the assessment of 21st century skills that the district has deemed necessary for the principal candidate to be successful in their school. The research suggests that successful principals need not only expertise and experience in curriculum and instruction, but also must possess a skill set of personal qualities that will allow the new leader to address the changing landscape of public education outside of the classroom. "A 2001 national survey of school superintendents conducted by Public Agenda found that 485 of respondents voiced dissatisfaction with their current principals' job performance; 7% communicated extreme dissatisfaction (Farkas, Johnson, Duffet, Foleno, & Foley, 2001)" (as cited in Knuth et. al, 2006, p. 4).

In 1996, the Council of the Chief State School Officers developed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC), which were later revised in 2008. "The ISLLC standards link leadership more directly to productive school practices and enhanced educational outcomes (and) confirm the centrality of the principal's role in ensuring student achievement through an unwavering emphasis on learning-centered leadership (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010, p. 242 as cited in Spanneut et. al., 2012, p. 68).

The ISSLC standards went through an additional revision in 2015, renaming the standards *The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (*PSEL). The need for this revision of the standards was imminent. The drastic changes in the field of education required standards that complement the work of educational leaders and establish a framework to meet the challenges and opportunities of this new landscape.

> Both versions provided frameworks for policy on education leadership in 45 states and the District of Columbia. But the world in which schools operate today is very different from the one of just a few years ago – and all signs point to more change ahead. (NBPEA, 2015)

Methods and Procedures

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the district value the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL)?

2. To what extent does the district assess a candidate's capacity to meet the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) standards through the interview process?

3. What is the relationship between the value placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership by a district and the assessment of a candidate's ability to meet these standards on candidate selection satisfaction?

Research Design and Data Analysis

Using the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) created by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, the research will set out to determine three things:

1. The significance of each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership for districts hiring new principals.

2. The district's assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership throughout the hiring process.

3. What is the relationship between the use of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership in the interview process and a district's satisfaction with the selected candidate?

This quantitative study seeks to determine the relationship between the value and assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership and the satisfaction with newly hired principals. The statistical analysis of the collected data will be entered in SPSS for the purpose of conducting a multiple regression. In an effort to determine if there was a significant relationship between the importance of the PSEL to a district, and the deliberate assessment of a candidate's capacity to meet the PSEL during the interview on the district's satisfaction with the candidate, the researcher will perform a Spearman Rho Correlation between the variables using SPSS.

Reliability and Validity of the Research Design

The validity of the research design is found in the literature in regard to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership. The PSEL are the foundation of the study, and the standards themselves are being used as the basis for each question in the study. This is the content-related evidence needed to determine the validity of the instrument. The research design is comprehensive as it uses the standards themselves to create a Likert survey asking participant to measure their preferences. The content-related

evidence of validity is the key component, as it represents the entire construct of the

PSEL rather than just a sample.

The appropriateness of the survey format finds its validity in the construction of

the survey. The website www.surveymonkey was used to develop the survey. This

internet-based program is designed to construct instruments that meet the needs of the

researcher in its overall format. The researcher directed the format, language, font size

and overall appearance of the survey. The Superintendent of Schools from the Islip Union

Free School District was asked to complete the online survey and evaluate the survey on

its format, including clarity, aesthetics, and ease. The Superintendent of Schools reported

that the survey was clear, concise, appropriate to the task, and over rather easy to

complete.

Sample and Population

Sample

Personnel administrators throughout Long Island, New York were asked to

participate in this study through email. According to the New York State Education

Department, there are currently 731 school districts in New York State, representing 63

counties. Four hundred of these professionals are registered as members of the New York

State Association of Personnel Administrators listserv. Using this as our sample size, the

researcher distributed the survey via email to New York State public schools, asking

Personnel administrators to participate, as they are typically responsible for hiring

decisions.

Description of Participants

Table 2

Description of Participants

Category	Number	Qualifications
Personnel Administrators	400	Licensed professionals with advanced degrees responsible for hiring decisions

Instrument

The design of the research tool specifically intended to measure the importance Assistant Superintendents for Personnel place on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership and whether those skills are assessed during the interview process. Using www.surveymonkey.com, the research created a 28-question survey instrument for distribution to all participants. The survey participants remained anonymous; however, several demographic questions asked years of experience, gender, and age.

The survey consisted of three components. Ten questions assessed the value the participants place on each of the ten Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. These questions used the following Likert scale: 5 = Extremely Important, 4 = Very Important, 3 = Somewhat Important, 2 = Not so Important, 1 = Not at all important. Another ten survey questions measured the extent to which each candidate is assessed during the interview on their ability to succeed at each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership. The Likert scale for these questions utilized the following scale: 5 = A Great Deal, 4 = A Lot, 3 = A Moderate Amount, 2 = A little, 1 = None at All. Three additional Likert scale questions asked participants to explain their level of satisfaction with their hiring decisions, and their opinion of their own district's interview

process and its ability to adequately evaluate a candidate's potential fit in their district. Finally, a free response question invited participants to explain if they feel their district will benefit from any improvements to their own district's interview process.

Procedures for Collecting Data

The sample population was targeted through school district email addresses to request their participation in the study. A detailed email outlining the purpose of the study, and requesting their participation was crafted. This email can be found in Appendix C. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. The email outlined a deadline date. Participants interested in participating needed to adhere to the deadline date, as they access to the survey beyond the survey's deadline ended at that time.

The web-based survey tool www.surveymonkey.com was used to create the instrument. This online service generated the Likert scale using the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership as the basis for 20 of the 28 questions. Once the online survey was completed, the website created a specific link to email the survey to all participants. Those willing to participate accessed the survey using the link found within their email and took the survey on their own computing device. The email was distributed to the 400-person membership of the NYSASPA, using their listserv.

The survey results were captured and stored within the web application. This allowed the researcher to access the results on an ongoing basis throughout the process. Once the survey deadline passed, the researcher determined the rate of participation, and collected the data to be used in the statistical portion of the research.

Upon completion of the survey, the researcher used the web tool www.surveymonkey.com to import the collected data into an Excel spreadsheet. This

allowed the researcher the proper format to then upload the survey results into the

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS). Once the data was housed in

the SPSS software, the researcher performed the multiple regression, specifically the

Spearman Rho Correlation, and interpreted the statistical findings.

Research Ethics

The survey tool did ask participants their name or the district where they work,

nor could the survey be tracked in any way. Each survey was completely anonymous, and

therefore met the guidelines for protecting human subjects. The survey explained to

participants that all contributions were purely voluntary, and all answers would be kept

confidential. Participants were assured in the email communication that their

participation was purely voluntary, and all responses would be kept confidential. No

identifying information was collected, and no system put in place to track participant

responses.

Conclusion

The researcher anticipated the findings of this study to be inconsistent in nature. It

was expected that districts would identify the job responsibilities as being an important

function of the role of the building principal. The research as explained in the review of

the literature provided confidence that each participant would value the job

responsibilities as they have become the cornerstone of the new role of the building

principal. Nonetheless, although personnel administrators value and deem the

Professional Standards for Educational Leadership to be important to a building principal,

they may not be consistently assessing the skills needed to successfully lead our 21st

century schools. Their hiring practices are not sophisticated or developed enough to

determine whether candidates possess the expertise necessary to lead 21st century schools outside of the responsibilities connected with curriculum and instruction. It was expected that there would be a significant relationship to the use of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership on the satisfaction with newly hired principals.

CHAPTER FOUR

This quantitative study sought to determine if there is a significant correlation between the value and assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership on satisfaction with a newly hired principal. Statistical analyses were performed and analyzed. All findings, both significant and insignificant, are reported in this chapter.

The survey results for this research were analyzed for relevant findings in relationship to the three research questions identified in this study.

1. To what extent does the district value the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL)?

2. To what extent does the district assess a candidate's capacity to meet the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) standards through the interview process?

3. What is the relationship between the value placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership by a district and the assessment of a candidate's ability to meet these standards on candidate selection satisfaction?

The data analysis coincided with each research question to determine if there is a relationship between a district's value and utilization of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership and their satisfaction with the most recently hired principals. The results and findings have been presented in three sections; one for each research question, followed by a summary of overall findings.

