Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration
2011 Yearbook:

Leading in the Decade of Challenges and Opportunities

Edited by
Ellen H. Reames

with assistance from
Maysaa Barakat

Published by:
Auburn University
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The Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration Yearbook is a refereed journal published under the auspices of the Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration (SRCEA). The title of the 2011 Yearbook, *Leading in the Decade of Challenges and Opportunities*, was the theme of the 2010 Annual Conference in Savannah, Georgia. The Council is a non-profit, professional society that exists for the improvement of educational leadership preparation programs through the promotion of research and the exchange of ideas and information. Membership is open to all persons interested in the improvement of preparation programs for educational administrators. An annual meeting is held in the Fall, at varied locations in the South.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of SRCEA and/or joining us at the 2012 annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana should check the SRCEA website (http://srcea.info/index.html) after November, 2011 for the exact date and additional information or should contact:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Leading in the Decade of Challenges and Opportunities ......................... Barbara Mallory 1

Outstanding Junior Faculty Award Paper: Examination of the Fidelity of School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and its Relationship to Academic and Behavioral Outcomes in Florida ......................... Jason A. LaFrance 5

Outstanding Graduate Award Paper: Student Services and Educational Leadership: The Effect of Student Services Staffing Ratios on Student Achievement and Dropout Prevention in Public Schools ........................................................... Travis Lewis & William Grobe 13

Call for Manuscripts ............................................................................................................................ 22

Lane B. Mills,
A Meta-analysis of Research on the Mediated Effects of Principal Leadership on Student Achievement........................................ James O. McDowelle, & William A. Rouse, Jr. 23

The Leadership Challenge: Developing an Ethical Compass.......................................................... Carol A. Schultz 31

Making Change Last: A Character Education Program................................................................. Ric Keaster 37

Call for Reviewers ............................................................................................................................... 46

Improving High School Completion Through a Community-Based Reentry Program for Previously Incarcerated Juveniles: Findings from a Case Study ......................................................... Ronda Sturgill 47

Cecil F. Carter, Dorothy C. Rea, Thomas C. Valesky, Judy R. Wilkerson, & William Steve Lang
Development and Analysis of Survey Instruments to Assess Education Leadership Candidates’ Dispositions............................................................................................................................... 57

SRCEA 2009 Jack Greer Lifetime Contribution Award

Jack Greer was a professor at Georgia State University for over 25 years. He was the glue that stabilized SRCEA in the early years. SRCEA had its beginnings in Atlanta and moved primarily between Florida and Georgia for the conference meetings. “The organization didn’t meet in the fanciest hotels, never-the-less, the fellowship was important as well as learning and collaborating on research.” Jack was extremely active in several professional organizations and he served as a mentor to many of the past members. Jack co-authored leadership texts and articles with more than just a few members.

Because of his love for SRCEA, his mentoring of others, his vast research in our field, and his ability to keep the early organization together, Mike Richard and others proposed a Jack Greer Lifetime Contribution Award to honor him and others who gave so much to SRCEA and their profession.

Jack Greer was the first recipient. Unfortunately Jack was not well and he passed away a few months after that presentation (taken from SRCEA History, Nancy Mims, 2007).

Those receiving the Award and who hold it in high regard are as follows:

- Jack Greer, 1999
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- Lynn Bradshaw, 2010
- Frances Kochan, 2011

Frances K. Kochan

Frances K. Kochan is a Wayne T. Smith Distinguished Professor in Leadership in the College of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology at Auburn University. She holds a B.S. degree from the University of New York at Fredonia, a M.Ed. in Reading Education from the University of Guam, and a PhD. in Adult Education and Policy Studies from Florida State University. She has served in the K–12 environment as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. Dr. Kochan is past Director of the Truman Pierce Institute for Teacher Education and previously served at Auburn as Associate Dean for Administration and Research, Interim Dean, and Dean of the College. Dr. Kochan has served on the Board of Directors of the Holmes Partnership, the Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration, the International Mentoring Association, and the University Council on Educational Administration. She has served as President of the Alabama Association of Professors of Educational Leadership and of the University Council on Educational Administration.

She has served as chair or committee member for over 60 doctoral students. She has authored or co-authored over 60 journal articles and book chapters and has co-edited 4 books. She is presently working with 2 co-authors to complete a book on mentoring and diversity. Her research focuses upon collaboration and organizational change. She has studied this area by examining how to create collaborative organizational environments, studying partnerships across organizations, delving into the development of collaborative leadership, researching mentoring programs and relationships, and examining the development and evaluation of change in educational leadership programs.
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**James McDowelle** received his doctorate in education from the University of Virginia. He has served as a teacher, principal and superintendent in the public schools. Prior to beginning a career in education he served as a captain in Vietnam and received the Bronze Star. This experience sparked a life-long interest in leadership. McDowelle is the author of several books about educational leadership, including *Leading with Emotion*. He is presently a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at East Carolina University.

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Leading in the Decade of Challenges and Opportunities

Dr. Barbara Mallory
Winthrop University

Introduction
The Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration (SRCEA) holds an annual Conference to provide a forum for critical inquiry and presentation of research and ideas among individuals with a professional interest in the field of educational administration and leadership. The theme for the 2010 Conference in Savannah, Georgia, was Leading in the Decade of Challenges and Opportunities. Leading educational organizations became more complex as we entered the 21st century, mainly in the way leadership work was viewed in relation to standards and accountability issues, both in university and school settings. Many papers presented at the Conference dealt with challenges and opportunities related to—not just leadership—but leadership capacity associated with accountability and student achievement issues. The ability to build and sustain leadership capacity across a school setting is a function of leadership, as educational communities realize that school leaders alone cannot conduct the work of leadership. The purpose of this introduction to the SRCEA Yearbook is to focus on challenges and opportunities of the work of leadership through the lens of the published manuscripts.

The Work of Leadership
Lambert (2002) defined leadership capacity as “an organizational concept meaning broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership that leads to lasting school improvement” (p. 37). One of the major roles of school leaders is to build leadership capacity by “creating learning communities within their organizations by learning from within but also learning from and contributing to learning outside their jurisdictions …” (Fullan, 2005, p. 84). Leadership skills necessary for creating conditions of leadership capacity and learning communities are “building relationships, building trust, and building community” (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p. 4). Bringing about change in student learning through building leadership capacity means that teachers, parents, and students can be involved in school leadership (Fullan, 2005, p. 61). The instructional leadership role of the principal in the era of accountability is one that involves influencing and engaging others to lead student achievement initiatives.

Challenges and Opportunities
The Ethical Compass
For leaders to engage others in the work of leading high student achievement involves strong moral commitment to the belief that all students can learn and the value of fairness. As moral commitment underpins behaviors, the visibility of leadership behaviors allows others insight into the moral compass of the leader. The leader’s responsibility is complex and multi-dimensional, perhaps rooted more in ethical decision making and community building, than in technical aspects of the job. And yet, the major focus in leadership preparation seems to be technical skills and expertise, not ethical decision making.

One challenge facing university principal preparation programs, therefore, is how to address ethical development of candidates. Educational leadership professors have not reached consensus on essential values and beliefs, or habits of mind, which we refer to as dispositions, that inspire leadership behaviors, nor have we developed valid and reliable means to assess dispositions of candidates. As discussed in the manuscript, Development and Analysis of Survey Instruments to Assess Education Leadership Candidates’ Dispositions, by Cecil Carter, Dorothy Rea, Thomas Valesky, Judy Wilkerson, and William Lang, universities are grappling with valid and reliable instruments to measure dispositions. The authors have seized an opportunity to contribute to the profession through their promising work in developing a dispositions instrument.

If stakeholders are to be involved in leadership work of school improvement, principal dispositions and behaviors must be authentic. Unfortunately, many principals may not have been trained to deal with ethical conflicts and dilemmas, which often emerge when building leadership capacity. As discussed by Carol Schultz in The Leadership Challenge: Developing an Ethical Compass, a leader’s strong moral compass influences his/her authenticity, which impacts how others engage in
leadership work. Schultz presents a method by which leaders articulate an ethical framework through application of Gladwell’s three rules in decision-making. Ric Keaster’s manuscript, *Making Change Last: A Character Education Program*, focuses on implementation of student character development programs, in which he concludes that authentic principals make such program implementation successful. Whether building leadership capacity or student character, a leader’s habits of mind have the potential to shape the school and inculcate strong moral habits in others.

**Evidenced-based Practice and Educational Reform**

Another major challenge is the demand for evidence-based practice to support reform. We need the work of educational researchers to identify, collect, and interpret evidence as the basis for improving teaching and learning. Policy makers, who strive to accelerate reform that will have immediate impact on higher student achievement, need to be informed by quality research from leadership professionals. Opportunities abound for empirical studies to provide a solid foundation for effective decision making in education.

Researchers Monica Harless and Ronald Childress, in *An Analysis of Professional Development Policies and Practices for Public Pre-K Administrators in the SREB States: A Preliminary Report*, examined state-level policies and implementation of professional learning for pre-K administrators to conclude that a deficit exists in this area. If we are to build leadership capacity to improve early learning, Harless calls for quality professional training for school leaders who work in the pre-K environment. There is research to support the need for early learning, but leadership training and development for pre-K environments has not kept pace with the growth of pre-K programs, according to Harless.

Empirical evidence on what works in relation to student achievement is in high demand by policy makers. As discussed in *Examination of the Fidelity of School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and its Relationship to Academic and Behavioral Outcomes*, Jason LaFrance stated the need for more research on student achievement and positive classroom management strategies. Lane Mills, James McDowell, and William Rouse, in *A Meta-analysis of Research on the Mediated Effects of Principal Leadership on Student Achievement*, called for more research on collaboration and the professional learning community model, which are central tools in building leadership capacity in a school. The meta-analysis approach to research can be a useful tool for educational researchers to build a body of evidence to support effective practice.

Often intermingled, sometimes subconscious, there are many variables of leadership that may impact student achievement, many difficult to isolate. Travis Lewis and William Grobe, in *Student Services and Educational Leadership: The Effect of Student Services Staffing Ratios on Student Achievement and Dropout Prevention in Public Schools*, describe the North Carolina study of student services staffing and dropout rates and student achievement. While findings of this study did not support increased funding on student services staffing, there is a larger body of evidence that supports the effects of student services staff on student achievement. Their call for more research is this area is warranted because of the essential leadership capacity of student services staff.

Finally, Ronda Sturgill in *Improving High School Completion through a Community-based Reentry Program for Previously Incarcerated Juveniles: Findings from a Case Study*, emphasizes the multiple-strategy approach in addressing risk factors associated with learners who need dropout prevention interventions. The case study method yields insight into the complex work of dropout prevention. This research method is valuable in schools for its evidence-based revelations about what works. Hargreaves (2003) proposes that schools should be knowledge creating organizations that produce a culture of, and an enthusiasm for, continual improvement and renewal.

**Conclusions**

This edition of the 2011 SRCEA *Yearbook* provides insight into some of the challenges and opportunities of educational leaders, ethical development of leaders. The SRCEA Conference allows us to ask critical questions, design future research, and connect with those committed to our profession. Just as principals do not work in isolation, professors, researchers, and practitioners of leadership cannot serve in isolation. While we conduct the work of leadership, we cannot forget the ethical considerations of leading others and engaging others in the work of leadership. The inspiration from reading such studies and views as presented in the *Yearbook* is one of the many reasons we steward this organization. The assumption is that, collectively, the better each of us is, the better our university-based principal training and development programs are, and the better our school leaders are, then the more effective we all will be in meeting our challenges and seizing opportunities to have our voices heard about the most fascinating work of school leadership. We need to be heard at Congressional
hearings, in state policy meetings, and in mass media with evidence that supports education as one of the most important human enterprises.

References

Examination of the Fidelity of School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation and its Relationship to Academic and Behavioral Outcomes in Florida

Jason A. LaFrance
Georgia Southern University

Abstract

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is an evidence-based approach to teaching behavioral expectations. The purpose of this article is to provide information regarding the theoretical background of Positive Behavior Support and to present the results of an examination of the relationship of implementation fidelity of the framework to academic and behavioral outcomes in elementary and middle schools in the State of Florida. The results of this study found that SWPBS is being implemented with fidelity in the majority of schools in one year and that these schools maintain or increase fidelity over time. Findings also suggest that there may be a relationship between greater implementation and lower Office Discipline Referral (ODR) rates, Out of School Suspension (OSS) rates and to a lesser extent, academic outcomes.

School leaders continue to face unprecedented challenges since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Most notably, leaders are facing increased accountability for student achievement. Factors that have been identified as influencing academic achievement include high quality academic instruction, child’s peer acceptance in the classroom, cognitive ability, motivation, community factor, family involvement, academic expectations, and cultural beliefs (Chamorro-Premuzic, & Furnham, 2008; Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005; Mullis, Rathge, & Mullis, 2003; Passoulunghi, Mammarella, & Altoe, 2008; Phillipson & Phillipson, 2007; Tavani & Losh, 2003). Another factor that has been identified as influencing the instruction that schools provide is student problem behavior (Lassen, 2006). Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg (2005) suggest that establishing effective discipline practices is critical to ensuring academic success. Recognizing this challenge, school leaders have instituted various programs to improve school culture and meet the needs of the students. Over the past 10 years, more than 11,000 elementary, middle and high schools have adopted SWPBS (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010).

Some outcomes associated with SWPBS include decreased Office Discipline Referrals increased instructional time, decreased administrative time addressing discipline, improved peer relationships, increased academic achievement, and an increase in perceived school safety (Curtis, et al., 2010; Glover, 2005; Landers, 2006; Lassen, 2006; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Rentz, 2007). Examining possible relationships between the fidelity of implementation of SWPBS to academic achievement and student problem behaviors may help predict the usefulness of future implementations of this program.

Theoretical Background

The classroom practices and behavior management strategies that support School-wide Positive Behavior Support have been known for over 40 years (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The conceptual framework has evolved from the work of the behaviorist B.F. Skinner (1953). Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1968) then laid the foundation for the application of applied behavior analysis (ABA) to the study and improvement of human behavior. The key components of ABA include a set of techniques designed to bring about socially acceptable behavioral changes. During the late 1960s, Madsen, Becker, and Thomas (1968) studied the importance of establishing appropriate classroom rules and behavior to achieve positive classroom atmospheres. This research developed into positive behavior support (PBS) which included proactive methods for improving the behavior of individual students with disabilities.
Kane (1992) argued that school-wide behavioral planning and interventions should be based on factors such as the characteristics of the students, educators, and schools. Furthermore, Zins and Ponti (1990) identified the importance of policies and organizational systems that govern staff behavior in schools and the appropriate allocation of resources to positively influence school climate. Mayer (1995) then extended the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and organizational behavior management to whole school interventions. An emphasis on the collective behavior and routines of educators and a focus on the whole school as the unit of analysis then developed (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). In 2002, Sugai and Horner noted that attention to behavioral practices in schools had increased due to legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004). Recommendations to implement more preventive and positive approaches for addressing problem behavior by researchers have also led to increased implementation of SWPBS (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Epstein, Kutash, & Duchnowski, 1998; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Skroban, 1996; Mayer, 1995; Sugai et al., 2000). Recent efforts to elevate behavior curricula and instruction to levels of interest and importance that are similar to those found with academics have also fueled the utilization of this approach (Sandomierski, Kinkaid, & Algozzine, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2009). School-wide Positive Behavior Support is the current embodiment of this evolution. This preventative, whole school approach is currently being used nationwide in an attempt to improve student behavior and academic outcomes.