Results/Findings

The respondents in this study were 49 personnel administrators across New York State. The anonymity of all participants was promised and as a result the geographical location around New York State remains unknown. Twenty-two participants were female, and 27 participants were male. The age of participants ranges from 24.49% of respondents in the age category of 35-44 to 8.16% of respondents identifying as 65 or older as seen in Figure 2. The years of experience ranged from 0-5 years of experience that accounted for 6.12% of respondents, to 26 or more years of experience at 10.20% of respondents, as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 2

Age of Participants
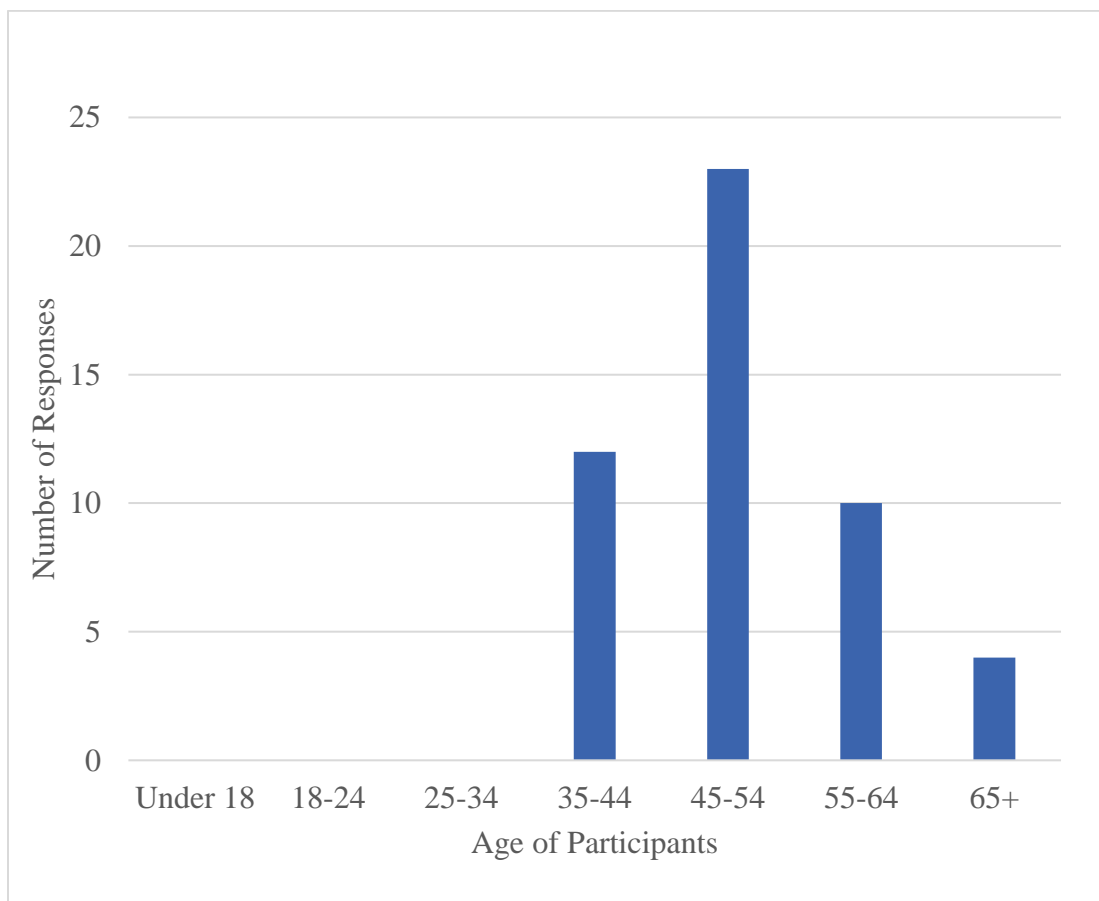
Figure 3

Years of Experience
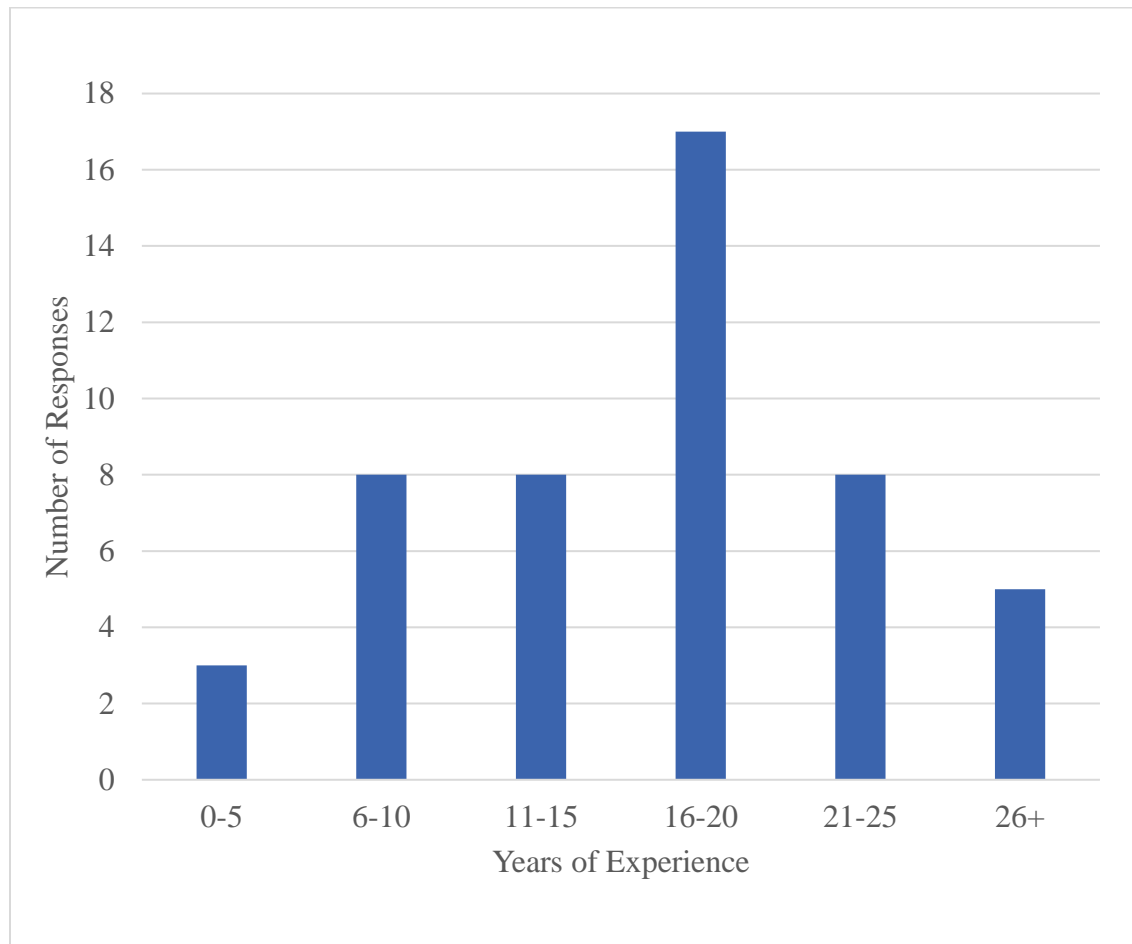
Research Question #1

      The first research question in this study asked each participant the level of importance they place on the each of the ten Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) using a Likert scale from *Extremely Important*, to *Not Important at All*. The descriptive statistics in Table 3 contains the frequency distribution for each response category in addition to the mean, median, and standard deviation for each professional standard.

A careful review of the frequency distributions reveal that the majority of personnel administrators found each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership as *Extremely Important* or *Very Important*. This is demonstrated through the total percentage of responses from *Extremely Important* and *Very Important* ranging from 81.6% (*manage school operations and resources*) to 100% for four of the standards. All 49 respondents indicated that the PSEL were at least somewhat important, 2.0% of the administrators found the PSEL not so important, while 0.0% of administrators found the PSEL not important at all. These statistics indicate that the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership were deemed important with the majority of personnel administrators finding them extremely important.

Table 3

Frequency Distributions, Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations for Importance of Each Professional Standard for Educational Leadership

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Not Important at All	Median/Mean (SD)
Develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education	38 77.6%	11 22.4%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.0/1.22 (.422)
Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms	44 89.8%	5 10.2%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.0/1.10 (.306)
Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	31 63.3%	18 36.7%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.37 (1.10)

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Not Important at All	Median/Mean (SD)
Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	26 53.1%	22 44.9%	1 2.0%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.49 (.545)
Cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community	39 79.6%	10 20.4%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.20 (.407)
Develop the professional capacity and proactive of school personnel	27 55.1%	17 34.7%	4 8.2%	1 2.0%	0 0.00%	1.0/1.59 (.814)
Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff	35 71.4%	13 26.5%	1 2.0%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.31 (.508)
Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways	29 59.2%	17 34.7%	3 6.1%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.47 (.616)
Manage school operations and resources	18 36.7%	22 44.9%	9 18.4%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2.00/1.82 (.727)
Act as agents of continuous improvement	30 61.2%	15 30.6%	4 8.2%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.47 (.649)

Note. 1 = Extremely important; 2 = Very Important; 3 = Somewhat Important; 4 = Not So

Important; 5 = Not Important at All; SD = Standard Deviation

Research Question #2

The second research question in this study asked participants to what extent are the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership assessed during the interview process. Descriptive statistics were generated in order to understand the findings for this research question. Table 4 contains the frequency distribution for each response category in addition to the mean, median and standard deviation for each professional standard.

Table 4 indicates that the majority of personnel administrators use the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership at least a moderate amount when interviewing principals. Further inspection of this table reveals that administrators use the PSEL at least a moderate amount between 85.8% (*Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices*) and 100% (*Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment*) when engaging in the interview process for hiring a school principal. It is from these descriptive statistics that the researcher can conclude that the majority of personal administrators use the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership at least a moderate amount when interviewing candidates for the principalship.

Table 4

Frequency Distributions, Medians, Means and Standard Deviations for Extent Each Professional Standard for Educational Leadership is Used During the Interview Process for Principals

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	A Great Deal	A lot	A Moderate Amount	A Little	None at All	Median/ Mean (SD)
Develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission,	13 26.5%	16 32.7%	18 36.7%	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	2.00/2.20 (.935)

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	A Great Deal	A lot	A Moderate Amount	A Little	None at All	Median/ Mean (SD)
vision and core values of high-quality education						
Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms	16 32.7%	14 28.6%	15 30.6%	3 6.1%	1 2.0%	2.00/2.16 (1.03)
Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	16 32.7%	14 28.6%	12 24.5%	6 12.2%	1 2.0%	2.00/2.22 (1.10)
Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	15 30.6%	23 46.9%	11 22.4%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2.00/1.92 (.731)
Cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community	21 42.9%	20 40.8%	6 12.2%	2 4.1%	0 0.00%	2.00/1.78 (.823)
Develop the professional capacity and proactive of school personnel	11 22.4%	17 34.7%	15 30.6%	5 10.2%	1 2.0%	2.00/2.35 (1.01)
Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff	16 32.7%	22 44.9%	9 18.4%	2 4.21%	0 0.00%	2.00/1.94 (.827)
Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways	15 30.6%	18 36.7%	15 30.6%	1 2.0%	0 0.00%	2.00/2.04 (.841)
Manage school operations and resources	6 12.2%	16 32.7%	21 42.9%	5 10.2%	1 2.0%	3.00/2.57 (.913)
Act as agents of continuous improvement	10 20.4%	22 44.9%	12 24.5%	5 10.2%	0 0.00%	2.00/2.24 (.902)

Additional analyses were conducted to assess the relationship of each

administrators' ratings of importance for each professional standard, and the extent of

utilization of that standard during the interview process. The Spearman Rho Correlations

were performed to determine if a viable relationship exists. An analysis of Table 5

suggests that there is a significant correlation between the importance placed on nine of

the 10 professional standards, and their use in the interview process, $p < .05$. The

researcher can conclude from this data analysis that the more importance placed on a

particular Professional Standard for Educational Leadership, the more that standard was

assessed during the interview process. One exception to this correlation was noted in

Standard 2 – *Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms*, at which $p > .05$,

therefore no correlation was found.

Table 5

Spearman Rho Correlations Between Importance of Professional Standards for

Educational Leadership and Extent Used in the Interview Process When Hiring

Principals

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Spearman Rho Correlation	*p*
Develop, advocate and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education	.391	.006
Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms	-.037	.799

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Spearman Rho Correlation	p
Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	.496	<.001
Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	.413	.003
Cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community	.369	.009
Develop the professional capacity and proactive of school personnel	.381	.007
Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff	.349	.014
Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways	.438	.002
Manage school operations and resources	.406	.004
Act as agents of continuous improvement	.585	<.001

Research Question #3

The third research question in this study sought to determine if a relationship

exists between the importance placed on each Professional Standard for Educational

Leadership and the extent to which they were utilized during the interview process, and

the administrator's satisfaction with each newly hired principal. Essentially, research

question three is determining the predictability of candidate satisfaction through a school

district's the value and use of each Professional Standard for Educational Leadership.

A total of 10 multiple regressions were conducted, one for each Professional Standard, to address research question number three and determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable in this study is the satisfaction with newly hired principals. The independent variables are: (1) value placed on each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, and (2) the assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership during the interview process.

The satisfaction of newly hired principals was measured in the survey from one being *Very Satisfied,* to five *Very Dissatisfied.* Table 6 represents the frequency distribution generated for the administrator's satisfaction level with newly hired principals. Ninety-six percent of administrators report being satisfied or very satisfied, leaving the data highly skewed in this regard. This would indicate there is a restriction of range and therefore a limited variance (standard deviation = .639), in the dependent variable, which limits it predictability. In addition, the distribution was heavily positively skewed, skewness ration = 5.69.

Table 6

Frequency Distributions, Median, Mean and Standard Deviation for Administrators'

Satisfaction with the Last Principal Hired

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Median/ Mean (SD)
How satisfied have you been with your last principal hired?	33 67.3%	14 28.6%	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	0 0.00%	1.00/1.39 (.64)

The multiple regression analyses were conducted with the results of the analysis

presented in Table 7. The rated importance and use in the interview process of each

Professional Standard was entered simultaneously to predict satisfaction with the last

principal hired. A review of Table 7 confirms there were no significant relationships

found between the value and assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational

Leadership throughout the interview process on a district's satisfaction with their newly

hired principal. The level of importance of the PSEL and the utilization of the PSEL

during the interview process does not predict satisfaction with newly hired principals.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Satisfaction with the Last Principal Hired from

the Administrators' Ratings of Importance of the Professional Standards for Educational

Leadership and the Extend They Were Used in the Hiring Process

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p
Develop, advocate and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education	.179	.032	-.010	.758	.474
Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms	.344	.118	.080	3.09	.055
Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	.290	.084	.044	2.11	.133

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	p
Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	.136	.019	-.024	.436	.650
Cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community	.051	.033	-.041	.059	.943
Develop the professional capacity and proactive of school personnel	.172	.030	-.012	.705	.499
Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff	.254	.065	.024	1.592	.214
Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways	.164	.027	-.015	.638	.533
Manage school operations and resources	.248	.061	.021	1.502	.233
Act as agents of continuous improvement	.064	.004	-.039	.096	.909

Note. df explained = *2, df* error = *46*

Three additional questions were asked on the survey that did not pertain directly to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership:

1. To what extent do you feel your current interview process adequately assesses the fit and personal capacity of principals needed to lead a 21st century school?

2. To what extent do you feel your district invests in the interview process to find the best fit for your school district when hiring a principal?

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3. To what extent do you feel your district would benefit from redesigning the interview process to better assess leadership candidates to see they are the right fit for the district and will carry out the district's vision and mission?

Essentially, these questions were geared to measure the administrator's thoughts about the adequacy of their district's interview process, namely finding the candidate with the best fit and whether the district would benefit from redesigning the interview process. These questions followed the same format as all prior questions by using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 8 depicts the frequency distribution for these three additional questions. 87.7% of personnel administrators feel their current interview process adequately assess the fit and personal capacity of principal candidates a least a moderate amount. Similarly, 93.9% of administrators feel their district invests in the interview process to find the best fit for their school when hiring a principal either *A Great Deal*, *A Lot*, or a *Moderate Amount*. 73.4% of participants feel their district would benefit from redesigning the interview process a least a moderate amount and only 4.1% of administrators feel their district would not benefit from redesigning the interview process.