**Practical Application**

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is the application of a broad range of systemic and individualized behavior approaches designed to achieve behavior change and learning outcomes (Murdock, 2007). It provides student with clearly defined, carefully taught and consistently rewarded behavioral expectations. Specific consequences that are consistent with the level of misbehavior are also defined in this system (Smolkowski, 2006). The major components of school-wide applications of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) include establishing a planning team, defining school-wide behavioral expectations, training teachers, teaching behavioral expectations to students, developing procedures for acknowledging appropriate behaviors and discouraging inappropriate behavior, utilizing data to monitor behaviors, and evaluating the system (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Data collected from sources such as Office Discipline Referrals are one of the primary measures used for evaluation and decision making to appropriately address student behavior in public areas of the school such as the hallways, cafeteria, playground, and restrooms (Smolkowski, 2006).

Many schools choose to implement SWPBS in an effort to maximize academic achievement and to create a safe and orderly environment due to the research-validated behavior management practices incorporated by the system (Murdock, 2007). SWPBS in the school setting is implemented in a three-tier model that provides a continuum of support that includes primary universal support for all students, secondary support that is targeted for students at-risk for problem behavior or academic failure, and tertiary support that is individualized for students who do not respond to either of the first two levels of support (Martella, Nelson, & Marchand, 2003). Each of the three levels of support is important for successful outcomes within the school setting (Lassen, 2006).

These elements are important in creating a positive cultural change. Scott and Martinek (2006) note that this framework could be unsuccessful in achieving desirable outcomes if the proactive changes are not implemented with fidelity. Buy-in from administration and teachers, the development of environments that facilitate student success, effective teaching of rules and procedures, and consistent consequences for behavior are also important implementation components. Formative and summative evaluations of the system are also critical (Scott & Martinek, 2006). To measure how effectively the elements of this framework are being implemented, tools such as the Benchmark of Quality (BoQ) have been created.

**The Importance of Implementation Fidelity**

A review of literature supports the contention that SWPBS is associated with decreases in problem behavior and increases in pro-social skills and academic outcomes (Martella, Nelson, & Marchand-Martella, 2003; Sugai & Horner, 2001, 2002). However, in some cases research on SWPBS implementation produced mixed behavioral and academic outcomes. Lassen (2006) and Curry (2007) suggest one possible reason for mixed results insufficient implementation. To date, relatively little research exists on the relationship between the fidelity of program implementation to academic and behavioral outcomes.
Measuring Fidelity
The BoQ is the one tool for measuring fidelity of implementation of SWPBS throughout the United States. The BoQ is a 53-item rating scale that measures the degree of fidelity with which a school is implementing SWPBS (BoQ; Kincaid, Childs, & George, 2005). This instrument was developed as a self-evaluation tool to allow school teams to review their progress toward implementing the critical elements of PBS. The critical elements are PBS Team, Faculty Commitment, Effective Discipline Procedures, Data Entry, Expectations and Rules, Reward System, Lesson Plans, Implementation Plans, Crisis Plans, and Evaluation. Cohen, Kinkaid, and Childs (2007) suggest:

The results of our evaluation indicate that the School-wide Benchmarks of Quality for SWPBS is a reliable, valid, efficient, and useful instrument for measuring the degree of implementation of the primary or universal level of PBS application within individual schools. The high test–retest reliability (above 90%) indicates that the BoQ is a stable instrument, and the high interrater reliability (also above 90%) indicates that the BoQ process, including the Scoring Guide, allows for accurate and consistent scoring across different evaluators. (p. 210)

A Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.96 was reported for the BoQ scale. This indicated good internal consistency between questions. These scores fell above the threshold set by Nunnally (1978) to determine if there is internal consistency between the items on the scale. Cohen, Kinkaid, and Childs (2007) also suggested that an overall implementation score of 70% or higher indicates that the critical features are in place to provide effective behavior support. These indicators suggest that this tool is useful in measuring the implementation fidelity.

Behavioral and Academic Measures
In this study, measures for student behavior and academic achievement were correlated with BoQ scores. Research has suggested that Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) and Out of School Suspension (OSS) rates are a useful and valid for measuring student problem behavior in that they are a common form of documentation and they have been highly correlated with other measures of student behavior (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). Therefore, they were used as measures of behavioral outcomes for this study. Academic performance in Reading and Mathematics were measured using standardized test data from the FCAT. This comprehensive battery of academic tests was designed to assess student knowledge and understanding of reading, writing, mathematics, and science content as described in the Sunshine State Standards (FLDOE, 2007).

Research Procedures
Although researchers have studied the relationship between the implementation of SWPBS to academic and behavioral outcomes, few have included data in their studies regarding how closely the program is implemented as it is intended (Muscott, Mann & Lebrun, 2008). Dumas, Lynch, Laughlin, Smith, and Prinz (2001) suggested that the conclusions that can be drawn about a program are limited if fidelity is not established. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent which SWPBS was implemented in elementary and middle schools in Florida during the 2007–2008 school year. Furthermore, the number of years that SWPBS had been implemented in each school as a factor in proper implementation was analyzed. This study also examined possible relationships between the fidelity of implementation of SWPBS as indicated by the total BoQ score and the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test Reading and Mathematics subtests. The relationship between BoQ scores and students’ behaviors within the school as measured by ODR’s and OSS’s during the 2007–2008 school year in the state of Florida were also studied. The final purpose of this study was to examine differences between schools that scored in the top quartile of total BoQ scores, the lowest quartile of total BoQ scores, and a control group.

Method
At the time of this study, there were 2,889 public elementary and middle schools in the state of Florida (FLDOE, 2008). The sample size varied for each question in the study. To determine the level of implementation fidelity over time, the sample included 145 elementary and 60 middle schools that actively utilized SWPBS and had completed the BoQ survey. To examine the relationship between fidelity to behavioral and academic outcomes, 134 elementary and 59 middle schools that utilized SWPBS, completed the BoQ survey, reported ODR and OSS data, and had valid FCAT Reading and Mathematics subtest scores were selected. The final step included examining if implementation fidelity made a difference in academic outcomes. To achieve this, schools whose BoQ scores
were identified in the top quartile, the lowest quartile, and a comparison group that did not participate in training were selected at the elementary (n = 30) and the middle school (n = 14) levels.

**Evaluation of Fidelity**

Implementation fidelity was central to this study. As such, BoQ total scores were examined for the 2007–2008 school year to evaluate the target schools’ adherence to universal SWPBS procedures. A total score of 70 indicated that the program was being implemented with fidelity. Descriptive statistics including the mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were analyzed to determine the level of implementation. A one-way between groups ANOVA with post-hoc tests was run to determine if there was a relationship between years of implementation and fidelity. These procedures were utilized to determine if schools were in fact implementing SWPBS with fidelity and if fidelity changed over time.

**Evaluation of Relationships**

Analyses were conducted to determine if implementation fidelity could be correlated to behavioral or academic outcomes. To determine if there were relationships between fidelity and behavioral outcomes, two sets of analyses were conducted using the mean number of ODR’s and OSS days at the selected schools. The first analysis was of detailed descriptive statistics generated for ODR’s and OSS’s. Second, a Pearson’s Product-moment Correlation was conducted between the fidelity of implementation and the number of Office Discipline Referrals per 100 students and the number of days of Out of School Suspensions per 100 students, respectively.

Next, relationships between fidelity and academic outcomes were examined. Two sets of analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the fidelity of implementation and Mathematics and Reading FCAT scores. The first analysis was a set of detailed descriptive statistics generated for Mathematics and Reading mean scale scores. The second analysis involved conducting a Pearson’s Product-moment Correlation between the fidelity of implementation and the mean scale scores for the Mathematics and Reading subtests of the FCAT. Once these statistical procedures were conducted and explored, it seemed relevant to determine if greater fidelity was associated with higher achievement scores.

**Evaluation of Differences**

To examine if differences existed in academic achievement between elementary schools that had implemented SWPBS with fidelity and those who had not, two sets of analyses were conducted. The first analysis was a set of detailed descriptives. For the second analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted. The independent variable, fidelity of implementation, had three categories: lowest quartile of BoQ scores, highest quartile of BoQ scores, or did not participate in SWPBS training. The dependent variable was the FCAT Reading and Mathematics mean scale scores. The ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the three groups for each year using FCAT Reading and Mathematics subtest mean scale scores. This procedure was repeated for middle schools. The findings of this study were generated as a result of this statistical analysis.

**Findings**

The investigation into the extent that SWPBS was implemented with fidelity showed that schools were able to implement the program with fidelity within one year. The results indicated that the majority (71.7%) of elementary and middle schools in Florida did in fact implement SWPBS with fidelity as indicated by a total BoQ score of greater than 70. Further investigation suggested that a greater percentage of elementary schools in this study implemented the framework with fidelity than middle schools.

To determine if fidelity increased over time, a one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of years of implementation on implementation fidelity. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference at the p < .05 level in scores between the schools that had implemented SWPBS for one year (M = 72.96, SD = 13.77) and schools that had implemented SWPBS for three or more years (M = 80.01, SD = 18.19). These findings indicate that schools are able to successfully adopt SWPBS with fidelity in the first year of implementation and sustain or increase the use of these practices over time.

Next, the relationship between implementation fidelity and student problem behavior as measured by ODR’s and the number of days for Out of School Suspensions were examined. The relationship between implementation fidelity as measured by the BoQ total score and ODR per 100 students was investigated using a Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient. A Pearson’s correlation was also used to examine the
relationship between implementation fidelity and OSS days per 100 students. Both statistics indicated that a statistically significant relationship existed between implementation fidelity and these measures. For Office Discipline Referrals the significance was at the p < .05 level. The significance level for Out of School Suspension days was at the p < .01 level. In each case higher levels of fidelity were associated with lower levels of undesirable behaviors.

The next step was to examine the relationship between fidelity of implementation and academic achievement as measured by FCAT Reading and Mathematics scores. The scores for elementary schools were calculated using the mean FCAT Reading and Mathematics subtest scores for grades three through five at each school. The scores for middle schools were calculated using the mean FCAT Reading and Mathematics scores for grades six through eight. Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficients were utilized to examine the relationship between fidelity and FCAT Reading and Mathematics subtest scores. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between implementation fidelity and academic outcomes as measured by FCAT scores for the group as a whole. When broken down into elementary and middle schools, results indicated that there was a moderate positive relationship at the p < .05 level between BoQ and FCAT Reading subtest scores in middle schools. Due to the small sample size of middle schools (N = 59) these results should be viewed cautiously. However, these results do warrant further investigation.

The final step in this process involved determining if these results do warrant further investigation. The groups were then compared to the state mean FCAT Mathematics score (M = 330). It is relevant to note that the highest and lowest quartile group scores were similar to the state mean while the comparison group was significantly lower. Here the limitation of the sample size (N = 40) should be considered when evaluating these results. No statistically significant differences were noted for the mean FCAT Reading and Mathematics subtests for the middle school cohorts. It is interesting to note that the academic outcomes for SWPBS schools were in line with or were greater than the outcomes for schools that did not participate in SWPBS training. Frequently, schools focus on one area for improvement such as Writing, Mathematics, Reading, or improved behaviors. When this occurs, attention to other areas may lapse. The outcomes of this study may suggest that schools implementing SWPBS improve student behavior while sustaining or improving academic outcomes.

**Discussion**

The influence of multiple factors should be considered when evaluating the outcomes examined in this study. These include other academic and behavioral programs that may have been in place, administrative and staff buy-in, and environmental factors. In addition, staff tolerance for different behaviors may influence behavioral outcomes. The results of this study suggest that SWPBS practices can be implemented with fidelity on a large scale and greater fidelity is associated with fewer instances of negative behaviors. The strength of the relationship between fidelity and the behavioral measures was low to moderate. One possible explanation is that schools may have over reported the level of implementation. The results also indicate that there may be a relationship between implementation fidelity and academic outcomes as indicated by the middle school outcomes. The findings from the evaluation data and results have important implications for policy, practice, and program evaluation.

**Limitations**

A number of limitations must be considered before recommendations can be discussed. The implementation fidelity data used for this study from the BoQ tool is based on self-reported information from each school. As a self-evaluation tool, some inconsistency could result. In addition, the level of fidelity at each grade level is assumed to be consistent with the level of implementation of the school as a whole since grade level data was not collected regarding implementation. Therefore, assumptions regarding the impact on specific grade levels or individual students could not be made.
Data from different cohorts of students were analyzed in aggregate. This limits any conclusions regarding individual academic and behavioral functioning. Finally, due to the relatively small sample size for correlational statistics, conclusions were limited.

**Recommendations for Policy**

This research has important implications for policy makers. The findings of this study suggest that implementation fidelity is mildly associated with reduced instances of ODRs and OSS days. As a self-reported tool the possibility exists that BoQ scores may have been over reported which could have the effect of reducing the strength of the correlation between fidelity and behavioral outcomes. Policy makers should consider examining how closely schools are accurately reporting implementation fidelity. Identifying schools that are utilizing SWPBS appropriately with data to support the results will undoubtedly help school leaders utilize SWPBS effectively.

In some cases SWPBS has also been associated with improved academic outcomes. Since SWPBS focuses on improving student behavior, this may not be a causal relationship. However, by improving behavioral outcomes, SWPBS creates an opportunity for schools to improve student achievement by increasing the time available for planning and implementing engaging lessons for students. Policymakers should take note that this success is based on sound instructional practices and effective training on appropriate behavioral strategies. By appropriately utilizing the time available for instruction, behavioral and academic outcomes can be maximized. As such, it is important that the human and financial resources necessary for appropriate training, sustained implementation, and evaluation are provided.

This research has also suggested that the fidelity of SWPBS increases over time. Policy decisions should be made to support the continued implementation of SWPBS and examine if this trend leads to improved outcomes over time.

**Recommendations for Practice**

While the findings of this study are subject to limitations, they offer guidance to practitioners. One of the primary findings of this study is that a relationship exists between implementation fidelity and behavioral outcomes. There is also some limited evidence that a relationship between implementation fidelity and academic outcomes may exist as well. Prior research has indicated that a total score of less than 70 on the BoQ indicates partial implementation of the critical components of SWPBS which may not be sufficient to achieve desirable outcomes. To implement SWPBS with fidelity, practitioners should strive to fully implement each of the major components of SWPBS. These components include establishing a planning team, defining school-wide behavioral expectations, training teachers, teaching behavioral expectations to students, developing procedures for acknowledging appropriate behaviors and discouraging inappropriate behavior, utilizing data to monitor behaviors, and evaluating the system. As a school implements this framework, some of the factors that impede the implementation of SWPBS such as insufficient funding, lack of time, and lack of stakeholder buy-in should be addressed. By developing an awareness of the possible pitfalls to implementation and focusing on the research based strategies of SWPBS practitioners may experience some of the positive outcomes suggested by the findings of this research. School based leaders should also conduct classroom walkthroughs and have frequent discussions with stakeholders such as staff members, students, and parents to investigate implementation fidelity. In addition, school leaders should ensure that additional time is used appropriately to improve student instruction. Finally, free tools for implementing positive behavioral supports available at the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports web site (www.pbis.org) should be utilized.

**Recommendations for SWPBS Program Evaluation**

This research examined the relationship between implementation fidelity and behavioral and academic outcomes. For validation purposes, further research should be conducted in this area of investigation. In addition, emerging research has begun to examine qualitative data regarding improved quality of life outcomes for students. Future research should include longitudinal studies of behavioral, academic, and quality of life outcomes in relation to implementation fidelity. Research should be directed in this area to examining factors that influence the adoption of evidence based practices, how to sustain SWPBS practices, and the integration of SWPBS with other intervention frameworks such as Response-to-Intervention (RtI). The findings of this study support previous research advocating SWPBS as a conceptually sound framework for improving student behaviors when implemented with fidelity.
References


Student Services and Educational Leadership: The Effect of Student Services Staffing Ratios on Student Achievement and Dropout Prevention in Public Schools

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Abstract

The impact that student services personnel have on minimizing the effect of barriers to academic success for students has recently come into question, particularly as leadership in education and government make fiscal decisions for schools based on the cost-benefit ratio of all current and potential programming and staffing in relation to student achievement outcomes.