Table 8

Frequency Distributions, Medians, Means and Standard Deviations for the Three Additional Questions Included in the Survey

Question	A Great Deal	A lot	A Moderate Amount	A Little	None at All	Median/ Mean (SD)
Current interview process adequately assesses the fit and personal capacity of principals	13 26.5%	17 34.7%	13 26.5%	6 12.2%	0 0.00%	2.00/2.44 (.99)

Question	A Great Deal	A lot	A Moderate Amount	A Little	None at All	Median/ Mean (SD)
District invests in the interview process to find the best fit for your school district when hiring a principal	16 32.7%	20 40.8%	10 20.4%	2 4.1%	1 2.0%	2.00/2.02 (.95)
District would benefit from redesigning the interview process	8 16.3%	13 26.5%	15 30.6%	11 22.4%	2 4.1%	3.00/2.71 (1.12)

Note. 1 = A Great Deal; 2 = A lot; 3 = A Moderate Amount; 4 = A Little; 5 = Not at All,

SD = Standard Deviation

The Spearman Rho correlations were conducted in two ways for these additional questions. The first set of correlations were performed between these three questions and the administrators' rating of the *importance* of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership. The second set of correlations were performed on the *extent* to which the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership are assessed during the interview process. There was no relationship between the three additional questions and the rating of importance of the 10 standards, all p's >.05. However, a number of correlations emerged between the two of the three additional questions and the ratings of extent used during the interview process, represented in Table 9.

An analysis of Table 9 exposes that the administrators' ratings of adequacy of their district's interview process in assessing the fit and capacity of the principal candidates was significantly correlated with their ratings to the extent the standards were used in the interview process for five of the standards, all p < .05. There is also a significant correlation with the administrators' ratings of the extent the standards are used in the interview process and the extent their district invests in the interview process to

find the best fit for the district. No correlation was found between the administrators'

ratings of the extent their district would benefit from redesigning the interview process

with any of their ratings of the extent the standards are used in the interview process, as

all p is greater than .05.

The additional three survey questions were also correlated with the

administrators' ratings of satisfaction with the last principal hired. The results indicated

that the administrators' ratings of satisfaction with the last principal hired was

significantly correlated with their adequacy ratings of their district's interview process in

assessing the fit and capacity of the principal candidates, r(48) = .342, p = 016, and the

administrators ratings to the extent that their district invests in the interview process to

find the best fit for the district, r(48) = .381, p = .01. There was no relationship between

administrators' rating of satisfaction with the last principal hired and their ratings of the

extent their district would benefit from redesigning the interview process, r (48) = -.102,

p = .487.

Table 9

Relationship of Additional Questions Regarding the Interview Process to Extent

Professional Standards for Educational Leadership are Used During the Interview

Process

Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Current interview process adequately assesses the fit and personal capacity of principals	District invests in the interview process to find the best fit for your school district when hiring a principal	District would benefit from redesigning the interview process
Develop, advocate and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education	.163 (.264)	.231 (.110)	-.014 (.922)

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Professional Standard for Educational Leadership	Current interview process adequately assesses the fit and personal capacity of principals	District invests in the interview process to find the best fit for your school district when hiring a principal	District would benefit from redesigning the interview process
Leaders act ethically and according to professional norms	.075 (.611)	.190 (.192)	.158 (.280)
Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	.477 (<.001)	.448 (.001)	-.276 (.055)
Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	.337 (.018)	.310 (.030)	-.186 (.200)
Cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community	.273 (.058)	.363 (.010)	-.212 (.143)
Develop the professional capacity and proactive of school personnel	.185 (.202)	.199 (.171)	-.051 (.729)
Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff	.498 (<.001)	.435 (.002)	-.043 (.767)
Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways	.097 (.506)	.151 (.300)	.004 (.978)
Manage school operations and resources	.384 (.006)	.452 (.001)	-.238 (.100)
Act as agents of continuous improvement	.475 (<.001)	.259 (.073)	-.033 (.824)

Note. The top number is the Spearman Rho correlation and number in parentheses is the associated probability.

The last question of the survey instrument was a free response question giving participants an opportunity to answer the following question in their own opinion: *What*

improvements, if any, could your district make to the interview process to more adequately assess the fit and personal qualities of principal candidates? Appendix B, question 28, depicts free responses from those who chose to respond to this question. This question was answered by 26 participants, and skipped by 23 participants, as this was an optional survey question. The purpose of this question was to help inform the researcher of possible areas of future research.

Several themes and patterns emerged from these responses. Participant reactions provided a more in-depth understanding of the needs and perceived shortcomings identified by those districts that responded. Sentiments of the respondents were similar and fit into several categories that included the depth of the interview process, the interview committee, outdated practices, and shallow applicant pools. An analysis of these free responses highlighted the breath and scope of the interview process and how the process is composed of many different and important components. It became clear through this question that there is no one process that meets the needs of all districts.

The most prevalent theme that surfaced was the interview process in and of itself. It was suggested that there are gaps in the process that limit a districts ability to properly and thoroughly assess a candidate's capacity to serve their school district. Several respondents spoke to different parts of the process that hinder their attempts to find quality leadership for their schools. On several occasions, respondents discussed the need for steps in the process that would allow for better assessment of a candidate's capacity to handle real life experiences. Several suggested that a site visit be conducted at the candidate's current school, allowing the interviewers to get a sense of the type of school/classroom they currently lead and see the programs and initiatives they have had a

part in creating. One respondent described this step as a possible "meet and greet" as part

of the final steps in the process. Another suggested observing the prospective leader

conduct an observation and review the observation write-up as another way of assessing

the candidate in real situations. In the responses in this regard, there is an overwhelming

sense that districts are looking for new ways to better assess the candidates on a more

personal level, either in their own environment, or in a more realistic setting, that will

allow for a much deeper assessment of the candidate.

Another theme that emerged in the free response question was the need to educate

the interview committee and include more stakeholders in the process. Suggestions were

made that spoke to the need to involve more stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds,

allowing a greater representation of perspectives on the interview committee as a way to

strengthen the process. In keeping with the interview committee, several respondents felt

that those participating on an interview committee should have stronger interviewing

skills, suggesting perhaps more training of committee members could help. One

respondent suggested required readings for all committee members, while another simply

stated better interview skill sets of the interview team is needed.

The free response question on the survey instrument shed light on a concern that

comes as no surprise. Several described an outdated process that has been in place for a

very long time and the necessity of updating the process to fit the current needs of the

district as well as the changing landscape of education. More than one respondent

commented on the format of their interview process being the same for 40 or more years,

and for that reason, a complete overhaul of the process was suggested. It became clear

through the analysis of this free response question that many feel the current process does

not reflect the changed environment in which current leadership must operate. Another respondent with the same outlook suggested schools pretend the current system of interviewing is an "organizational requirement, written in stone." Another personnel administrator offered their opinion, suggesting districts compare their practices with one another to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual processes, which may help improve dated practices.

Lastly, but significantly, personnel administrators described a weak applicant pool and a rushed process. Respondents indicated they are seeking new ways to recruit more candidates to open leadership positions. Shallow pools of candidates appear to be problematic for districts seeking leadership candidates for open position in their schools. Designing an interview process with limited qualified candidates can leave districts to make hiring selections out of necessity. In addition to limited applicant pools, several respondents spoke about the urgent need to hire leaders, therefore rushing the entire interview process to fill these critical roles. One respondent stated that time is needed to develop a "deep and thoughtful" process that will glean the best candidate. Additionally, top leadership must not rush the process and also support those actively involved in finding the most skilled and qualified for their school.

Conclusion

Through this research analysis, both significant relationships and insignificant relationships for each of the research questions has been realized. School personnel administrators appear to greatly value the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership and consider them important, and the majority of personnel administrators use the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership as a tool to assess the fit of their candidates. There were no significant findings, however as to the predictability of the

value of the standards and the use of the standards during the interview process on the satisfaction with their selected candidate.

Further analysis of the collected data did find significant correlations between the ratings of adequacy of the interview process in assessing the fit and capacity of the principal candidates, and the districts investment in the interview process significantly correlated with their ratings of the extent the standards were used in the interview process for five of the standards. Ultimately, those who assessed the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership felt their interview process adequately assessed the fit and capacity of candidates and their satisfaction with hired principals. Therefore, the adequacy of the process and the feeling of district investment can be found in the extent of the usage of the standards during the interview process.

These findings are significant as they provide districts with valuable information that can guide future practices and possibly provide the foundation to begin to develop more meaningful interview strategies for school administrators. The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership can be seen as a tool for districts to incorporate into their interview processes as a research-based approach that can be used to assess principal candidates.

CHAPTER 5

This research study sought to determine administrative importance on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, the assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership during the interview process, and whether there was a correlation between the importance and use of the standards in the interview process with a district's satisfaction of newly hired candidates. The major findings in this study have relevance to the field of education and the hiring practices used by school districts. These findings will add to the body of research on the hiring practices of school districts with the intent of strengthening hiring decisions in public schools. Although there are limitations to this study, there are incredible opportunities to strengthen current practices and for future research.