A quantitative, correlational research design was used that involved collecting student services staffing totals, as well as student performance data and dropout rates, for all 115 public school districts within the state of North Carolina. A series of Fisher’s exact tests were performed to determine if a significant relationship exists between student services staff-to-student ratios and student outcomes in academic achievement and dropout rate. Staffing for each of the four identified fields within student services—school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, and school psychologists—were analyzed separately as well as collectively to determine if there is a significant relationship with student outcomes. The findings of this study show that a statistically significant relationship exists between school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth status at the p < .05 level. The implications of the findings of this study for education leaders and policy makers are discussed.

Introduction

Student services in public schools encompass, at a minimum, the professional fields of school counseling, school social work, school nursing, and school psychology (Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Brown & Trusty, 2005; California Department of Education, 2003; Carrell & Carrell, 2006; National Association of School Psychologists, 2004; Schmidt & Ciechalski, 2001). The purpose of student services staff is to help meet the needs of students through their efforts in six clusters of activity: improving social skills, providing mental health services, removing barriers to achievement, serving as an advocate/change agent, providing organizational support within schools, and positively addressing student behavior and disciplinary problems (Louis & Gordon, 2006).

The impact that student services personnel have on student outcomes, however, comes into question during difficult budgetary seasons when fiscal analysts in financially-strapped school districts look at the cost-benefit ratio of programming in relation to student achievement (Jacques & Brorsen, 2002). Often, the decision made during these deliberations is to implement cuts to student services programs and staffing (Adelman & Taylor, 2006; Goodman & Young, 2006). This is due in part to legislation such as No Child Left Behind that has led school district to focus on accountability and student achievement. Unfortunately, not much data exist to help education leaders prioritize student services funding, particularly in relation to the impact these services have on improving student achievement (Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Goodman & Young, 2006; Guttu, Engelke, & Swanson, 2004; Jacques & Brorsen, 2002). And while many education leaders believe student services ultimately help students in schools, “they cannot submit budget requests based on blind faith” (Otwell & Mullis, 1997, p. 347).

Of the limited but growing body of research that has been conducted examining the impact of student services on student outcomes, such as student achievement and dropout prevention, the results have mostly been positive (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; California Department of Education, 2003; Christo, 2005; Cooper, 2005; Franklin, Kim, & Tripodi, 2009; Goodman & Young, 2006; Guttu et al., 2004; Hawken & Hess, 2006; Otwell & Mullis, 1997; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Webb, Brigman, & Campbell, 2005; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). While staffing ratios were not the specific focus of these
studies, one might logically deduce that a change in student services staffing would affect the means and extent to which the services and interventions explored in these studies are provided.

Due to the implementation of No Child Left Behind and its emphasis on accountability and student achievement, the base of research on the impact of student services specifically on student achievement outcomes has begun to grow steadily (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007). However, the impact of additional student services expenditures in the form of increased staffing on student achievement and dropout prevention has not been examined thoroughly. One study conducted by Jacques and Brorsen (2002) indicates that greater expenditures on student services had a negative effect on student performance. More research is needed to inform educational and governmental leadership as to whether student services staffing expenditures in particular would be a worthwhile investment toward achieving greater student achievement outcomes, including reducing school dropout.

This study investigated the relationship student services staff-to-student ratios have on student academic performance and dropout rates. The results of this study may be beneficial to leadership in education and government who make budgetary decisions for schools based on limited resources and, in the case of student services staffing, limited outcome data (Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Goodman & Young, 2006; Guttu et al., 2004; Jacques & Brorsen, 2002; Whiston, 2002). The primary research questions of this study were:

1. Is there a significant relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and student achievement?
2. Is there a significant relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and dropout rates?

Methods

The population examined in this study included all 115 public K–12 school districts, or local education agencies (LEAs), in the state of North Carolina. Charter and private schools were not included in this study. The total K–12 public school enrollment in the state during the sixth months of the 2008–2009 school year was 1,408,848, with LEA enrollment ranging from 581 to 137,148 students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, n.d.a). Of the total student enrollment in the state during the 2008–2009 school year, the racial breakdown was as follows: 54.2% Caucasian, 31.2% African-American, 10.7% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian, and 1.4% Native American (NCDPI, 2009b). Additionally, 186,753 students, or 13.1%, were served by the Exceptional Children’s program (NCDPI, n.d.b). Finally, the most recent data available, which was for the 2007–2008 school year, indicated that 679,877 students in North Carolina public schools, or 48.4%, received free and/or reduced lunch due to economic status (NCDPI, n.d.c).

With regard to student achievement outcomes, 102 of the 115 LEAs in North Carolina met growth during the 2008–2009 school year, while only 12 LEAs met AYP. Additionally, 22,434 students in grades 9–12, or 4.97%, dropped out of North Carolina public schools during the 2007–2008 school year (NCDPI, 2008b). Of these dropouts, 59.66% were male while 40.34% were female (NCDPI, 2008b). The racial breakdown of dropouts in North Carolina public schools during the 2007–2008 school year is as follows: 6.99% of Native Americans, 6.92% of Hispanics, 5.95% of African-Americans, 5.06% of Multiracial, 4.25% of Caucasians, and 2.15% of Asians (NCDPI, 2008b).

This study utilized a quantitative, correlational research design. Data were collected from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on all 115 school districts or LEAs within the state. The data included:

1. The total number of positions employed and specifically coded as school counselor, school nurse, school social worker, or school psychologists within each school district in the state of North Carolina for the 2008–2009 school year.
2. The total number of students enrolled within each school district in the state of North Carolina for the 2008–2009 school year.
4. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status of each school district in the state for the 2008–2009 school year.
5. The dropout rates for grades 9-12 for each school district in the state of North Carolina for the 2007–2008 school year.

Regarding the data collected and utilized for this study, a few definitions unique to North Carolina’s public schools need to be shared:
ABCs – According to NCDPI (2009a), “The ABCs of public education is North Carolina’s comprehensive plan to improve public schools. The plan is based on three goals: (1) strong accountability, ‘A,’ (2) mastery of basic skills, ‘B,’ and (3) localized control, ‘C’” (p. 24).

North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests of Reading Comprehension and Math – The North Carolina EOG Tests of Reading and Math are state-required, multiple-choice exams administered at the end of the school year to all students in grades 3–8 as part of the statewide assessment program (NCDPI, 2008c). “These curriculum-based achievement tests are specifically aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and include a variety of strategies to measure the achievement of North Carolina students” (NCDPI, 2008c, p. 1).

The North Carolina End-of-Course Tests – The North Carolina EOC Tests are state-required, multiple-choice exams administered at the end of the following courses as part of the statewide assessment program: English I, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History (NCDPI, 2008d). “These curriculum-based achievement tests are specifically aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and include a variety of strategies to measure the achievement of North Carolina students” (NCDPI, 2008c, p. 1).

Proficiency – Proficiency levels, also known as achievement levels, are predetermined performance standards that compare a student’s score on the NC end-of-grade test to that of grade-level expectations (NCDPI, 2008c). There are four achievement levels – I, II, III, and IV, with students scoring at Level III and IV being considered at or above grade-level expectations (NCDPI, 2008c). Percent proficiency is a means by which a school, district, or state can demonstrate the number of students in a grade level who are at Level III or IV on a specific grade-level end-of-grade test.

Growth – Growth, also known as academic change, is “an indication of the rate at which students in the school learned over the past year. The standard is equivalent to a year’s worth of growth for a year of instruction” (NCDPI, 2008a, p. 3). For a public school student in North Carolina to demonstrate growth, he or she is “expected to perform as well, or better, on the end-of-grade (EOG) assessment for the current year as she or he did, on average, during the previous two years” (NCDPI, 2008a, p. 3). More specifically:

\[ \text{School / District AC} = \frac{\sum AC\ (EOG)}{\text{Total Count}} \]

where “AC” is academic change and “total count” is the number of academic change scores (NCDPI, 2008a).

Those schools or districts whose average student academic change is greater than or equal to 0 have met expected growth. Those schools or districts whose average student academic change is less than 0 have not met expected growth (NCDPI, 2008a).

The formula for school/district academic change for elementary and middle grades is as follows:

\[ \text{School / District AC} = \frac{\sum AC\ (EOG)}{\text{Total Count}} \]

While growth for elementary and middle grades is based solely upon student performance on End-of-Grade Tests, growth at the high school level is calculated using not only student performance on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Tests, but additional factors as well. When determining high school growth, “change in dropout rate will be multiplied by \(\frac{1}{4}\) the ADM [enrollment] of the school and added to the
denominator [of the formula] such that an increase in dropouts will have the same effect as more students not meeting the academic change target of “0.” Also, change in percent of students graduating in the College Tech Prep Curriculum and College University Prep Curriculum will be multiplied by the number of graduates and added to the numerator [of the formula] such that this change will appear as students who meet the standard” (NCDPI, 2008a, p. 9). Therefore, as part of the high school growth formula, the dropout rate as well as the college-bound program of study completion rate have an influence upon growth status for high schools and their respective LEAs / districts.

For this study, a series of Fisher’s exact tests were performed to determine if a relationship exists between student services staff-to-student ratios and student outcomes in academic achievement and dropout rate. Student outcomes analyzed included:

1. District growth status.
2. District status for Adequate Yearly Progress.
3. Dropout rates for grades 9–12.

Staffing for each of the four identified positions within student services—school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists—was analyzed separately as well as collectively to determine if there is a relationship with student outcomes.

For each of the 115 LEAs in the state of North Carolina, the following ratios were calculated based upon student services staffing data and student enrollment data from the sixth month of the 2008–2009 school year:

1. All student services staff (collectively) within the LEA divided by the total number of students in the LEA;
2. All school counselors within the LEA divided by the total number of students in the LEA;
3. All school social workers within the LEA divided by the total number of students in the LEA;
4. All school nurses within the LEA divided by the total number of students in the LEA;
5. All school psychologists within the LEA divided by the total number of students in the LEA.

For each type of ratio (student services staff-to-students, school counselors-to-students, school social workers-to-students, school nurses-to-students, and school psychologists-to-students), the 115 LEAs were ranked from highest ratio to lowest ratio and divided into two levels: those 58 LEAs with the higher staff to student ratios, and those 57 LEAs with the lower staff to student ratios. As there is an odd number of LEAs in the state of North Carolina, the LEA with the median value in the ranking for each type of ratio was included with the group of LEAs with the higher staff to student ratios.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>District Growth (Met/Not Met)</th>
<th>AYP Status (Met/Not Met)</th>
<th>Dropout Rate (above/below state average)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratio (high/low)</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 1.1</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 2.1</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counselor-to-Student Ratio (high/low)</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 1.2</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 2.2</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Social Worker-to-Student Ratio (high/low)</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 1.3</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 2.3</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Nurse-to-Student Ratio (high/low)</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 1.4</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 2.4</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist-to-Student Ratio (high/low)</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 1.5</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 2.5</td>
<td>Fisher’s exact test 3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results

The first research question examined was whether there was a relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and student achievement. Student achievement was analyzed using two different measures: district growth and adequate yearly progress, or AYP. In examining the relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and district growth, five Fisher's
exact tests were performed. The first analysis compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the growth outcome (met/not met) for each LEA. The four additional analyses performed compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the growth outcome (met/not met) for LEAs for each of the following ratio types: school counselor-to-student ratios, school social worker-to-student ratios, school nurse-to-student ratios, and school psychologist-to-student ratios.

Presentation of the results of each Fisher’s exact test relative to district growth status can be found in Table 2.

Table 2
Results of Fisher’s Exact Tests for Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratios and District Growth Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Ratio Type</th>
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<th>P</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.777</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Counselor-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.558</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Social Worker-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these Fisher’s exact tests relative to district growth status, a significant association was found to exist between school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth status, \( P = 0.043 \), two-tailed Fisher’s exact test).

In examining the relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and AYP status, five Fisher’s exact tests were performed. The first analysis compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the AYP status (met/not met) for each LEA. The four additional analyses performed compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the AYP status (met/not met) for LEAs for each of the following ratio types: school counselor-to-student ratios, school social worker-to-student ratios, school nurse-to-student ratios, and school psychologist-to-student ratios. Presentation of the results of each Fisher’s exact test relative to AYP status can be found in Table 3.

Table 3
Results of Fisher’s Exact Tests for Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratios and District AYP Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Ratio Type</th>
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<th>P</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counselor-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Social Worker-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these Fisher’s exact tests relative to AYP status, a significant association was not found to exist with any of our comparisons.

The second research question examined was whether there was a relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and dropout rates. More specifically, districts were compared based upon whether their respective dropout rate was above or below the state average. In examining the relationship between student services staff-to-student ratios and dropout rates, five Fisher’s exact tests were performed. The first analysis compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the level of the dropout rate (above/below state average) for each LEA. The four additional analyses performed compared the level of ratio (high/low) with the level of the dropout rate (above/below the state average) for LEAs for each of the following ratio types: school counselor-to-student ratios, school social worker-to-student ratios, school nurse-to-student ratios, and school psychologist-to-student ratios. Presentation of the results of each Fisher’s exact test conducted relative to the district dropout rate can be found in Table 4.
Table 4
Results of Fisher’s Exact Tests for Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratios and District Dropout Rate for Grades 9–12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Services Ratio Type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Student Services Staff-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counselor-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Social Worker-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychologist-to-Student Ratio</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these Fisher’s exact tests relative to AYP status, a significant association was not found to exist with any of our comparisons.

Discussion
In all, fourteen of the fifteen null hypotheses of this study were accepted. The only significant finding was that of a positive relationship between school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth status. Given that the results of this study show a significant association exists between district growth status and school psychologist-to-student ratio, it may be inferred that the provision of additional school psychologists by an LEA has a positive effect on the district’s growth status. This finding is supported by the research of Goodman and Young (2006), who found that “the number of psychologists employed by a public school district demonstrate a significant and decisive impact on achievement” (p. 3). Part of the responsibilities of a school psychologist is to administer academic and/or psychological assessments to students for identification of learning or behavior problems (Dupper, 2003). They then interpret the results of these assessments to help determine whether a student is eligible for special education services (Dupper). As part of this process, school psychologists help develop and support prevention and intervention measures for students with learning or behavioral problems (National Association of School Psychologists, 2003).

Given the results of this study, one can draw the conclusion that the efforts of school psychologists help ensure students are properly placed into regular or special education and receive the necessary supports to be successful. These supports may include modifications in the classroom and on achievement tests. Additionally, students who receive special education may be taught more developmentally-appropriate lessons and objectives that differ from students who do not receive special education but are on the standard course of study. Therefore, these students may be administered a different form of achievement testing that the North Carolina End-of-Grade or End-of-Course Tests to measure their academic change or growth.

The results of this study have implications for education leaders, government officials, student services staff, and public school students. While Jacques and Brorsen’s (2002) assertion that expenditures on student support services have a negative relationship to student achievement cannot be verified or refuted by this study, the results indicate that greater expenditures on student support services staffing, for the most part, do not lead to direct improvements in student achievement or dropout rates. Additionally, while numerous other studies cited in the review of literature demonstrated positive student outcomes through the efforts of student services staff, the results of this study, do not support increasing expenditures on student services staffing if the exclusive rationale is to improve district growth, AYP status, and/or dropout rates. An exception is the significant relationship found between school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth. Given this finding, education leaders may want to consider providing additional funding for more school psychologists in order to help improve the academic change, or growth, of students and, therefore, the overall district growth status. This conclusion is supported by the research Christo (2005), Goodman and Young (2006), and Hawken and Hess (2006).

Another factor that should be taken into account is the exclusion of contracted services from the data set. If an individual is not a school district employee, but provides student services through a contractual agreement with the school district, the individual would not be included in the student services staffing totals received in the data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. This was one of the limitations outlined for this study. However, the work of such individuals could have an impact on student
achievement and dropout prevention, thus influencing the results of the study.

Given the growing body of research supporting the work of student services staff in positively affecting student achievement, the results of this study should be considered carefully within the larger context. Funding and staffing decisions made by education and government leaders based exclusively on the results of this study could ultimately harm students and schools. For example, while this study found that school nurse-to-student ratios did not directly impact district growth status for all students, including those who never required the services of the school nurse, what is not measured in this study is whether only those specific students whom were provided services by the school nurse demonstrated growth. Further research is recommended that solely measures the achievement of those students directly served by student services staff. Given the roles and responsibilities of student services staff, these students would most likely be a school’s most at-risk. In this study, the fact that all students’ achievement data were explored may not fairly reflect the work of student services staff with a smaller subset of the entire student body.

With the sample used in this study consisting exclusively of K–12 public schools in North Carolina, caution should be given when generalizing the findings herein to other states across the nation. Dropout rates differ dramatically across states, despite the common method of calculating dropout rates. One variable that may influence this disparity is the age at which a student is permitted by law to quit school within each state. Additionally, many states do not utilize the growth model in effect in North Carolina public schools. Different state can vary widely in their accountability measures and models. Demographics play a role in the AYP status of school districts. Logically, diverse communities are more likely to have schools with a higher number of AYP subgroups. In these communities, it is a greater challenge for their schools to ensure that all subgroups have met their targets and, thus, for the school to be designated as having met AYP. Within North Carolina, the difference in demographics from one region to the next can vary greatly. Such a difference would also likely be found across the nation. Therefore, the results of this study for the state of North Carolina may not be generalizable to other states or regions that are more or less diverse.

The role of each field within student services, and how that role and its related duties are intended to positively impact student outcomes, should be given further consideration in relation to this study’s findings. Given the dichotomy between most of the results of this study—excluding the significant finding regarding school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth—and the growing base of research supporting the work of student services staff, it is strongly recommended that the actual day-to-day duties of student services staff in North Carolina public schools be more closely examined. For example, if a significant number of school counselors in North Carolina public schools are also performing the responsibilities of their schools’ testing coordinator at the behest of their principal or district leadership, it would be difficult for these school counselors to also be able to “deliver a comprehensive school counseling program encouraging all students’ academic, career and personal/social development and helping all students in maximizing student achievement” (American School Counselor Association, 2004). Such a scenario is a plausible explanation for the dichotomy between the findings of this study specific to North Carolina public schools and, contrarily, the growing base of national research supporting the efforts of student services staff in improving student outcomes. Further examination by North Carolina’s education and government leadership is needed to ensure that there is strong alignment with each respective field within student services and the following: national standards for the role and general duties of the profession, North Carolina’s job descriptions for student services staff, and the actual assigned day-to-day responsibilities of student services staff in local districts. Otherwise, unless there is a strong alignment in this regard for each field within student services, the findings of this study may be misapplied resulting in a negative outcome for students.

Based upon the findings and implications of this study, the following recommendations for further study are made. First, the significance of school psychologist-to-student ratios and district growth needs to be examined more closely to determine the specific reasons why this correlation exists. The relationship may be due to the nature of the school psychologist’s duties and how those duties impact a student’s performance on the North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) Tests. These duties include determining whether or not a student qualifies for instructional or testing modification, as well as whether or not a student qualifies for special education and related alternate assessments in lieu of the NC EOGs or EOCs. Additionally, further study may help identify an ideal school psychologist-to-student ratio to maximize the
effect of this relationship. An ideal ratio would be beneficial in conjunction with the results of this study for education leaders and government officials when making decisions regarding the funding and staffing of school psychologists in school districts.

Another recommendation for further study would be to examine the quality of the various student services provided in public schools. While this study explored the quantity of student services staffing and its effect on student achievement and dropout prevention, similar research exploring the effect of identified, high quality student services on student achievement and dropout prevention would be useful. The findings of such a study would help to clarify whether the results found here hold true regardless of the skill level and expertise of the student services staff member, or whether this is a variable that has not been accounted for sufficiently in this study.

References


SRCEA Yearbook
Call for Manuscripts

The SRCEA Yearbook is the official yearbook of the Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration. The Yearbook is nationally refereed and the journal is published in the fall of each year.

FOCUS: Manuscripts should be original works neither previously published nor consequently submitted for publication in other journals. Manuscripts should be written clearly and concisely for a diverse audience, especially educational leadership and management professionals in PK–12 and higher education. Topics should reflect the theme of the 2011 conference, “Gateway to Leadership and Learning.” Priority in the selection of manuscripts will be given to authors whose papers were accepted and presented at the 2011 conference.

FORMAT: Manuscripts should follow the guideline of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Manuscripts should not exceed 25 typed, double-spaced, consecutively numbered pages, including all cited references. Submitted manuscripts which do not follow the APA referencing format will not be reviewed. Illustrative materials, including charts, table, figures, etc., should be clearly labeled with a minimum of 1½” margins.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: An electronic copy of the manuscript must be submitted to the editor; hard copies of the document will not be accepted for review. Manuscripts should include a cover page with the following information: author’s full name, institutional or professional affiliation, email address, mailing address, telephone number, full name of co-authors with their institution or profession affiliation and email addresses, and the full manuscript title. Also note on the title page if the paper was presented at the 2011 SRCEA Annual Conference. Do not include any identifying information on the text pages. All appropriate manuscripts will be submitted to a blind review. Manuscripts must be submitted by November 30, 2011. If accepted, authors will be notified of publication. There is no publication fee.

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A Meta-analysis of Research on the Mediated Effects of Principal Leadership on Student Achievement

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William A. Rouse, Jr.  
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Abstract

Although much exhortatory literature exists describing the importance of the principals' role in instructional leadership, empirical evidence strongly indicates that the role of the principal's actual association with teacher effectiveness is indirect and occurs through mediating factors (Hallinger & Heck, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Mediating factors cited in the literature are (a) school's vision and mission, (b) teacher knowledge, (c) teacher instructional practices, and (d) school culture (Hallinger & Heck, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Robinson 2007). The purpose of this study was to conduct a meta-analysis to ascertain with greater precision the impact of school culture, as defined by Schoen and Teddlie (2008), on teacher effectiveness with student achievement serving as its proxy measure. Ninety studies were reviewed for possible analysis with 30 studies ultimately meeting the criteria for inclusion in the study. These studies included a total of 152 correlations representing 3,378 schools. The study concludes that there is a moderately strong relationship between school culture and student achievement. The results suggest that school culture is likely a significant mediating variable of principal leadership and student achievement.

Introduction

Although research shows that principal leadership is correlated with student achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Walters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003), few direct effects of principal leadership on student achievement are cited in the research on instructional leadership. Rather, the majority of research reveals that principal leadership impacts student achievement through indirect or mediating factors (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Robinson, 2007). Research on educational leadership has, “generated few robust claims” (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006, p. 15).

Examination of the literature on the impact of principal leadership yields varying findings. For example, Vecchio (1987) and Northouse (2004) state that principal leadership style has little effect on the performance of experienced or mature teachers. Other studies have found that principal leadership impacts student achievement through mediating factors, many of which are related to teacher effectiveness (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1997; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Robinson, 2007). Mediating factors are defined by Hallinger and Heck (1996) as the features of an organization that can be manipulated by the leader and, in turn, influence student achievement. Among the school-level factors that impact teacher effectiveness noted in the literature to be positively associated with student achievement are: (a) school’s vision and mission, (b) teacher’s pedagogical and content knowledge, (c) teacher instructional practices, and (d) school culture.

Although each of these factors are associated with improved teacher and student performance, school culture emerges in the literature as a significant mediating factor of principal leadership that is associated with improved teacher effectiveness. Houtte (2004) describes the importance of studying the effects of school culture on teacher effectiveness as follows:

Since culture can be so easily connected with structural and compositional school features on the one hand, and with behavior of individual members of the organization on the other hand, it becomes the most obvious mediating variable to explain the effect of school features on the behavior of members of the organization. (p. 82)

Given the importance of school culture as a mediating variable, this meta-analysis examines the effect size of
school culture on teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this study is to establish an effect size of school culture on student achievement at the kindergarten through twelfth grade level in public schools in the United States. Through a synthesis of existing research, this study examines the mediating effects of culture as identified in the review of literature to determine the overall effect on student achievement based on relevant student accountability results.

The Principal's Contribution to School Culture
During the last two decades much attention has been given to the impact of educational leadership on student outcomes (Kruger, Witziers, & Sleegers, 2007; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). The public, as well as, politicians believe that the quality of principals substantially impacts student progress (Robinson, 2007). Literature pertaining to the nature of principal leadership indicates that the principal’s influence on student outcomes is indirect (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Witziers, Boyken, & Kruger, 2003). Principals’ influence on student outcomes is mediated through intervening variables which impact teacher effectiveness and therefore, student achievement. In their 2004 review of research, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom found that most leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, by their influence on other people in the school which include setting directions and developing people. Hallinger and Heck (1996) contend that while the principal is a key educational input in determining student outcomes, the role of the principal in determining school effectiveness is best understood as part of a “web of environmental, personal, and in-school relationships that combine to influence organizational outcomes” (p. 6). Kruger, Witziers, and Sleegers (2007) also suggest that educational leaders impact the instructional organization and culture of the school, which then impacts student achievement. In order to understand how a principal influences the effectiveness of a school, one must understand how a principal can shape the mediating factors such as school climate, culture, and instructional organization, ranging from school policies and norms, to the practices of teachers.

Defining School Culture
There is no universally agreed upon definition of school culture (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000; Hoy, 1990; Owens 2001; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Researchers and authors have provided a myriad of definitions which are worthy of further examination. The following list outlines many of the definitions provided in a review of the past 25 years of literature:

1. The underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. (Peterson & Deal, 1998, p. 28)
2. Organizational culture is a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together…. Culture is manifest in norms, shared values, and basic assumptions, each occurring at a different level of abstraction. (Hoy, 1990, p. 157)
3. “A way of working that results from the interaction of the parts and perceptions of members that drive such interaction.” (Wiles & Bondi, 2004)
4. “Cultures consist of the shared values and beliefs in the organization…. Culture refers to the things that people ‘agree are true’ and ‘agree are right’.‘” (Fullan, 2005, p. 57)
5. “The values, belief systems, norms, and ways of thinking that are characteristic of the people in the organization.” (Owens, 2001, p. 141)
7. The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define a basic ‘taken-for-granted’ fashion of an organization’s view of itself and its environment. (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000, p. 147)
8. Culture exists in the deeper elements of the school: the unwritten rules and assumptions, the combination of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, the expectations for change and learning that saturate the school’s world. (Peterson & Deal, 2002, p. 9)
9. The “inner reality that reflects what organizational members care about, what they are willing to spend time doing, what and how they celebrate, and what they talk about.” (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004, p. 1)
10. The beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize a school in terms of how people treat and feel about each other, the extent to
which people feel included and appreciated, and rituals and traditions reflecting collaboration and collegiality. (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004, p. 1)

Houtte (2004) called for greater conceptual clarity when defining school culture. In response to Houtte’s (2004) call for conceptual clarity in defining school culture and climate, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) make the argument that school climate and school culture represent different levels of the same construct and go on to propose that it may be more appropriate to think of school climate as a subset of school culture. This is contrary to the thinking of previous researchers who view school culture as a component of school climate. Schoen and Teddlie state that although many researchers have defined school climate differently, these definitions frequently use a survey to measure a given set of school attributes. In their research, they concluded that climate definitions are typically viewed from a psychological perspective and have been more specific than definitions of culture, which are typically viewed from an anthropological perspective and defined in a more general and holistic manner. Given these definitions of school climate and culture, research on school climate has tended to involve more quantitative methods, while research on school culture tended to focus on qualitative studies (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Schoen and Teddlie provide the following framework to describe their new model of school culture. They describe The Dimensions of Culture as follows:

1. **Dimension I: Professional Orientation**—This includes “the activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty” (p. 140). This dimension incorporates the concepts of: (a) professionalism, (b) professional learning communities, (c) norms of collegiality, (d) teacher professionalism, (e) collaborative cultures, (f) organizational learning, and (g) learning organizations.

2. **Dimension II: Organizational Structure**—This dimension includes “the style of leadership and communication and processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business” (p. 140). This includes not only the style of leadership that exists in the school, but also things such as who is involved in leadership activities, the development of vision and mission statements, the formulation of goals and action plans, and the degree of consensus and commitment of the staff.

3. **Dimension III: Quality of the Learning Environment**—This third dimension includes “the intellectual merit of the activities which students are typically engaged” (p. 140). This has to do with the level of rigor expected from the students as they utilize and construct knowledge.

4. **Dimension IV: Student-Centered Focus**—This dimension deals with, “the collective efforts and programs offered to support student achievement” (p. 140). This dimension deals with the level to which individual student needs are met and examines such things as: (a) parent involvement, (b) student support services, (c) differentiated instructional strategies, (d) the disaggregation and analysis of individual student achievement data, and (e) the use of student data to make decisions about instruction.

According to Schoen and Teddlie, “…these dimensions embody the essence of school culture, they should have predictive validity for determining the effectiveness of school improvement efforts” (p. 142–143). “Unfortunately, there is not much research empirically and quantitatively relating organizational culture to the outcomes of the organization” (Houtte, p. 83).

**Defining Student Achievement**

Research reveals that there is no clear, quantitatively measurable definition of teacher effectiveness. However, research indicates that student achievement is a commonly used and justifiable proxy measure of teacher effectiveness. Student achievement data provides a quantifiable measure of teacher effectiveness that can be correlated with quantitative measures of school culture. Strong, Ward, Tucker, and Hindman (2008) provide evidence that teachers achieving high student growth also demonstrate teacher effectiveness using other definitions of effectiveness. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, student achievement is used as the quantitative measure representing teacher effectiveness.

**Method**

A total of 90 quantitative studies were identified for possible inclusion in the study to address the primary research question of the effect size of school culture on student achievement. After the elimination of studies not meeting the inclusion criteria, a total of 30 studies remained and are included in the present meta-analysis.
Of the studies included in the meta-analysis, sixty-seven percent of the data represented performance in elementary and middle schools. The distribution of studies by cultural dimension is summarized as follows: Dimension I: Professional Orientation was represented by the fewest number of studies, 8; while Dimension II: Organizational Structure and Dimension III: Quality of the Learning Environment, were represented by the most studies with 18 and 17 studies respectively. Dimension IV: Student-Centered Focus was represented by nine studies and five studies contained elements that addressed all four dimensions of culture. Studies could represent more than one cultural dimension. Over half of the studies (57%) included in the meta-analysis are unpublished studies, with fourteen studies in the form of unpublished doctoral dissertations.

Effects Model
Determining the degree of homogeneity of the studies included in a meta-analysis helps to define the statistical model to be used. A Q statistic was computed to explore whether the variability across effect sizes was greater than expected from sampling error alone thus indicating a need for a random-effects model. Developed by Cochran (1954), the Q-statistic is based on the sum of the squared deviations of each study’s effect estimate from the overall effect estimate, weighted by the inverse of the variance of each study. The Q statistic follows a chi-square distribution with k-1 degrees of freedom (where k is the number of studies). A non-significant finding for the Q statistic will often lead a researcher to adopt a fixed-effects model under the assumption that the effect sizes derived from the studies differ by sampling error only. Based on a significant result for the Q statistic for these data (p = .001), the hypothesis of homogeneity was rejected and a random-effects model was implemented. This significant Q statistic result was not unexpected given the essential random differences between studies that were associated with the dimension of culture chosen and other study variables (e.g. achievement measures, etc.). Incorporation of a random effects model allows for the estimation of the mean of a distribution of effects which prevents the underestimation of the weight of a small study or the overestimation of the weight of a large study (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins & Rothstein, 2007).