Implications of Findings

The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership clearly shape the qualities and skills essential to be a successful leader in today's schools. The overwhelming sentiment by survey participants agreed that the standards are important, setting the stage for clearly outlining the vision and mission of their school. For those schools yet to clearly define the qualities they deem important in those tasked to lead their schools, they may make use of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership to help clearly articulate their vision and find strong leadership that can meet the challenges facing leaders today.

The first research question in this study related to whether personnel administrators found each individual Professional Standard for Educational Research important in their work within school districts. The findings in this regard were

predictable and significant in that the large majority of personnel administrators found the standards either extremely important or very important. This suggests that those newly hired in their school district would need to possess the qualities and skills to successfully accomplish the standards they have deemed important. School districts placed great value on the skills and qualities highlighted by the standards, and as such, would look for these qualities in a newly hired principal. The importance placed on these standards by school districts also offers a window into their vision. The respondents' survey answers suggest a clear alignment with their own trajectory, and therefore they seek out those who will participate as part of a team, working toward the same goal.

Senge's (2006) concept of shared vision reinforces the findings to the first research question in this study. Senge would suggest that the success of any organization lies in the principle that all those involved must share the vision of the organization.

The committed person brings an energy, passion, and excitement that cannot be generated by someone who is only compliant, even genuinely compliant. The committed person doesn't play by the rules of the game. He is responsible for the game. If the rules of the game stand in the way of achieving the vision, he will find ways to change the rules. A group of people truly committed to a common vision is an awesome force. (Senge, 2006, p. 205)

The value placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership by districts suggests that these districts have defined and established their vision and are looking to find those that will share in it. School principals need to share in the district's vision for all stakeholders, for the ultimate responsibility of the school's success or failure rests on the building principal. Senge suggests that a shared vision leads to

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passion, a quality that moves people from compliance to commitment. Districts are

clearly looking for individuals with passion to lead today's schools.

The second research question in this study sought to evaluate the extent the

Professional Standards for Educational Leadership are assessed during the interview

process. The findings from survey participants suggest that personnel administrators from

New York State use the standards at least a moderate amount when interviewing

principal candidates. This indicates that personnel administrators are implementing the

assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership into their hiring

processes when looking for school principals. Using a research-based tool such as the

PSEL can assist districts in narrowing their focus during the interview process and target

the specific qualities and skills they seek in candidates. The information gathered

highlights the opportunities districts have to use the standards throughout the interview

process. The results suggest that there is room for growth and an opportunity to

strengthen the use of the standards in the process to find a new school principal.

Analysis at this point of the research sought to determine the relationship between

the value placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership and the use of

the standards in the interview process. A significant correlation was found, suggesting the

more important the personnel administrators found the each of the standards, the more

likely they would be to assess that standard during the interview process. Senge would

suggest that this is an important component of shared vision. Shared vision is more than

simply the understanding and agreement with the vision of an organization, but more

comprehensively, being able to put that vision into practice. Having a shared vision is not

enough to create successful teams and organizations. The members of the organization

must also have the skills and tools to move from vision to practice as they strive to meet a common goal. The findings surrounding this second research question again supports the notion of shared vision. Once the personnel administrators deem a quality important, they assess that quality during the interview process to determine whether the individual they are interviewing has the skills needed to implement the district's vision. Districts have an opportunity to determine the standards they value, then assess a candidate's ability to meet that standard during the interview process. The partnership of value and use must coincide for districts to be true to their mission. Valuing a standard but not assessing the standard underscores the missed opportunities some districts face in designing their interview process. Senge et al. (2012) have taught us through shared vision that "Every organization, whether it deliberately creates them or not, is governed according to some explicit principals. These principals are 'guiding ideas'– concepts that define what an organization stands for and what its members desire to create" (p. 350). The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership can be seen as the framework that defines what schools value. The interview committee, then, becomes the vehicle to bring others to the district that stand for the same.

The literature has acknowledged extensively that the role of the school principal has changed dramatically in recent years. Tasks, expectations, accountability, and responsibility of all aspects of a school environment have intensified for school principals, creating a job that can be unpredictable and uncertain. Senge (2006) suggests that shared vision takes courage and requires risk taking and experimentation. Those organizations that have successfully implemented and executed a shared vision have

fostered and supported courage, allowing school leaders to face these evolving

responsibilities.

> When people are immersed in a vision, they often don't know how to do it. They
>
> run an experiment. They change direction and run another experiment. Everything
>
> is an experiment, but there is no ambiguity. It's perfectly clear why they are doing
>
> what they are doing. People aren't saying "Give me a guarantee that it will work."
>
> Everybody knows that there is no guarantee. But the people are committed,
>
> nonetheless. (p 195)

Districts invest time and money into their interview process to find those who will best

suit their needs, commit to the process, demonstrate courage and commitment, and take

the risks necessary to continue to move their learning community forward within the

scope of the shared vision.

The final research question sought to determine if a relationship exists between

both the value and assessment of each standard during the interview process for school

principals and the satisfaction with the newly hired principal. It is here that no significant

relationship was found between the variables. Although personnel administrators found

the standards extremely or very important and moderately assessed the standards during

the interview process, no relationship was evident to their satisfaction with the successful

candidate. This suggests that the importance and use of the Professional Standards for

Educational Leadership during the interview process does not predict a district's ultimate

satisfaction with their principal candidate of choice. The implication here is significant as

it informs districts that valuing and using the PSEL throughout their interview process is

not a perfect science and cannot promise satisfaction with their newly hired principal.

Further, it suggests that satisfaction with a newly hired principal involves additional

components, and one cannot rely solely on the value and use of the standards. Indeed,

school districts must evaluate their entire hiring process and identify additional

components that may lead to accurate predictors of hiring satisfaction. Given the lack of

relationship, school districts must be mindful and inclusive of their interview process in

its entirety.

When relating the findings of this study to the conceptual framework that guided

it, the research unexpectedly failed to support the framework. The framework implied

that a decisive school vision, coupled with the acknowledgement of its importance, and

assessment of each Professional Standard for Educational Leadership during the

interview process would predict a district's satisfaction with a newly hired principal. The

research did not support this, ultimately contradicting the conceptual framework.

Instead, the conceptual framework in this study may benefit from a new approach.

This research tells us that although the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership

have importance to schools, they are simply not enough to predict leadership success.

Therefore, the conceptual framework needs to be updated to consider other important

pieces of the interview process. Perhaps additional components of the interview process

need to be added to the framework to predict candidate satisfaction more accurately.

These may include assessment of real-life scenarios such as teacher observations, site

visits, meet and greets, and opportunities to get to know candidates on a more personal

level.

Relationship to Prior Research

The research on the hiring of school district personnel suggests that the selection of a school principal is one of the most important decisions a school district can make, as the principal bears the burden of all aspects of a school with the ultimate goal of increased outcomes for all learners.

> The ability to hire and retain the right people is a key characteristic of a high-performing organization. The need for excellent teachers (and administrators) has never been greater as escalating demands are placed on schools to reform their structures and practices, improve student achievement, and narrow the achievement gaps between white and non-white students. Hiring is frequently rushed, competing with end-of-the-school-year activities or summer vacation plans. There are costs associated with poor hiring decision and the mediocre learning that ensues. (Platt et. al, 2015, p. 279)

Poor hiring decisions can be an expensive mistake that can affect the student learning community for years to come. These mistakes must be avoided at all costs.

The prior research in this study reviewed hiring practices in three components; the roles and responsibilities of school principals, the 21st century skills needed to be an effective school principal, and the hiring practices in place used to hire principals.

It has become clear through the research reviewed that the roles and responsibilities of the modern-day principal has drastically changed over the years. They are tasked with many more obligations related curriculum, instruction, and student outcomes than ever before, while still attempting to manage the day-to-day operations of a school and maintaining social order. Muse and Abrams (2011) described the difficulty

principals face trying to remain focused on their fundamental tasks because the multitude of additional issues and problems they must resolve. The work of Normore (2006) adds an explanation of the increased expectations and the dissatisfaction with the educational status quo.

In 2003, The Thomas Fordham Institute exposed the evolving tasks of the school principal. They acknowledged the establishment of a vision of learning; building school culture; the management of students, staff, and parents; and academic success as the newly established benchmarks for leadership success (Hine, 2003). The parallel to the importance of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership further acknowledges the changed role of the school principal. These ten standards clearly illustrate the changing role of the school principal. They cover all aspects of the role of school leader today, as well as the qualities and skills necessary to adequately meet them. The PSEL highlight the similar classifications as the Thomas Fordham Institute: mission, vision, and core values; professional community for teachers and staff; operation and management; curriculum; instruction; and assessment.

The research conducted in this study reveals the importance personnel administrators from New York State place on each of the ten standards. The frequency distributions performed on the importance of each standard reveal that the majority of personnel administrators described each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership as *Extremely Important* or *Very Important*. This clearly acknowledges the changed role of the school principal. The restructuring of the standards in 2015 realigned them with current responsibilities, ensuring they are reflective of leadership positions today. The roles and responsibilities of the principal lie within each of the standards and

are recognized by districts as a crucial part of the job of the school leader. Whitaker (2003) has identified one of the more challenging human resource functions as the effective recruitment and selection of school leaders, making a research-based approach to interviewing an important and sensible decision.

In addition to the changed role of the school principal, this research reveals the link to the 21st century skills needed to be a successful school leader. Gore (2013) schools his readers on the litany of newly developed skills one most possess to be successful in the area of school leadership. The extensive list of necessary skills includes critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, learning, creativity, and the ability to work as part of a team. In addition, Gore highlights adaptability, self-direction, flexibility, and social and cross-cultural communication as 21st century qualities necessary to lead in today's educational climate.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership developed in 2015 helped to culminate the research into categories of proficiency that define the 21st century skills one must possess. Using the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership as the basis for the survey intentionally linked literature to practice. The fundamental role of the standards was to inform districts of the qualities and values of leaders needed to improve student outcomes. This ties in with the premise that a very different set of skills is required to be a successful leader in the schools of today, and the Professional Standards outlines exactly what those skills are. When used to help districts understand the 21st century skills needed to lead our modern-day schools, they provide a compass for districts to navigate the assessment process of potential principal candidates.

The survey data in this study suggests that tremendous value is placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership by personnel administrators. This finding corresponds to the research surrounding "soft skills," or those skills surrounding emotional and social intelligence. The current research has taught us that the emphasis has shifted in part from content knowledge and performance to intangible skills - the skills needed to lead people. The emphasis placed on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership furthers the notion that employers today are desperately looking for those who can lead, inspire, and manage people, in addition to possessing more measurable skills such as knowledge and technical ability, to lead successful schools.

A fundamental and significant aspect of the literature surrounding the hiring of school principals encompasses the hiring practices adopted by schools. The multi-step interview process attempts to uncover multiple dimensions of a candidate to determine if this person will be successful in a particular school district. This formidable task is riddled with imperfections, undeveloped practices, and inexact ways of determining if hiring decisions are sound. The inexact science of hiring has left districts struggling to find these complex and comprehensive individuals that have what it takes to lead our 21st century schools.

The research of Rammer (2007) boldly described the interview procedure as a process that lacks purposeful design. The lack of intentional methods in hiring systems may directly affect the success of the principal selection process. The lack of thorough vetting of principals leaves the burden on the skills and abilities of the superintendent to identify candidates they believe will find success in the principalship. Through his research, Normore (2006) reminds schools that hiring practices remain a mystery and

making a poor hiring decision could be a direct result of a hiring process that lacks an aggressive and comprehensive approach.

The research findings in this study mimic the findings of Rammer and Normore. Through the survey instrument, it became clear that although the majority of personnel administrators found the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership substantial, they acknowledged the interview process moderately assessed for the skills needed for the principalship. A more comprehensive and modernized approach to the interview process is needed, although the predication of candidate satisfaction may remain imprecise.

The hiring process in schools relies heavily on the work of the interview committee. In this model, a group of stakeholders from the school district comes together for the sole purpose of hiring, for the purposes of this study, a new school principal. They come together under the premise of a shared vision, which can help define their work. In fact, interview committees present a clear example of the elements of shared vision. "At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, 'What do we want to create?'" (Senge, 2006, p. 192). This premise is scaffolded into the interview process. The first task of the interview committee is to use their collective vision to design and implement an interview process that will get them the best candidate for their administrative opening. On the second level of the scaffold, they work to ensure the process created and implemented assesses the candidate's ability to share in the greater vision, including that of the school building, school district, and learning community.

This research adds to the body of research surrounding the hiring of school principals. After examining the roles, responsibilities, characteristics, and hiring

practices, this study sought to look further into the predictability of the interview process for districts. It expands upon the interview process to determine if there are factors that could increase the predictability of satisfaction of hiring decisions. Knowing the adverse consequences of poor hiring decisions, this research looked to find predictability for districts, so they have quality outcomes that could be relied upon and provide them confidence in their decision-making. The insignificant relationship found between value and use of the PSEL on candidate satisfaction adds to the literature that even a research-based approach to interviewing does not increase the predictability. Districts must continue to do their due diligence when hiring principals and cannot simply rely on the implementation of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership to ensure their hiring decisions are adequate.

Limitations of the Study

Several factors contributed to the limitations of this research study, four of which are significant. They include the participation rate, limited variability, the research approach, and the wording of the dependent variable. The limitations became clear during the analysis of the data and may have prevented more significant findings.

The sample population for this study included 400 personnel administrators from around New York State. These administrators all participate the New York State Association of Personnel Administrators (NYSASPA). This professional organization has an active online listserv used as a vehicle of communication for all those involved. This listserv served as the mechanism to deliver the survey. Of the 400 personnel administrators emailed the survey using the organization's listserv, only 49 responses were received. The survey was sent on two separate occasions to elicit participants to

voluntarily complete the survey. One could suggest that a greater number of participants could have produced different findings in this research by increasing the variability in the responses. A substantial limitation of this research study was in the lack of variability in the responses. The closer you move toward no variability in responses, the more restrictive the range and the less likely correlation. Increased participation could increase the variability of responses and the likelihood of finding relationships within the data set.

The anonymity of respondents created another unexpected limitation of this study. The lack of demographic information collected suggests another challenge, for significant possibilities exist that urban school districts have different needs than suburban or rural school districts. One could suggest that satisfaction could not be predicated depending on the type of district the participant serves and the needs of that community. A one size fits all approach to this survey instrument may therefore have skewed the findings.

The dependent variable in this study looked for satisfaction with *newly hired principals.* Upon further reflection, the wording of this dependent variable may have been considerably limiting. The research asked for reflection on only those principals newly hired. Essentially, districts were asked to reflect on either their most recently hired principal, or their last principal hired, depending on how they interpreted *newly hired.* Extending this variable to simply the hiring of school principals, regardless of the timeline in which they were hired, could have distorted the results of this study. Furthermore, using a timeline as a descriptor of "principal" significantly limited the data collected. In addition, "newly hired" is asking about only one principal, even though the majority of school districts have more than one principal. This further limited the responses by participants. The study may have benefited from respondents looking at all

principals in their districts or, at the very least, not only the most recently hired. This may have given the researcher a greater perspective on the hiring process.

Reflecting on the method in which the data was analyzed in this study, one could suggest that a qualitative approach may have increased the findings. The survey questions in this study measured a participant's use and assessment for each of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership using a Likert scale. Although there is value in their responses, their response choices were quite limited. A qualitative approach to this research using a focus group could have provided the opportunity for a deeper conversation by asking participants *why* they feel a certain way. The focus group may also have encouraged discussion between and among the participants, helping the researcher to uncover themes and patterns. Similarly, the dialogue within the focus group may have given the researcher a better understanding of the needs of different districts, possibly leading to varied outcomes for different schools. Hearing directly from participants in a focus group would have allowed the researcher to perhaps find correlations in the data through greater questioning and conversation.