Analysis of Effect Size
A total of 30 studies were included in this meta-analysis analyzing the effect of school culture as defined by Schoen and Teddlie and student achievement. These studies included a total of 152 correlations and included 3,378 schools. Using Biostat’s Comprehensive Meta-Analysis Software Version 2.0 (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2005), all correlations were converted into Fisher z scores which were then converted back to correlations for presentation. The effect size z and its variance is used to yield a combined effect and confidence limits in the Fisher z metric (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2007). Based on the rule of thumb for product moment correlation effect size magnitudes suggested by Lipsey and Wilson (2001), correlation effect size values are considered small if less than or equal to .10, medium if equal to .25, and large if greater than or equal to .40. This meta-analysis yielded a combined effect of \( r = .349 \) which is interpreted as a moderately strong effect of school culture on student achievement.

Publication Bias
To examine for possible publication bias, several methods were employed by the researchers. A funnel plot of the standard error on the vertical axis and the converted Fisher Z effect size on the horizontal axis was computed and examined. The plot revealed a largely symmetrical distribution around the mean effect size with no visual indications of extreme outliers suggesting that the probability of publication bias is low (see Figure 1). In the present meta-analysis, the funnel plot presents a balanced picture of the included studies. Additionally, unpublished studies represent approximately 57% of the included studies in the meta-analysis. Based on this information, it is unlikely that publication bias is present within the study.
The fail-safe N estimates the number of unpublished studies needed to nullify a positive effect (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). This meta-analysis incorporates data from 30 studies, which yielded a z-value of 9.581 and corresponding 2-tailed p-value of 0.001. The fail-safe N is 5,992. This means that the researcher would need to locate and include 5,992 null studies in order for the combined 2-tailed p-value to exceed 0.05. In other words, there would need to be 200 missing studies that show a negative or non-significant effect for every observed study for the effect to be nullified. The fail-safe N test provides additional support for a lack of publication bias.

**Conclusion**

Whether a school culture is considered toxic, as defined by Deal and Peterson (1999) or is functional, an understanding and recognition of the culture of the school is essential to achieve and/or maintain high levels of student performance. The findings of the current meta-analysis validate the high level of importance that school principals must place on school culture as they seek to achieve high levels of student achievement. In today’s world of high stakes accountability, student achievement is ultimately the final measure by which the effectiveness of a school, teacher, and principal is judged. It is crucial for practicing school principals to recognize school culture as a major factor contributing to the ultimate goal of improved student achievement. Stolp (1994) states the importance of principals recognizing the critical nature of school culture as follows:

> By deepening their understanding of school culture, these leaders will be better equipped to shape the values, beliefs, and attitudes necessary to promote a stable and nurturing environment. (Stolp, 1994, p. 1)

Many practicing school leaders feel the public and political pressure of achieving high levels of student performance in as quick of a manner as possible. This pressure has led to the search for a quick, magic bullet approach to improving student achievement. Programs are often quickly implemented, without appropriate study, input, planning and training, and are then
abandoned just a quickly based on lack of improvement in student achievement. Little thought is given to the impact that school culture plays in success or failure of any improvement effort. In many cases, principals will have to develop the culture that they want within their school, and this takes time. Quick fixes, if successful at all, only exist at the surface and will quickly deteriorate if they are not supported by the culture of the school.

Establishing a school culture supportive of continuous improvement is the only way to provide opportunities for lasting and sustainable school improvement to occur. Principals must invest the necessary time and resources in order to develop such a culture. Research indicates that school culture correlates with teachers’ attitudes towards their work and stronger school cultures have more highly motivated teaching (Stolp, 1994). A positive school culture that encourages continuous improvement and leads to more highly motivated teachers, leads to more effective teaching, and ultimately higher student achievement. “Unless we address the issue of school culture … there is little chance that school improvement will be achieved” (Hopkins, 1995, in Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 148).

Implications

The finding of a strong moderate relationship between school culture and teacher effectiveness as measured by student achievement provides practicing school administrators with an area of focus to improve the effectiveness of teachers and achieve higher levels of student performance. Given the many mediating factors that exist in the field of education, it is important that principals have empirical evidence that relates to specific mediating factors that lead to improved student achievement. This finding will be beneficial for school principals to assess the culture of their school and develop strategies to design any areas of weakness in school culture. Based on the study findings, improvements in school culture should lead to improvement in student achievement, and by proxy, indicate improved teacher effectiveness.

The findings also support the inclusion of school culture measures as a component of administrative evaluation process. If there is a significant correlation between school culture and student achievement as this study shows, then administrators should seek to maintain, establish, or improve a positive culture within their school. By including evaluations of school culture as part of administrative evaluations, principals will be held accountable for trying to ensure that a positive culture exists or is created.

The results of these meta-analyses also have implications for the inclusion of coursework and fieldwork experiences that introduce and reinforce the importance of assessing, establishing and maintaining a school culture that emphasizes the importance of school culture overall and each of Schoen and Teddlie’s dimensions of school culture.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the most obvious question left to answer is how can practicing administrators improve the culture of schools? Are there specific practices that can be put in place? Do certain models of professionalism and collaboration lend themselves more to the establishment of and maintenance of positive school culture than others? One current movement that is underway which may need validation of its effectiveness in improving school culture is the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model which many schools and systems are beginning to implement.

Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) conducted a review of research examining the impact of PLCs on teaching practices and student learning. Based on their findings, few studies on PLCs were found to, “move beyond the self-report of positive impact” (p. 80). Their research found 11 studies, 10 in the United States and one in England that examine the impact of PLCs on teaching practices and students learning. Of these 11 studies, only eight made an attempt to make connections between PLCs and improved student achievement. There is a definite need for additional empirical research relating PLCs to improved teacher effectiveness and increased student achievement. In addition, other models designed to improve the culture of the school should be examined empirically to determine their effect on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

The present study did not contain sufficient numbers of studies by cultural dimension to effectively analyze the correlation of each of Schoen and Teddlie’s dimensions of culture. Additional quantitative research in each of the dimensions, especially Dimension I: Professional Orientation and Dimension IV: Student-Centered Focus, will provide valuable data to further prioritize the dimensions of culture and possibly give principals and other school leaders more specific areas of focus.
that may lead to improved student achievement. The literature in this area of also illustrates the continued need for the development of an agreed upon definition of school culture so effective processes and instruments can be developed to measure the same components of school culture and provide data which is comparable from school to school. The model of culture, as defined by Schoen and Teddie, provides a possible starting point for such a model.

References


The Leadership Challenge: Developing an Ethical Compass

Carol A. Schultz
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Abstract

In his book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell (2002) provides three rules: the “Law of the Few,” the “Stickiness Factor,” and the “Power of Context.” He contends these three rules provide a road map of how to reach a tipping point and make sense of epidemics which have confronted us throughout history and continue to challenge us today. This paper applies his three rules to administrative best practices and examines the following questions: What can be identified as a tipping point in decision-making? Is there a tipping point to identify how decision-making can advance, or is decision-making evolving into a new iteration?

The intent of this paper is to increase the ethical awareness of administrators, and define approaches with their application to cultivate an ethical compass by which to lead. Administration is demanding and complex. No one theory or source of ethical standards can be recognized as the correct ideology. Self-reflection and the identification of ethical beliefs will enable the leader to formulate decisions with a clear mind and conscience.

Although the task is tedious and at times appears to be unobtainable, leaders need to be reminded that change is a gradual process. Leaders will reflect and identify their values and discover their ethical compass, beginning the process of creating a tipping point, fostering ethical leadership and decision-making.

Introduction

In his book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell, (2002) provides three rules: the “Law of the Few,” the “Stickiness Factor,” and the “Power of Context.” He contends that these three rules provide a road map of how to reach a tipping point and make sense of epidemics, which have confronted us throughout history and continue to challenge us today. Applying his three rules to administrative best practices, what can be identified as a tipping point in decision-making? Is there a tipping point to identify how decision-making can advance, or is decision-making evolving into a new iteration?

Major national newspapers throughout the nation report on a disconnecting trend of ethical behavior that forces educators to question the integrity of certain behaviors and decisions made within the profession. Educational leaders are confronted with issues such as test score tampering, financial indiscretions, and decisions based on hidden agendas. These stories support the need for a “tipping point” and a new focus—a convergence on returning to core values and the call for ethical professionalism as tenets for educational reform. When did the profession allow political agendas, special interest groups and self-interest issues to drive the decisions and vision of educational leadership?

The focus of this paper will relate the three rules in Gladwell’s book, *The Tipping Point*, and their correlation to the preparation of ethical decision-making for educational leaders. Reflecting upon Gladwell’s three simple rules of ethical leadership as a compass, administrators can create a tipping point in educational organizations for improved student achievement.

Developing an Ethical Compass

What is a tipping point? According to Gladwell, it can be a critical intersection when things begin to change, the launching of an idea, or a contagious behavior. At times, it is a dramatic moment in an epidemic, when all perspectives change at once. However defined, a tipping point is a point of no return. It is a time when change occurs, either positive or negative, forever altered. The educational field has experienced tipping points. Issues such as desegregation, special education, federal and state mandates, No Child Left Behind, charter schools, funding formulas, standards-based education, and universal curriculum are but a few applications that have influenced a dramatic evolution in education.

Administrators are not only challenged by the reforms, but they must also defend, interpret and make sense out of the rules, guidelines and mandates. It is no wonder newspaper headlines and lead articles in the local and national news focus on indiscretions of school...
personnel and school systems. Often issues such as test score tampering, financial tampering; hidden agendas, favoritism and nepotism guide the news. What causes administrators to follow the unethical path of leadership? The answer may be found within the leader and his/her inability to identify and acknowledge his/her ethical compass.

An ethical compass can be defined as experience, knowledge, and awareness which have been internalized through years of observation and interaction. An ethical compass is thoughts, feelings, actions and decisions. It is the belief that drives one’s perceptions of what he/she believes when formulating a decision. What do I stand for? What do I believe in? What is important to me? What is at stake? What is the best decision all factors considered? Answers to these questions are guided by an internal ethical compass.

Begley and Zaretsky (2004) defined an ethical leader as one who has the presumption of knowing and doing what is right as an implicit behavior. Ethical behavior can manifest itself when a leader exhibits preferred patterns of professional practice (Ozar, 2001). Ethics guide actions and largely determine the results of those actions (Becker, 2004). Within educational leadership, there are multiple influences which have power and authority to lead administrators away from the path that is ethical and the person he/she is believed to be.

Perhaps more importantly to developing an ethical compass, a leader must understand what does not define ethics. Ethics is not a set of feelings, nor is it a religion, law, cultural norms, or a science. Identifying what ethics is not compounds the ability to define what it is and how one should act. Two fundamental challenges arise when identifying ethical standards: what are ethical standards based upon and how do those standards apply to specific situations (Velasquez, et al., 1987). If our ethics are not guided by feelings, religion, law, accepted social practice, or science, on what are they based?

The National Education Association (NEA) developed a code of ethics for administrators (NEA, Code of Ethics, 1975). The Code of Ethics indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards to judge conduct. In the preamble, educators are reminded of

... believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles ... accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards ... recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process ... desire for the respect and confidence of one’s colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community, provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. (p. 1)

When creating a framework for thinking ethically, five sources of ethical standards or approaches can be used as a reference: utilitarian, rights, fairness or justice, common good and virtue (Velasquez et al., 1987). When describing utilitarianism, some philosophers adopt the term consequentialism to describe the reasoning associated with this approach (Beckner, 2004). The right or wrong of the act is determined by the goodness or badness of the result. “The act is good if it brings about more pleasure than pain or prevents pain. The act is considered wrong if it brings about more pain than pleasure, or prevents pleasure from occurring” (Pojman, 2002, p. 109). Simply stated, the utilitarian approach manages consequences as it attempts to increase the good and reduce the harm.

Philosophers suggest ethical actions are based upon the rights of others. This approach is established on the belief that one has the “responsibility to respect the rights of others” (Beckner, 2004, p. 25). These rights include the concepts of liberty, independence and individuality. The concepts of freedom, responsibility and duty are also identified in this approach. The question argued is: What constitutes a right?

Aristotle and Plato propose that equals should be treated equally. The concept of equality leads to the definition and understanding of justice. “Justice is not mere strength, but harmonious strength-desires and men falling into that order which constitutes intelligence and organization; justice is not the right of the stronger, but the effective harmony of the whole” (Beckner, 2004, p. 36). The common good approach suggests the relationships of society form basic ethical reasoning. It is from reasoning that respect and compassion are important for the welfare of everyone in society (Velasquez et al., 1987).

The final ethical approach is often identified as virtue or value theory. “Value theory identifies virtues as the key to ethical thought and action” (Beckner, 2004, p. 72). Value ethics are described by characteristics such as honesty, compassion, courage, love, integrity, and fairness. This concept is established in the teachings of
the philosophers Socrates and Aristotle. Virtue ethics focus on personal reflection. Reflection usually occurs in the form of a series of questions: What makes life worth living? What kind of a person will I become if I make this decision? Is this action consistent with my beliefs?

As one contemplates various approaches and considers the stakeholders in a school system, the ability to balance influences becomes a formidable task. At times, leaders may disengage, and not follow their ethical compass. They drift from their beliefs on best practice. Instead of doing what is right, they become more concerned with making everyone happy. According to Ciulla (2003), making everyone happy is anti-ethical to the role of an administrator. An administrator cannot please all stakeholders or make everyone happy. Instead, the decision should be based on the correctness of the action, not the popularity of a response. The goal to make everyone happy is not feasible given the divergent beliefs of stakeholders in a district.

Testing Ciulla’s theory, research was conducted at a four-year university in Chicago (Isreal, 2007). The sample included eighty-eight students enrolled in a graduate level leadership program. They were asked: If you could grant one wish for your child, or what you believe your parents would want for you, what would it be? Respondents were to choose one of the following responses: smart, successful, good or happy. Of those responding to the question of granting one wish for a child, forty-seven respondents selected happy as the most desired answer. Twenty-two participants choose successful, followed by fourteen choosing good, and five choosing smart.

Those responding to the question of identifying what they thought their parents wanted for them, the forty-three students chose happy as the most desired answer, followed by thirty-four answering successful, nine responding to good, and two indicating smart. To further test this concept, doctoral students in an educational leadership and administration program at Chicago State University (CSU) were informally posed the same questions by this author. Responses mirrored the results recorded in Isreal’s study. CSU students consistently selected happy as the primary response with successful as a secondary choice. These examples support the development of ethical awareness and reasoning for future educational leaders who face multiple conflicting influences in order to raise their awareness of the difference of making people happy as opposed to making the correct ethical decision.

Administrators who base their decisions on the premise of making people happy will falter as a leader. The role of an administrator is to do the right thing based on knowledge, expertise and an ethical compass. Gathering, analyzing and reviewing information prior to making a decision is logical. This process is not always straightforward. The solution is not readily transparent. The question remains: how does an administrator navigate a decision, making sure to ascertain the action reflects values and norms that are ethically based and simultaneously adhere to their internal compass?

One might begin by asking: What do I believe and what is the theoretical framework for those beliefs? A leader whose foundation is based on deontology might consider questions focusing on moral duties and obligations and how to weighs one's moral duty against another. Following these principles, a deontologist would conclude duties and obligations must be determined objectively and absolutely, not subjectively. One way to view this perspective is to declare the rule is to be followed without exception. A leader who adheres to this orientation would make a decision single-mindedly.

Leaders’ philosophies which are consistent with a utilitarian approach would make decisions in which actions are based on the situation; consequently, different situations require divergent actions. This leader formulates decisions, based on the premise that duties and obligations are determined subjectively.

Both avenues are viable paths to base a decision, yet the outcomes could be as diverse as the belief system. This implies that the decision is important, but more valuable is the leader’s ability to identify beliefs, ethics and morals, and to base their decisions on what is authentic according his/her beliefs and an ethical approach. Consider the adoption of a zero tolerance policy in a school district. Depending upon the administrator’s belief system, one might struggle with his/her ethical compass supporting the belief that equal punishment is correct regardless of the variables leading to the infraction.