Recommendations for Future Practice

One exciting outcome of this research lies in the implications for future practice. Improving the quality of the interview process can only strengthen hiring decisions and give districts a more purposeful approach to hiring. The literature review in this study emphasized not only how important hiring decision are for schools, but how hiring in schools remains an inexact science. Districts are often left to their own devices and strategies when looking to hire a principal. They typically create processes that they "think" are useful, but may lack a research-based approach, or may not help them find the

candidate they seek. If considered, districts can use three specific findings in this research to guide their own practices:

1. Clearly identify their vision, mission, and goals.

2. Incorporate the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership throughout the interview process.

3. Seek to find candidates that share in their district's vision.

The guiding premise and theoretical framework that directed this research study was Peter Senge's "shared vision." Understanding the importance of a shared vision can change the trajectory of a school district. School districts must invest time and energy into explicitly identifying their vision - their vision for their students, for their faculty, and for the learning community at large. Schools cannot employ the right people to support their vision if they have not clearly identified it. It is an integral first step in their quest to find talented, qualified, and skillful principals. It was very clear throughout the literature review that principal hiring decisions are one of the most vital decisions a school district will make. The survey responses in this study reveal that valuing a quality or characteristic does not necessarily mean a school knows how to design a process that assesses that quality. There remains a tremendous opportunity to develop sound hiring practices that helps schools find the leaders that best fit their needs.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leadership provide a strong resource for districts as it is a research-based tool that identifies the qualities of effective school leaders that are most important and encompass the robust role of the school administrator. The use of the PSEL can assist districts in defining their vision. The ten independent domains use student success as the basis for the qualities and values leaders need to

possess in the current educational climate. It is a tool to help them understand what is important to them as a school and as a learning organization. Having a definitive mission, understood by all in the learning community, will increase the success of all students and their administrators.

Lastly, this research provides districts with the awareness they need to improve their hiring practices and possibly their hiring decisions. Using the PSEL as a research-based tool throughout their interview process can greatly assist districts in finding leaders that fit their vision and share their values. It is exciting to think that districts may be armed with the knowledge and direction needed to make hiring decisions that will move their districts forward and create positive, sustainable, and improved results for students. This research breaks down the hiring process into tangible components that districts can develop for their own use and practice and implement in a way that has the ability to help them find the candidates they desire.

Recommendations for Future Research

The future of research in the area of school district hiring practices is promising and encouraging. There is much left to learn in regard to the most effective ways to hire school leaders. Future researchers may want to consider building upon this research and examine the components of the interview process more carefully.

Future research could also replicate this study using a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach may lead researchers to understand why the value and assessment of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership does not help districts predict satisfaction with hired candidates. This research suggests that predictability lies somewhere beyond the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership. Through a

qualitative approach and the use of a focus group, researchers may gain a stronger understanding of what may predict satisfaction through in-depth conversation with school personnel administrators.

As this research has determined there is no significant relationship on candidate satisfaction using the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, future research may consider analysis of another component of the interview process for predictability. Other interview components include resume screenings, reference checks, and writing samples. Perhaps future research could analyze whether there is a relationship between the satisfaction of principal candidates and their performance on writing samples, or the ratings given by prior employers.

The final question on the survey instrument was a free-response question, giving the participants the latitude to answer the question in their own words. This question asked what improvements could be made to their current interview process. While the responses for this question were quite individualized, they did indicate possible areas for future research. As an example, one reply in the free response section said, "Have better interview skill sets of the interview team." This response could be used as an area of future research. Perhaps future research could look closely at the make-up, training, and qualities of the interview committee, and how those components may affect hiring outcomes. Research surrounding the make-up and expertise of the interview committee could lead to suggestions on how to strengthen these committees and better prepare them for the task at hand.

Those interested in pursuing research on interview selection for school administrators can seek to find the science behind the interview process. Looking to find

what components can predict success, and what research-based approaches can be used to ensure schools are making smart personnel decisions. There are great possibilities for research surrounding the hiring of a school administrator by taking a closer look at the interview process.

Conclusion

Hiring decisions surrounding school principals are crucial as they can determine the success or failure of any school. School principals have the responsibility, power, and awesome responsibility to increase outcomes for students across multiple areas. A single hiring decision can affect the overall success of an entire school community, students, and staff alike.

Research surrounding the hiring of school leaders is incredibly valuable. The more information school districts have regarding how to hire the right leader, the more likely both the students and the leader will be successful. Educating today's children has become a formidable task. A job this critical and robust and must be held by those best equipped to move a school forward. Hiring practices cannot be an after-thought, but rather must be a developed and comprehensive process that puts students first and is thorough enough to vet the most suited candidates for the position of school principal.

The body of research surrounding hiring practices of school leaders has made it clear that hiring is not a science. Districts must continue to improve upon their practices to ensure they are bringing leadership to their schools that will move their vision and mission forward and inspire and support teaching and learning across all content. Districts must greatly invest in their hiring practices, for if they do not, they will end up investing time and money into either supporting or replacing those they have hired that fail to meet the challenges of today's principals. "But remember that a great school

system (or any great organization) is a living system; it takes its vitality and energy from the commitments that people make to a common vision, into which they invest their thinking and emotions" (Senge, 2012, p. 87).

EPILOGUE

The overall research process in this study was enlightening and insightful. As a personnel administrator myself, I am incredibly passionate about the topic of hiring practices in schools. I have seen firsthand the positive and negative effects of hiring decisions and their impact on our schools and our students. The value of this type of research, however, lies solely in its implementation. As an educator, it has been my experience that we often repeatedly admire the problems in public education but do little to improve practice. Change is difficult for many and incredibly slow in schools, leaving dated practices in place for far too long. School systems have done little to keep up with the changing times, and our interview practices are no exception.

This research has inspired me as a professional in the field to continue to build upon what we already know about our hiring processes and begin to develop an updated and more comprehensive approach. We have an obligation to our students and our profession to no longer accept the status quo. It is no longer acceptable to hire those who are merely available. We need to have the courage and conviction to hire only those who have earned a place in our schools, no matter how difficult and time consuming those decisions can be. The pressures and responsibilities of administrators at the top of school systems have little time to devote to any one thing. It is time that the hiring of our school personnel becomes a priority that we refuse to waiver from.

The writing of a dissertation is an incredible and humbling experience. The design and facilitation of meaningful research that can potentially change the way we do business in schools is no easy task. I have a new appreciation for all those who have come before, and for all of those yet to embark on this journey. This experience has

taught me it is worth the incredible effort, and the new perspective gained from this experience will forever change me as an educator.

Education is a noble profession and there is incredible admiration for those of us who have dedicated our careers to making a difference in the lives of our students. We have studied for many years ourselves, so we are properly trained and prepared to serve our students and our educational communities to the best of our abilities. There is a responsibility on the part of all educators to look at all aspects of our craft to be certain we provide the finest education and opportunities to the children in our care. If I have learned anything in this research, it has reinforced in me that hiring decisions are the most important decisions we can make as school leaders, and we must treat this awesome responsibility with great respect. The complexities of teaching and learning begin with those we put in front of our children. Any and all success starts and ends with the educators and leaders we choose to bring to our schools, and we must keep students at the forefront of every hiring decision without exception.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Signed form of IRB approval to conduct the study within the involved institution(s).

	Date: 4-4-2022

IRB #: IRB-FY2022-207

Title: To what extent do interview committees assess the personal capacity of principal candidates to operate in a fast paced, 21st century educational environment Creation Date: 1-1-2022 End Date:

Status: Approved

Principal Investigator: Cynthia M. Fitzgerald

Review Board: St John's University Institutional

Review Board Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type Initial	Review Type Exempt	Decision Exempt

Key Study Contacts

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Member Cynthia M. Fitzgerald	Role Principal Investigator	Contact cynthia.fitzgerald17@stjohns.edu
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The Importance of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and the Interview

Process. Hosted by www.surveymonkey.com

Q1 - What is your age?