Making Decisions
Rules do not provide answers for problems when making a decision; rules help to guide what is considered ethical. The ability to articulate an ethical
decision relies on trust, confidence and integrity in relationships. Ethical decision facilitates open dialogue and communication. Developing a moral compass is achieved by combining those thoughts which one believes and the process or method in which a decision is made.

The following figure is the product of dialogue and debate at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (2009). The questions provide a framework which can be followed as a guide when making a decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize an Ethical Issue</td>
<td>Could this decision or situation be damaging to someone or to some group?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does this decision involve a choice between a good and bad alternative, or perhaps between two “goods” or between two “bads”?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is this issue about more than what is legal or what is most efficient? If so, how?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get the Facts</td>
<td>What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are not known? Can I learn more about the situation?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do I know enough to make a decision?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Are some concerns more important? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? Have I identified creative options?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Alternative Actions</td>
<td>Which option will produce the most good and do the least harm? (The Utilitarian Approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which option best respects the rights of all who have a stake? (The Rights Approach)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which option treats people equally or proportionately? (The Justice Approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which option best serves the community as whole, not just some members? (The Common Good Approach)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which option leads me to act as the sort of person I want to be? (The Virtue Approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Decision and Test It</td>
<td>Considering all these approaches, which option best, addresses the situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I told someone I respect—or told a television audience—which option I have chosen, what would they say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act and Reflect on the Outcome</td>
<td>How can my decision be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all stakeholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How did my decision turn out and what have I learned from this specific situation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. A Framework for Ethical Decision Making**

**Creating a Tipping Point**

Once an administrator has reflected on his/her ethical compass, the next challenge is the ability to articulate his/her beliefs. These beliefs require consistency and understanding, especially when applying these beliefs to the stakeholders in a school system. Leaders confront a unique set of ethical demands. Schools are institutions designed to teach social norms. The administrators are tasked with decisions in selecting one ethical value over another. These decisions address a host of issues from day-to-day dilemmas to implementing school board policies and federal mandates. At times, the right or wrong response is unclear. Teachers, parents and students demand the administrator be an unbiased leader capable, of making the proper ethical decision.
To meet this challenge, an administrator has an obligation of sharing his/her beliefs and thought processes to bring credibility, consistency and commitment to the school system. The main goal is not to have everyone agree with a decision, but to understand the theoretical foundation applied in producing the decision. Once the thought processes for the decision is articulated, respect for the decision can be achieved. Where and how does one begin to articulate an ethical framework? One method is to apply Gladwell’s three rules for creating a tipping point: Law of the Few, Stickiness Factor and Power of Context.

**Law of the Few**
The ability to be a connector, a maven and a salesman comprise the first rule Gladwell titled, *Law of the Few*. In order to share a belief system which drives decision making, one must become a connector, a person who is social and has the ability to make friends and acquaintances. This person also must become a maven, one who accumulates knowledge and then possesses the ability to share information and draw others into the conversation of thoughts and ideas. According to Gladwell, it is paramount to begin with a small group, even one or two people, in which ideas are shared. An administrator would not put this matter on an agenda for a meeting, but rather have meaningful individual conversations sharing ideas, thoughts and beliefs.

**Stickiness Factor**
While sharing thoughts and ideas, the second rule is the ability to deliver a memorable and irresistible message, ergo the *Stickiness Factor*. The ability to articulate beliefs in a concise and well-presented format allows listeners to continue to reflect on the concepts after the conversation has concluded. The continued reflection long after the conversation has ended assists in the further deliberation of a concept. The stickiness factor could also manifest itself not only in the concept itself, but the manner in which it was presented. Content and/or delivery of the message provide the stickiness factor.

**Power of Context**
Implementing the third rule, for creating a tipping point requires the accumulation of small movements in order to create one contagious movement. The *Power of Context* is acquired by dispersing the message into smaller sections and then, those sections coming together as a unit.

Consider the stakeholders in a school system: parents, staff, faculty, community, board members, and students. As the leader of a school system begins to share his/her beliefs, philosophies and theories that define them as an educator, dialogue with stakeholders commences. The conversations could be formal or informal, individual or within small groups. As paradigms are articulated, conversations and the content of those conversations begin to “stick” and become talking points. It is the power of all conversations coming together along with the law of the few and the stickiness factor that initiates the tipping point of change.

**Conclusion**
A leader’s responsibility is complex and involves several dimensions. To be an ethical leader, beliefs need to be developed and followed in a consistent manner. Starratt (1991) argues that an ethical leader will consider the theme of caring, justice and critique. Leaders will examine dilemmas from different perspectives and reframe issues. Starratt insists an effective leader should have the habit of reflection. Starratt believes all decisions can be categorized as consequentialist and no consequentialist. However defined, it can be declared that there is an “inherent moral and ethical relationship between those who teach and those who are taught” (Zumbay & Soltis, 2005, p. 3).

The intent of this paper was to increase the ethical awareness of administrators, define approaches and their application to reflect an ethical compass by which to lead. Administration is demanding and complex. No one theory or source of ethical standards can be recognized as the correct method. Self-reflection and the identification of ethical beliefs will enable the leader to start making decisions with a clear mind and conscience.

Sergiovanni’s (1992) *Head, Heart and Hand Theory* illustrates the lenses of leadership and the interrelationship of developing an ethical compass. The heart of leadership is that which one believes values and dreams. The head of leadership represents the theories of practice a leader develops over time and reflects upon. The hand represents the decisions, actions and behaviors of the leader. “The head of leadership is shaped by the heart and drives the hand: in turn reflections on decisions and actions affirm or reshape the heart and the head” (p. 7). Simply stated, a leader must respond from within, guided by the ethical compass which has developed over time, experience and
education to apply the best practices to today’s challenges.

In this author’s opinion, improvement of ethical leadership commences with a focus on three aspects of professionalism: behavior, values, and character. Although individually identified, these three areas intersect and, in combination, influence the ethical leadership of an administrator. A leader’s behavior, values, and character defines the leadership style and approach as well as the credibility and sincerity of their actions. In order to shift the acceptance of “things as usual” ethical leaders must ask difficult questions of themselves when making decisions. Understanding and knowing ones beliefs and what one values form the baseline of ethical leadership. Ethical leaders act according to their ethical compass that is part of their character and level of professionalism.

Patterson (2011) depicts personal strengths as a triangulation of three interconnecting concepts: what a person says, what a person does, and what a person values. The relationship between what a person says and does builds the foundation of trust and reliability. The relationship between what a person does and values provides insight to a person’s character. Finally, the relationship between what a person values and says, speaks to the person’s authenticity. This triangulation of personal strengths forms the foundation of an ethical compass. The ability to recognize, identify and reflect on beliefs establishes the process of developing an ethical leadership.

It is this commitment to the personal ethical compass which defines ethical leadership. Your ethical compass is more than purchasing the latest technology or implementing the best practice in curriculum delivery; it is the deep commitment to be fair. It is the process of understanding and valuing all stakeholders, and not allowing a decision to be influenced by pressures arising from personal interest groups.

Ethical leaders initiate transformational change by reflecting on who they are and what they believe. The process begins by applying Gladwell’s three rules: Law of the Few, Stickiness Factor, and Power of Context, which forms the foundation of ethical leadership. The movement toward ethical leadership is accomplished one person at a time. Although the task is tedious and at times appears to be unobtainable, leaders need to be reminded that change is a gradual process. Leaders will reflect and identify their values and discover their ethical compass, beginning the process of creating a tipping point, fostering ethical leadership and decision-making.

References


Making Change Last: A Character Education Program

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Abstract

As far back as 1980, experts told us how to make change last laying out a 5-step process to ensure that professional development in P-12 schools took root. In 1994, the National Staff Development Council asserted that schools, districts, higher education, and state level practitioners typically focus only on the first component of this staff development model. It is doubtful that we are any different today. This presentation examines this process in light of a district-wide character education program initiated in a large urban school district. Those schools who attended to the latter steps experienced fuller implementation of the program. Most change efforts in schools do not endure because administrators fail to attend to effective change processes. This paper lays out data that supports this basic truth.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
— King Solomon (Prov. 22:16), c. 900 B.C.

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation.
We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence,
but we rather have those because we have acted rightly.
Good habits formed at youth make all the difference.”
— Aristotle, 350 B.C.

“What we need in education is a genuine faith in the existence of moral principles which are capable of effective application.”
— John Dewey, 1909

“Human beings must be trained in obedience to moral intuitions almost before they are rational enough to discuss them, or they will be corrupted before the time for discussion arrives.”
— C. S. Lewis, 1942

“It is helpful to keep in mind that character education is not a new idea. It is an idea as old as education itself; indeed, it is the school's most important mission.”
— Thomas Lickona, 1993

“Education at its best should expand the mind and build character.”
— Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, 2007

Introduction

To echo the thoughts of Lickona (1993) above, there is nothing new in our nation’s history or the history of the world where character education is concerned. The other quotes above suggest that considerable attention has been devoted to this topic over the centuries and how it applies to making sure that our youth are provided with the instruction and environment necessary to perpetuate a civilized culture. They also suggest it is important that this instruction be a part of their formal education, that the schools play a critical role in making sure that children in their charge are provided direct and intentional training in this critical area of the curriculum.

What is new is that this part of our schools’ curriculum has had to become more formalized into a separate (or intentionally integrated) part of the curriculum. Traditionally, what has been called values education or moral education was a “given” within the curriculum of all public and private schools, but it has more recently (within the past decade or two) been discouraged by groups wary of exactly whose values or morals were being taught and of those who might force their
religious views on others, especially the impressionable youth in our nation’s P–12 schools.

Character, virtue, and morality have resurfaced in recent years as key issues of emphasis in education reform. Educators, parents, and American society in general seem to share a heightened awareness of serious deficiencies in the upbringing of increasing numbers of our youth (The Shell Poll: Crisis of Conscience, 1999). “Upbringing,” in this context, refers to intentional influences of family, supported by other institutions, on children and youth that lead to wholesome habits of behavior and decision patterns. Problems once identified with at-risk youth are now evident among youth in general, including affluent youth.

Over two decades ago, when A Nation At Risk (1983) was published, it was regarded by many as alarmist and misguided. The report’s concern with low academic achievement was eventually answered by a focus on preparation for achievement testing. The search for causes led practitioners and researchers to examine the learning environment. Attention was drawn to the dismal moral climate in youth society and, by extension, in the classrooms. The search for what had led to the declines revealed that a likely contributor was ineffective moral guidance. To fully address the achievement issue, schools and communities would have to succeed with character issues.

Moral education, in the traditional sense, is returning to an increasing number of public schools in America. Genuine change of a prevailing mindset and practice in modern education is usually gradual,

... but we have seen one notable exception to this in recent times. With astonishing rapidity, education in the United States has ended its failed experiment in separating the intellectual from the moral and choosing the intellectual as its only legitimate province. (Damon, 2002, p. vii)

The questions arise by whom and by what process students’ moral development should be addressed.

The current state of character education in the United States reveals that educators are bringing in a whole new era in character education (Damon, 2002). What remains to be demonstrated is the lasting effect of these efforts. Educational reforms such as character education require leadership, preparation, coordination, and broad support. The heart of educational reform may be found in the collective work of classroom teachers who foster a positive change in students. The key responsibility, however, to implementing, coordinating, and sustaining a school-wide reform effort such as character education lies with the leadership of educational administrators.

Adult Learning and Change

The literature on adult education provides us with some enduring and research-based principles on which we can make some fundamental assumptions about how adults learn best. Knowles (1984) provided the field with his five principles; all are applicable to the literature on the change process, but two directly apply— at least as discussed below: (1) adult learning should be problem-focused, and (2) effective adult education requires that learning have an immediate application of the newly gained knowledge. If a problem does not exist, then there is essentially no need for new adult learning to take place. All innovation in schools is problem-based. We are attempting to “fix” something or at least “make something better” through new approaches. Keeping learning focused on the problem under consideration is not an issue with professional development in schools.

The second concept mentioned above has the greatest impact on change itself and upon the connection between adult learning and implementing an innovation within an educational institution. This notion is that adult learning should have some sort of immediate application of the newly gained knowledge. In the Hall and Hord (2006) model below, “checking progress” and “continuing assistance” suggests that application of the innovation and its use is being monitored and supported. The next section deals with the issue of adult learning on effective professional development in greater detail.

The Problem with Implementing Programs

Effective staff development models in education have been in the literature since the early 1980s. Joyce and Showers (1980) identified five components of effective staff development (i.e., changing teacher behavior through formalized training).

1. Presentation of theory or the description of a new skill/behavior
2. Demonstration/modeling of the new strategy or skill
3. Initial practice in a protected or simulated setting — most often in the workshop session
4. Open-ended feedback about performance of the practice is promptly provided
5. Follow-up coaching is provided as the new idea/skill is being applied on the job back “at home.”
Based on the recommendations of Joyce and Showers, Bush (1984) found the following concerning the amount of transfer that takes place in the staff development session back to the classroom for implementation as a standardized practice:

1. **Description** = 10% of the persons could transfer or use the skill in the workplace
2. **Add Modeling/Demonstration** = an additional 3% could transfer or use the skill in the workplace
3. **Add Practice** = an additional 3% could transfer or use the skill in the workplace
4. **Add Feedback** = an additional 3% could transfer or use the skill in the workplace

By employing these four components, only 19 persons out of 100 (19%) were able to perform the new skill effectively and consistently in the classroom. Bush was demonstrating the importance of the fifth and last step of the Joyce and Showers model, coaching. Bush found that when this step was incorporated within the holistic staff development model, a mind-boggling 95% of the participants were able to transfer the skills effectively and consistently back to the classroom.

Unfortunately, 10 years later the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, TX made this startling assertion: “A large majority of school, district, higher education, and state level practitioners agree that staff development offerings typically focus only on the first component of a staff development model articulated by Joyce and Showers (1980), omitting the remaining four” (Hord, 1994, p. 1). Not only was education as a whole omitting the last step, they were omitting the last four steps. More school districts today are recognizing the importance of coaching than in the past (Knight, 2006), but many school leaders, unaware of the importance of this final—but very critical—step in the change process, are severely limiting their schools’ and their staff’s ability to change the behavior of their students through programmatic efforts. When one “treatment” fails to have the desired effect, school or district administrators simply add another one. As a result, school teachers around the country are experiencing what has been called “initiative fatigue” (Reeves, 2010), where the number of ongoing initiatives (new programs or change efforts) increases to the point where teachers encounter overlapping/redundant strategies, experience confusion about what pieces go where, become overwhelmed by these multiple reforms, get burned out, and are turned off by any change effort within their schools, ultimately adopting a “This, too, shall pass” mentality.

### CARE for Kids Character Education Program

The current study was an attempt to determine if the administrative behavior of change agents within schools (i.e., principals/assistant principals) had an influence on how thoroughly their faculties and staffs adopted a new initiative—in this case, a character education program. The character education program, CARE for Kids, is best described and embodied by its 6 core principles:

1. At the heart of a caring school community are **responsible, supportive relationships** among and between students, educators, support staff, and parents.
2. Learning becomes more connected and meaningful for students when social, emotional, and ethical development is an **integral part** of the classroom, school, and community experience.
3. Significant and engaging learning, academic and social, takes place when students are able to construct deep understandings of broad concepts and principles through an **active process of exploration, discovery, and application**.
4. Community is strengthened when there are frequent opportunities for students to **exercise their voice, choice, and responsible independence** to work together for the common good.
5. Classroom community and learning are maximized through frequent opportunities for **collaboration and service** to others.
6. Effective classroom communities help students develop their **intrinsic motivation** by meeting their basic needs (e.g., safety, autonomy, belonging, competence, usefulness, fun, & pleasure), rather than seeking to control students with extrinsic motivators (e.g., rewards and punishment).

The components of the CARE for Kids program are drawn largely from the Child Development Project (Schaps, 1995). The Morning Meeting component is largely based on the Responsive Classroom approach (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). The information below outlines the basic components of the CARE for Kids program.