Answer Choices	*Response Percentage*	Total Responses
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	0.00%	0
25-34	0.00%	0
35-44	24.49%	12
45-54	46.94%	23
55-64	20.41%	10
65+	8.16%	4

Q2 - What is your gender?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Female	44.90%	22
Male	55.10%	27
Non-binary/Non-Conforming	0.00%	0
Prefer not to respond	0.00%	0

Q3 - How many years have you been a school administrator?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
0-5	6.12%	0
0-6	16.33%	0

0-7	16.33%	0
0-8	34.69%	12
0-9	16.33%	23
0-10	10.20%	10

Q4 - How important is it for a new principal to develop, advocate and enact a shared missing, vision and core values of high-quality education?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	77.55%	38
Very important	22.45%	11
Somewhat important	0.00%	0
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q5 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a principal candidate's ability to develop, advocate and enact a shared mission, vision and core values of high-quality education?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	26.53%	13
A lot	32.65%	16
A moderate amount	36.73%	18
A little	2.04%	1
None at all	2.04%	1

Q6 - How important is it that new leaders act ethically and according to professional norms?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	89.80%	44
Very important	10.20%	5

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Somewhat important	0.00%	0
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q7 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidates' ability to act ethically and according to professional norms?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	32.65%	16
A lot	28.57%	14
A moderate amount	30.61%	15
A little	6.12%	3
None at all	2.04%	1

Q8 - How important is it for principals to strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	63.27%	31
Very important	36.73%	18
Somewhat important	0.00%	0
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q9 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidates' ability to strive to equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	32.65%	16
A lot	28.57%	14
A moderate amount	24.49%	12

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A little	12.24%	6
None at all	2.04%	1

Q10 - How important is it for principals to develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	53.60%	26
Very important	44.90%	22
Somewhat important	2.04%	1
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q11 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidates' ability to develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	30.61%	15
A lot	46.94%	23
A moderate amount	22.45%	11
A little	0.00%	0
None at all	0.00%	0

Q12 - How important is it for principals to cultivate an inclusive, caring and supportive school community?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	79.59%	39
Very important	20.41%	10
Somewhat important	0.00%	0
Not so important	0.00%	0

Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q13 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidates' ability to cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	42.86%	21
A lot	40.82%	20
A moderate amount	12.24%	6
A little	4.08%	2
None at all	0.00%	0

Q14 - How important is it for principals to develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	55.10%	27
Very important	34.69%	17
Somewhat important	8.16%	4
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	2.04%	1

Q15 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidate's ability to develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	22.45%	11
A lot	34.69%	17
A moderate amount	30.61%	15
A little	10.20%	5
None at all	2.04%	1

Q16 - How important is it for principals to foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	71.43%	35
Very important	26.00%	13
Somewhat important	2.04%	1
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q17 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidate's ability to foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	32.65%	16
A lot	44.90%	22
A moderate amount	18.37%	9
A little	4.08%	2
None at all	0.00%	0

Q18 - How important is it for principals to engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	59.18%	29
Very important	34.69%	17
Somewhat important	6.12%	3
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q19 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidate's ability to engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	30.61%	15
A lot	36.73%	18
A moderate amount	30.61%	15
A little	2.04%	1
None at all	0.00%	0

Q20 - How important is it for principals to manage school operations and resources?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	36.73%	18
Very important	44.90%	22
Somewhat important	18.37%	9
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q21 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidate's ability to manage school operations and resources?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	12.24%	6
A lot	32.65%	16
A moderate amount	42.86%	21
A little	10.20%	5
None at all	2.04%	1

Q22 - How important is it for principals to act as agents of continuous improvement?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Extremely important	61.22%	30
Very important	30.61%	15
Somewhat important	8.16%	4
Not so important	0.00%	0
Not at all important	0.00%	0

Q23 - When hiring a school principal, to what extent during the interview process does your district assess a candidate's ability to act as an agent of continuous improvement?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	20.41%	10
A lot	44.90%	22
A moderate amount	24.49%	12
A little	10.20%	5
None at all	0.00%	0

Q24 - How satisfied have you been with your last principal hired?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
Very satisfied	67.35%	33
Satisfied	28.57%	14
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2.04%	1
Dissatisfied	2.04%	1
Very dissatisfied	0.00%	0

Q25 - To what extent do you feel your current interview process adequately assess the fit and personal capacity of principals needed to lead a 21st century school?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses

A great deal	26.53%	13
A lot	34.69%	17
A moderate amount	26.53%	13
A little	12.24%	6
None at all	0.00%	0

Q26 - To what extent do you feel your district invests in the interview process to find the best fir for our school district when hiring a principal?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	32.65%	16
A lot	40.82%	20
A moderate amount	20.41%	10
A little	4.08%	2
None at all	2.04%	1

Q27 - To what extent do you feel your district would benefit from redesigning the interview process to better assess leadership candidates to see they are the right fir for the district and will carry out the district's vision and mission?

Answer Choices	Response Percentage	Total Responses
A great deal	16.33%	8
A lot	26.53%	13
A moderate amount	30.61%	15
A little	22.45%	11
None at all	4.08%	2

Q28 - In your opinion, what improvements, if any, could your district make to the interview process to more adequately assess the fit and personal qualities of principal candidates?

Respondent

1	No suggested changes.
2	Determining their leadership qualities as a base line for future growth.
3	Involving stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds/perspectives would allow for a more comprehensive process.
4	The overall proves needs to be completely overhauled for every position, not just administrators/principals. Our interview process looks the same today as it did 40 years ago, however, the environment in which we operate has change dramatically.
5	I think in some cases there is too much focus on fit rather than getting the most qualified.
6	Site visits, personal interviews in addition to stated references.
7	My suggestion is that everyone who participates in developing and participating int the recruitment process should read the following articles: Utter Uselessness of Job Interviews by Dana 2017 and How to Design a Better Hiring Process by Haimann 2020.
8	I think observing them during an observation and subsequent write up is important to see how they evaluate instruction.
9	Have better interview skill sets of the interview team
10	An interview is just that, a meeting where someone is advocating from themselves. It would be great to visit the building they were coming from to get the feel of the building/classroom they created.
11	We have a strong selection process, however, having more time for candidates to walkthrough ad visit a school is something we need to do more of in the process.
12	We need to develop better practices when it comes to equity and diversity.
13	We have not had the opportunity to take the time for a deep and thoughtful process as the last few hires have been urgent situations, so we've moved faster than is desired. We also have had fairly shallow pools of candidates, so we've been limited in that way as well.
14	We need to update our interview evaluation forms to better reflect the ISLLC standards.

15	First, would be for the district to define for itself "culturally responsive practices, equity, diversity" in order to be able to better assess a candidate. Second, to develop a better means of assessing the candidate's ability to support staff, handle adversity (veteran teacher who may not be on board with change, staff who do not get along, how to use faculty meetings productively, handling difficult parents, interacting with students, etc.). I would like to develop better tasks for principal candidates to accomplish that would shed light on these areas.
16	Continue to tweak the balance between getting to know the candidate as a person and their professional capacities. Interviews are a moment and often skill based. You could lose good candidates who can lead, but not interview well. On the contrary, you can hire a person who dazzled a room but is unable to do the same when it is time to execute with a staff. So, improving on that part of the process is always evolving and growth opportunities for that are always welcomed.
17	The structure and process has been adopted and implemented with fidelity, but the present Superintendent is aloof and indifferent. The process is sound up to the final selection.
18	Devoting more time to holding stakeholder committees. My current superintendent does not see hiring as that important and has rushed through the process for principal candidates which has resulted in mediocre hires.
19	Pre-screening of potential candidates, key questions during reference checks, a meet and greet as part of the final interview process
20	I would like to find a way to recruit a wider range of candidates to any of our open administrative positions.
21	End the interview practices that have existed for the last 50 years and stop acting like they are organizational requirements written in stone.
22	None at this time.
23	Compare to other districts to identify where current processes/practices may be lacking and need improvement.
24	None come to mind.
25	Value the process and use references with more fidelity.

| 26 | There needs to be an alternative way of assessing candidates for a live experience. Teachers complete demonstration lessons in the district they are interviewing. It would be fantastic to have a similar version for principal candidates. |

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Dear Personnel Administrator,

My name is Cynthia Fitzgerald, and I am doctoral candidate at St. John's University. I am conducting quantitative doctoral research on the hiring of school principals. You have been invited to take part in a research study to learn more about the hiring of school principals.

The purpose of this study is to recognize the changing role of the school principals and to determine what leadership skills and abilities are important to a school district when setting out to hire a new principal and whether these skills and abilities are assessed during the interview process.

This study will be conducted by me through the School of Education at St. John's University. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online, anonymous survey. The following link will allow you to access the survey: This is a 30-question survey that takes approximately ten minutes to complete. The survey will be available until April 1, 2022. There are no known risks to your participation in this survey. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/doctoralstudy711

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the hiring practices for school principals and whether the current hiring practices produce candidates that school districts are satisfied with.

Your identity as a participant will remain anonymous, as you will not provide your identity or place of employment at any time during the survey. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty.

If there is anything about the study or your participation that is unclear or that you do not understand, if you have questions or wish to report a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher, Cynthia Fitzgerald at 631-258-1744, or by email: cfitzgerald17@my.stjohns.edu at any time. If you have questions concerning your rights as a human participant, you may contact Dr. Anthony Annunziato, Director of Department of Administration and Instructional Leadership at St. John's University at annunzia@stjohns.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia M. Fitzgerald

Cynthia M. Fitzgerald

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