1. **Caring Classroom Community**: developing classroom community and unity building—building relationships reflective of respect, responsibility, caring and helpfulness through activities such as cooperative/collaborative learning (across content areas—reading, math, science etc.), unity builders, literature
components, class meetings, and morning meetings.

2) Morning Meetings: Special type of class meeting designed to set the tone for respectful learning and establish a climate of trust.

3) Classroom Meetings: Provide a forum for students and teachers to come together as a class to get to know each other, reflect, problem-solve, and make decisions.

4) Developmental Discipline/Logical Consequences: Is a pro-active, prevention approach that utilizes a teaching/learning approach with an emphasis on relationships, modeling, skill development, moving students to self-control and responsibility.

5) School-Wide Activities: Designed to link the students, parents, teacher and other adults in the school with a focus on inclusion and participation, cooperation, helping others, taking responsibility, appreciating differences, and reflection.

The study sought to answer two questions.

1. What is the relationship between reported levels of implementation of the CARE for Kids program and the change process subscales?

2. What change process subscales were predictive of level of implementation?

Method

Participants

School selection. The project took place in the large southeastern school district. The school district serves approximately 99,000 students across 150 schools. The demographic makeup of the district consists of 35% African-American, 58% White, and 8% Other. A little over half of the students (54%) are from single-parent households and 61% are from low-income backgrounds.

The 22 CARE for Kids schools were selected from an eligible 90 elementary schools through an application process. The application process entailed the schools writing an essay on why they wanted to be a CARE for Kids school and providing information that their school’s council and at least 80% of the certified staff had to vote to participate in the comprehensive school reform model. Through this criteria process, the 90 elementary schools were narrowed down to the 22 treatment schools. Attention was given to having a wide range of schools, representing the diverse nature of the school district. CARE for Kids schools were diverse in demographic (race, socio-economic status) make-up, as well as academic achievement.

Procedure and Measures

Two instruments (combined into one—the End-of-Year Survey) were used to collect the data for the study. The first instrument was an Implementation Survey and the second instrument was the Change Process Survey (Keaster, 2007), both described below. The Implementation and Change Process Survey were distributed in May 2009 via electronically scanned forms and were distributed during faculty meetings with a total response rate of 93%.

Implementation. The Implementation Survey was a district-developed tool designed to collect data on demographic information (e.g., school name, participant role at the school, certification, years at the school, and years in education), attendance at instructional sessions (i.e., Summer Institute, After School Support Sessions), and level of implementation of the program’s components (i.e., Morning Meetings, Class Meetings, End-of-day Meetings, Partner Activities, and Small Group Activities). In order to assess implementation, teachers answered questions on the extent to which they implemented CARE for Kids components. Implementation level was rated from 1 (None, Rare) to 5 (High) and a composite implementation score was computed using an average rating of all the implementation ratings across the CARE for Kids components.

Change process survey. The Change Process Survey included a list of questions designed to operationalize the components of the change process advocated by Hall and Hord (2006). These “functions” include the following: developing, articulating, and communicating a vision; planning and providing resources; supporting professional learning; checking progress; providing continual assistance; and creating a context supportive of change. Questions for each of these constructs comprised this section of the End-of-Year Survey completed by instructional and support staff at each of the 22 schools. The overall reliability coefficient for the questions on the Change Process Survey was 0.93.

By merging the program level of implementation data from the first portion of the instrument with the level of fidelity to the change process data, the researchers were able to statistically determine if change leadership influences the success of an initiative implemented within educational contexts.
Data Analysis and Results

In order to answer the first research question between the level of implementation of the CARE for Kids program and the Change Process Subscale, Pearson-product correlations were run between the level of implementation and the Change Process Subscales. In order to answer the second research question, multiple hierarchical regressions were run with the Implementation level as the dependent variable and each of the Change Process Subscales as a separate step. Hierarchical regressions were run because it allows the user to partition the variance in a theoretically-based manner (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Based on the findings and recommendations of Joyce and Showers (1980), Bush (1984), Hord (1994), and Hall and Hord (2006), the results of this study should have demonstrated that all components of the change process are important in the successful implementation of a new program within P–12 schools. This was, indeed, the case. Table 1 below provides the correlations between the level of implementation (measured by the faculty’s and staff’s participation in implementation activities—see above) and the six subscales of the change process (measured by the questions on the End-of-Year Survey related to the Change Process Survey incorporated within the larger instrument). All six subscales yielded significant correlations (p < .05). These results answer the first question in the affirmative in that there is indeed a relationship between the subscales of the change process and the level of implementation of a change effort.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Process Construct</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating a Vision</td>
<td>.193*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>.184*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Professional Development</td>
<td>.230*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Progress</td>
<td>.250*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Assistance</td>
<td>.189*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Context</td>
<td>.157*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Although none of the correlations were particularly strong, the two strongest were for the subscales of Support for Professional Development and Checking Progress. The weakest correlations were between Implementation and Developing a Change Context, and between Implementation and Planning. More discussion of these results and their implications is provided below.

The second question sought to discover if predictability would enter the picture. Since these relationships above do, in fact, exist, is it possible to predict which subscales are more important in the change process? Are there differences in the weight of influence among the subscales, are they significant, and how do these differences compare with what the literature (noted above) says about the components that emerge later in the process?

Table 2 provides a summary of the multiple regression analysis performed on the components of the change process and their influence on the level of implementation.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning/Resources</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.867</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>1.407</td>
<td>.160</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Progress</td>
<td>2.644</td>
<td>.008*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Assistance</td>
<td>-.722</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Context</td>
<td>-.767</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
This table demonstrates the importance of Checking Progress among all of the other components of the change process. It was the only one to achieve a level of significance (*p < .05*).

A multiple hierarchical regression was run in order to examine the impact of each change process subscale on implementation. The first block consisted only of Communicating Vision. The second block added the Planning/Resources subscale. The third block added the Professional Learning subscale. The fourth block added the Checking Progress subscale. The fifth block added Providing Assistance, and finally, the sixth block added the Supportive Context subscale. The result of the multiple regression is shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.19**</td>
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<td>Step 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Resources</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Resources</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.17**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Resources</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
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<td>.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Progress</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.16*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>-.13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.08</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Progress</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Assistance</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating Vision</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Resources</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Check Progress</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Assistance</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Context</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  $R^2 = .04$ for Step 1 (*p < .01*); $\Delta R^2 = .004$ for Step 2 (*p > .05*); $\Delta R^2 = .02$ for Step 3 (*p < .01*); $\Delta R^2 = .01$ for Step 4 (*p < .05*); $\Delta R^2 = .002$ for Step 5 (*p > .05*); $\Delta R^2 = .001$ for Step 6 (*p > .05*).  

Overall, the regression model was significant, $F(6, 470) = 3.70, p < .01$ Looking specifically at the blocks, Steps 1, 3 and 4 resulted in a significant change in the amount of variance explained. The total amount of variance explained with all the subscales in the regression was 7.3%. This suggests that Communicating a Vision, Providing Professional Learning, and Checking Progress assume more importance than the other three components of the change process.

**Implications**

First, these results help validate the use of established change processes in the implementation of new programs. Historically, educational leaders have ignored these steps when introducing new programs or initiatives within their schools or their school districts (Hord, 1994) and this practice has led educators to experience “initiative fatigue” where faculty and staff have adopted a “This, too, shall pass” mindset as a self-
defense mechanism against the steady barrage of new programs forced upon them each year or two.

The implications of the research reported above suggests that this trend and its consequences can be reduced, if not eliminated, by simply paying more attention to established change processes and its benefits if followed by school and district leaders. First, the results demonstrate that each of the six components of the change process is valid and has its place in making change efforts successful and making them last beyond the current school year—in other words, institutionalizing the innovation. Developing, Articulating, and Communicating a Vision of the innovation is important, because unless stakeholders are presented a picture of where they are going and what it will look like once they arrive, it is difficult for them to conceptualize the innovation in a successful state and have confidence that full implementation can be achieved. Communicating the purpose of the program also provides participants with a clear understanding of why the program is being initiated in the first place. Allowing participants—those responsible for implementing—to see the innovation in “full bloom” gives them a virtual target that helps carry them throughout the implementation stages. Talking with other faculty and staff involved in the implementation to share experiences (or insights) and discuss ideas about the program is also important as well as providing clear guidelines for implementation success.

Planning and Providing Resources is another critical step in the process. Without adequate planning for any venture, it is more than likely doomed to failure—at least considerably less success than could have otherwise been experienced. Participants like to see definitive structure for a new program and need to know that leaders are committed to providing all the resources necessary to make the program successful. Commitment on the part of the change agents promotes commitment on the part of the participants charged with implementation of the program. Commitment on the part of the participants provides a “synergy” that is difficult to defeat.

Supporting Professional Learning is a very key component. Most new programs require instruction for carrying out that innovation in educational practice. If participants are left to themselves to “read the manual” or work out the details prior to implementation, many will get frustrated and begin working against the program’s success. At a minimum, they will enter the effort with a negative attitude and uninspired. These unaddressed concerns are ingredients in a recipe for disaster. Based on the work of Bush (1984) noted above, the professional development provided needs to move far beyond just simply presenting relevant information. Demonstration, Practice, Feedback, and (especially) Coaching are of paramount importance if the innovation has any chance of succeeding. Those responsible for staff development within districts should be keenly aware of the results found by Bush (1984).

The component involving Checking Progress is, according to the results of the current study, the most important step in the process. Bush found that if change participants were not provided feedback and refinement coaching, a vast majority were essentially unable to make the transfer from the knowledge gained in the seminars and apply it back in their schools and in their classrooms. Leaders within the schools—also trained in the innovation—must monitor how the process is going once implemented within the schools’ classrooms. This is where implementation problems and issues occur and where—if not supported or corrected—implementers will become discouraged and revert to the status quo with which they are intimately familiar and where they derive comfort. Without checking on their progress with the innovation, school leaders will be unaware that progress has hit a snag and the program is in danger. However, just knowing about these problems and issues is not enough. Providing Continual Assistance (or Coaching) is key for correcting problems and getting derailed cars back on the track. Hall and Hord (2006) provide a number of suggestions for taking the temperature of the organization and prescribing appropriate remedies for whatever might be ailing the implementers in their quest to make the innovation work for them and their students. Without this ongoing support, efforts can become bogged down or even get entirely derailed.

Lastly, Creating a Context Supportive of Change is a component that weaves in and around all the organization does to improve itself. In order for something to change, someone must change. School leaders must create a culture within their schools that not only support innovative efforts but actually foster it. Teachers are tremendously creative beings, but if their imaginations are held hostage by a rigid, inflexible environment that might even punish unsuccessful ventures, they will cease to exercise their innovative instincts. Administrators must allow for innovation, must support creative efforts within classrooms and within the school as a whole, and must never sanction those who have attempted to improve something they do by doing it in a different way. Creativity (which
leads to change) thrives when it is supported; school leaders must do everything they can to support and encourage it. “Improving” implies “changing.”

Next, these results demonstrate not only the importance of each of these components, but they highlight the weight that the latter stages in the process carry. Bush (1984) demonstrated the importance of “follow-up” when expecting faculty and staff to adopt new practices. Homeostasis is a biological term that points to the fact that “systems” tend to accommodate new stimuli in the environment in order to return to normal operations and maintain the status quo. Human beings are a good example of this. Maltz (1960) discovered that humans need 21 days to change their behavior—to create or break a habit.

If these are true, it will take more than even a well-designed and delivered professional development session or two to change the behavior of faculty and staff in P–12 settings. It will require that leaders who are in charge of making sure that the change takes place in professional practice—that the treatment “took”—be diligent in following up with the participants. This requires that they not just assume that what was learned has successfully transformed practice back in the classrooms of their schools. They must proactively engage with faculty and staff to make sure that new practices are truly embedded in their consciousness and become a part of what they do on a daily basis. Old habits—what is indeed comfortable regardless of how effective—are difficult to break.

Checking Progress and its natural offspring, Providing Continual Assistance, are very key parts of the change process. Bush (1984) would tell us that without attention to these latter steps in the journey from the professional development session to embedded practice, we are doomed to less that 20% effectiveness in our efforts. With the initiation of a character education program (or any program, for that matter) should truly commit themselves to giving the program the chance to be successful that it deserves. Much time, energy, and money has been invested in introducing it to faculty and staff and training them in the details and nuances of the program. To simply fall short in its implementation constitutes administrative malpractice, some would say.

Character education is important for our nation’s school children. It can shape the rest of their educational experience and influence their relationships with others as they leave their formal schooling and take their places in the workforce and in society. Interestingly, the school district has decided not to include the full questionnaire on the change process in subsequent End-of Year Survey administrations. Their focus is more on whether or not the program is being implemented and is having an impact. They now have their answer as to why it is or is not becoming a part of their schools’ practice, and this is directly related to “follow-up activities” (Checking Progress and Providing Continual Assistance) by their school administrators. Questions related to this construct will be retained. The current research has told them how important this piece of the process is for ensuring successful implementation.

References


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Improving High School Completion Through a Community-Based Reentry Program for Previously Incarcerated Juveniles: Findings from a Case Study

Ronda Sturgill, PhD, ATC, CHES
University of Tampa

Abstract
Nationally, an alarming number of juveniles fail to complete a high school education. Educational policy makers and administrators are universally being challenged to resolve this problem where the impact is both multifaceted and lifelong. Nowhere is this challenge to complete high school more daunting than with juvenile offenders who were incarcerated and are then released into their communities. This paper focuses on community reentry and high school completion for 123 previously incarcerated youth. Project evaluation data and findings are presented along with recommendations for educational policy makers and administrators.

Introduction
Nationally, an alarming number of juveniles fail to complete a high school education as almost one-third of all high school students fail to graduate from high school each year (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). Educational policy makers and administrators are universally being challenged to resolve this problem where the impact is both multifaceted and lifelong. Nowhere is this challenge to complete high school greater than with juvenile offenders who have been incarcerated and are then released into their communities. The juveniles are immediately faced with the temptation of drugs and crime at the same time the juvenile justice system is challenged to coordinate efforts of agencies, including public schools that do not often work together (Christian, 2003).

The complexity and interaction of the factors involved in working with juveniles who have been incarcerated makes completing high school an even greater challenge. This paper will present the findings from the evaluation of a model community-based intervention program for previously incarcerated juveniles. The impact of this program on high school completion and recommendations for educational policy makers and school administrators will also be discussed.

Characteristics of Dropouts
Common characteristics of students who drop out of high school include being from a low-income or single-parent family, being a minority, being male, having limited English language ability, possessing learning or emotional disabilities, relocating, and being overage for their grade level. Other characteristics of high school drop outs include taking on adult roles such as parenting or working, receiving low or failing grades, falling behind on credits required for graduation, and exhibiting signs of being disengaged from school (Benard, 2004; Hupfeld, 2009).

For many juveniles, dropping out of high school is a gradual process influenced by a complex interaction of many variables. Unfortunately, “there is no single risk factor that can be used to accurately predict who is at risk of dropping out” (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007, p. 5). Dropping out of high school often begins with a warning sign reflected in poor attendance patterns such as skipping classes and missing too many days and being unable to catch up (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

The Impact of Dropping Out of High School
The impact of dropping out of high school is widespread and lifelong. High school dropouts earn less money, have higher unemployment rates, seek more public assistance, and are more likely to be single parents than their peers who graduate (Monrad, 2007). On average, an 18 year old dropout earns $260,000 less over a lifetime and contributes $60,000 less in federal and state income taxes when compared to their graduating counterparts. The average male high school graduate working until age 65 will earn $333,000 more than a high school dropout. In 2003, the median income of high school dropouts 18 years and over was $12,184 compared to $20,431 for their graduating counterparts (Monrad, 2007).
Monrad (2007) has studied the economic impact of failing to complete high school. The United States economy loses more than $8 billion in incarceration expenses and lost wages annually from high school dropouts. More than $26 billion is lost in federal and state income taxes each year from the 23 million high school dropouts. More than $8 billion in incarceration expenses and lost wages per year is accounted for by each class of high school dropouts. Increasing the male graduation rate only 5 percent would save the nation $7.7 billion a year through decreasing crime related costs and increasing earnings (Monrad, 2007).

Juveniles who drop out of high school also have an impact on criminal activity levels. When compared to their peers who graduate with a high school diploma, high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school completers to become incarcerated at some point in their lifetime (Monrad, 2007). It is estimated that 30 percent of federal inmates, 40 percent of state prison inmates, and 50 percent of people on death row are individuals who did not complete a high school education (Monrad, 2007).

**Juvenile Offenders and High School Completion**

In their 2006 study, *The Silent Epidemic*, Bridgeland et al. examined 467 ethnically and racially diverse students who had dropped out of public high school. They concluded that, “while some students drop out because of significant academic challenges, most dropouts are students who could have, and believe that they could have, succeeded in school” (Bridgeland et al., p. 5).

One finding in Natsuaki’s (2008) study suggested

… that the pace of committing offenses over time was substantially slowed down for late starters who completed a high school education. Finishing high school seems to serve as an effective turning point for later starters, but earlier starters did not appear to take a full advantage of it. (p. 11)

Before and during the high school dropout process, juveniles often become involved in illegal activities which may lead to incarceration or juvenile detention. Chronic truancy is the first and most noticeable sign that a juvenile or child has something wrong in their life (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Considered collectively, there are many effects of chronic truancy for youth and for society when juveniles become disconnected from school. Elements of crime, unemployment, under-employment, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and risky sexual activity have all been linked to chronic truancy (Baker, Signmon, & Nugent, 2001; Bell, Rosen, & Dynlacht, 1994; Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1994).

Successful re-entry into the community following incarceration can be defined in many different ways. One common piece of the definition is completion of a high school credential. In the past, efforts at successful completion of a high school education or GED have focused on identifying potential dropouts through existing deficits. More recently, the focus has been on building protective factors which offer protection against adverse situations (Hammond et al., 2007). This new focus emphasizes the development of “internal resiliency skills that help students make meaning out of their school experience and survive setbacks, and on relationships between adults and students that provide the support at-risk students need to make it through” (Hupfeld, 2009, p. 2).

The term “resiliency” is used to describe self-protective characteristics experienced by individuals who can adapt to hardship and succeed (Hampden-Thompson, Kienzl, Daniel, & Kinukawa, 2007). Resiliency generally refers “to those factors and processes that limit negative behaviors associated with stress and result in adaptive outcomes even in the presence of adversity” (Hupfeld, 2009, p. 3; Jerald, 2007). McPartland (1994) describes the following six resiliency skills that are linked to academic success: building confidence, making connections, setting goals, managing stress, increasing well-being, and understanding motivation.

**A Model Program Intervention**

Practices for reentry into the community vary from state to state. Many juvenile systems focus their post-release efforts on surveillance and monitoring to ensure the offender is meeting release conditions. Model programs, however, focus on providing a support system for juveniles during the challenging reentry process. Coordination among the juvenile justice, school, mental health, drug treatment and court systems is critical for a smooth transition.

Few studies have been conducted on juvenile reentry programs. The studies that have been conducted have found similar characteristics in model community reentry programs. These characteristics include a focus on schools, including comprehensive support and multi-agency plans for first-time juvenile offenders on probation, and fostering engagement of the reentering
juveniles (Christian, 2003). The Reentering Our Communities Successfully (ROCS) program that is the focus of this paper was based on these common principles.

**History of ROCS**
The ROCS program officially began in September, 2004 when the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Center for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded a Youthful Offenders Reentry Program grant to Prestera Center for Mental Health Services in Huntington, West Virginia. This four-year grant, in the amount of $419,448 per year, was part of SAMSHA’s program to target funding into areas where there is a high level of juvenile recidivism (Barnett, 2009).

The primary objective of the ROCS program was to reduce recidivism by providing transition services to incarcerated youth immediately on their release into the community. The intent was to effectively transition youth from incarceration back into the community and prevent them from becoming future adult felons. Education, and especially graduation from high school or completion of a GED, was an essential element of the model. Overall, the ROCS program was focused on enhancing the services that were currently available to juvenile offenders as they reentered their communities by:

- increasing the number of case managers so that each youth released from custody would have an active, community-based individual following the youth’s pre-release transition plan and reentry into the community;
- providing substance abuse treatment services for reentering youth;
- providing random testing for drugs;
- providing an adequate support network by developing additional wrap-around aftercare and transition services prior to release;
- securing educational (with a focus on high school completion) and work opportunities for reentering juvenile offenders; and
- providing continuing care, including peer support groups and mentoring.
(Barnett, 2009)

**Target Population**
The population served by the ROCS program consisted of sentenced juvenile offenders 14 to 21 years old who were under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Justice System and who had been assessed as substance-abusing or diagnosed as having a substance abuse disorder. All youth included in this program had been sentenced by the criminal or juvenile justice system to incarceration or were already incarcerated and within one year of scheduled release. Any individual who was already released to the community and participated in the program started within 60 days or less of their release date (Barnett, 2009).

Twenty-one (17.1%) of the 123 clients had a high school diploma or GED. Ten of the 28 (35.7%) clients who were 19 years old or older and who would be expected to have completed high school or its equivalent were high school graduates. Eleven of the 95 (11.6%) clients 18 years old or younger had completed high school or its equivalent. Of the 102 clients who had not completed high school: 19 had completed 11th Grade; 36 had completed 10th Grade; and 33 had completed 9th Grade. Twelve clients had completed the 8th Grade and two clients had completed the 7th Grade (Barnett, 2009).

**Program Model**
The program model undergirding ROCS was centered on adding a formal substance abuse treatment program to an already existing informal network of community-based services. Prestera Center for Mental Health Services collaborated with key stakeholders HOPE (Helping Others Pursue Excellence) Community Development Corporation and DAYMARK (transitional living) to create this all-inclusive program. Additional stakeholders and Steering Committee members represented the West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources—Division on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Juvenile Probation, West Virginia State Department of Education—Office of Institutional Education Programs, West Virginia University Youth Extension Service, the prosecutor’s office, the Public Defender’s Office, and the local evaluation team (Barnett, 2009).

The ROCS model drew heavily from two other successful model programs, the Family Support Network (FSN) and the Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA). The FSN model relies heavily on participation both from the client and their families including intensive family therapy sessions. ROCS staff received training on the FSN during the first year of the project and began FSN sessions with the parents while the juveniles were incarcerated.
The ACRA model utilizes 14 sessions over a 12 to 14 week timeframe to promote abstinence, positive social relationships, problem solving and improved communication and parenting. These sessions, led by a therapist, include 10 individual sessions with the adolescent, two sessions with the adolescent and the caregiver, and two sessions with the caregiver alone. The sessions and associated assessments/scales were expected to occur in a prescribed sequence with a urine screen midway in the sequence (Barnett, 2009).

ROCS project interventions can be divided into two distinct phases: the pre-release phase when ROCS staff worked with the staff of the juvenile detention facilities and with juveniles who were incarcerated; and the post-release phase when the ROCS staff worked with probation and/or courts and other juvenile justice staff, the juveniles, and their caregivers in the community (Barnett, 2009).

**Pre-release phase.** In the pre-release phase, the ROCS staff consistently made monthly or bi-monthly trips to the juvenile detention centers to engage clients and participate in transition planning. Approximately two months before the release of each juvenile, the staff began participating in transition planning with the multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) to develop comprehensive post-release plans (Barnett, 2009).

During these center visits, the ROCS staff provided both mentoring and coaching to juveniles who were potential program clients. The TALKS Mentoring Program, a systematic, structured approach to sharing values and wisdom with young people, was used as the basis for these sessions. Providing mentoring to the juveniles was a key to establishing rapport and a bond with them that led them to want to participate in ROCS, a voluntary program, after release. In addition, ROCS brought parents or other family members and caregivers to visit the juveniles. Because the detention centers are several hours away from the homes of most juveniles and public transportation is not readily available, this was an important and much appreciated service (Barnett, 2009).

**Post-release phase.** In the post-release phase, most of the staff work was done in the field. Services provided were classified as either therapy or case management services (Barnett, 2009). Each client received an individualized plan that was developed following their release from a detention center and was assigned a case manager following release back into the community.

All clients were also provided individualized wrap-around/aftercare transition services for reentering the community. All clients were linked with a ROCS case manager and the case manager assisted in providing services including housing opportunities, job options, completion of a high school degree or a GED, transportation and other transitional services.

A specific focus of the post-release phase was each client's high school credential. The case manager assigned to each client would assist with enrolling the client in high school. Additionally after school tutoring was provided for assistance with school work. If the client was not going back to high school, then the process of completing a GED was initiated with filling out forms and providing proper documentation.

Very few clients received substance abuse therapy during the program. Initially the therapist was not permitted to see the clients while they were incarcerated so clients did not have an opportunity to bond with the therapist prior to release. Juveniles were more willing to see the case managers whom they knew because of participation in the TALKS Mentoring Program. Even after the therapist began seeing incarcerated juveniles for case management purposes, the number participating in therapy did not increase greatly. In some instances clients were continuing to see a juvenile justice counselor after release and were not encouraged to see the ROCS therapist for substance abuse therapy. The therapist did however see clients after release and provided case management and other services more frequently than therapy (Barnett, 2009).

**Evaluation Design and Findings**

The program evaluation design was based on a collaborative model which involved the project director, case managers, and clients in building local evaluation capacity. The evaluators regularly provided outcome data and quarterly reports to the program staff. Comprehensive annual reports that summarized progress on achieving program goals and objectives provided a demographic profile of clients at admission and change data comparing the clients at admission and at the 3 and 6 month follow-ups and discharge were also provided (Barnett, 2009).

Fifty-six (52.3%) clients were enrolled in school or employed at the six month follow-up. However, the number of clients who were neither employed nor enrolled in school or a job training program fell from seventy-two clients at intake to fifty-six clients at the six
month follow-up, a 22% decrease. Twenty-four (24) clients completed high school or obtained a GED while in the program, a 133% increase in high school graduates. At intake 33 clients had graduated from high school or were enrolled in educational programs; at the 6 month follow-up this number increased to 54 clients, a 64% increase (Barnett, 2009).

The follow-up rate for the project’s six month interviews was 88.4%. To obtain a high follow-up rate the evaluators developed a locator form, provided incentives to clients, provided a weekly “HOT SHEET” listing the clients due for follow-ups, and provided performance awards to program staff for assistance in obtaining follow-up interviews. The evaluators provided business card-sized cards to be given to clients which gave the evaluators’ 800 number, dates of the follow-up window and a reminder of the incentive. Project staff and evaluators worked collaboratively to maintain contact with the clients and staff mailed birthday cards, monthly flyers, and reminders about follow-up interviews to clients (Barnett, 2009).

As part of the transition plan, all of the juvenile offenders receiving substance abuse treatment services while incarcerated received similar services when reentering their respective communities. ROCS surpassed its goal of 75% of clients not being re-incarcerated as 92% of clients had not been re-incarcerated at the end of the four-year program. Seventy-nine clients, 70.5% of the 112 clients who have left ROCS, met the program’s definition for successful completion (Barnett, 2009).

**Discussion of the Findings**

ROCS was successful in achieving its primary purpose of breaking the cycle of criminal behavior, recidivism and re-incarceration for youths reentering their communities from juvenile detention facilities. Only 11 of the 123 clients were re-incarcerated—a recidivism rate of 8.9%. ROCS is a model of what can be accomplished in a voluntary program collaboratively implemented through a partnership between a faith-based initiative and behavioral health and housing agencies. ROCS achieved 100% of its target for admissions, a 72% retention rate, and a 70.5% successful completion rate (Barnett, 2009).

The program demonstrated moderate success related to consistent participation in educational and vocational programs and achieving educational and employment objectives. Only 23 clients were employed and only 48% of the clients were employed or enrolled in an educational program at the six month follow-up. However, improvement in education was achieved by a substantial number of clients: 24 clients completed high school or obtained a GED while in the program; and 54 clients had graduated from high school or received a GED or were enrolled in educational programs at the six month follow-up—a 64% increase (Barnett, 2009).

Several factors were key elements in the program’s success and the effect on recidivism and educational achievements. Providing services to juveniles and their families as early as possible during incarceration was critical. The staff went to the detention facilities once or twice a month to deliver the TALKS Mentoring Program to potential clients, to participate in MDT’s to create transitional plans and to take family members/caregivers to visit the youth. The bonds established during this period were a crucial factor in voluntary participation at release. The clients who developed relationships with the program staff were more willing to participate in both the high school completion and future employment activities following their release (Barnett, 2009).

Having a stable, committed staff was a second key factor in the program’s success. There was very little turn-over and several staff members were with the program for most of the grant period. Working with the faith-based initiative was one reason some of the staff members made a commitment to stay with this program. In addition, the program did not encounter the supervision and coordination problems which often occur when staff members are employed by different agencies (Barnett, 2009). Tracking clients and providing coaching and mentoring were the most frequently provided services. The majority (55%) of the case managers’ time was spent in attempting to locate clients. Case managers also devoted approximately 20% of their time to peer coaching and mentoring sessions for clients, most of which was focused on pre-employment preparation, employment coaching, and educational programs (Barnett, 2009).

The resources and expertise of each of the partner agencies were used effectively in the program. Agency executives with decision-making authority were involved throughout the process. The Steering Committee provided oversight, served as a communication and coordination mechanism, and assisted in helping the program overcome barriers. The group also actively worked on developing and implementing a strategic plan for sustainability including the creation of a day
The ROCS program also encountered difficulty in getting sustained participation from the juveniles and their families, but made considerable progress in improving outcomes for a majority of clients (Barnett, 2009). Although nearly half the clients were using drugs or alcohol at the six month follow-up, the program did achieve an increase in abstinence from alcohol and other drugs and a decrease in use from pre-prison levels among a substantial number of clients as: a 64% increase in abstinent clients; a 60% increase in clients who did not use alcohol; and a 56% increase in clients who did not use drugs (Barnett, 2009).

The partner agencies and sustainability sub-committee, and the Juvenile Justice Task Force wrote and implemented a planning grant which led to a follow-up implementation grant funded by the Department of Justice. This was intended to extend the ROCS model for screening, therapy and case management to juveniles entering the juvenile justice system at multiple entry points as well as to youth reentering the community (Barnett, 2009).

**Challenges and Barriers**

Several challenges and barriers were addressed during program planning and implementation. Initially parents and caregivers were reluctant to participate in the required caregiver sessions. The FSN model was never successfully implemented because family members and caregivers were unwilling to participate. The ROCS staff attempted to overcome the caregivers’ reluctance to participate by using the time when the ROCS staff took the parents to visit their children in the juvenile detention facility to build rapport and deliver parent education. They were in the vans for two hours or more at a time and it provided an opportunity for sustained interaction. Staff members were successful in having some caregivers complete the initial session, but few caregivers completed the second session.

ROCS staff members also attempted to have the parents meet with them once a month. This initiative was also met with limited success (Barnett, 2009). Initially, the families were willing to participate and seemed to be helping one another in the group meetings. Once the juveniles were released, however, the family and/or caregiver participation waned and in many instances ceased altogether. Family members became unwilling to accept responsibility for improving the situation and regarded it as the juvenile’s problem. The FSN did not prove to be successful with ROCS because parents and other family members and/or caregivers were unwilling to participate. The program discontinued trying to use FSN after the first year and transitioned to using the caregiver sessions embedded in the ACRA model for parent education and problem-solving (Barnett, 2009).

The second barrier related to the ACRA model and the low number of juveniles who were seeing the therapist and who remained in therapy. No client completed the ACRA model as designed. Adolescents completed an average of five of the 10 program sessions. The content of the ACRA sessions was delivered as specified with some minor modifications. The therapists found that the adolescents were more likely to accurately complete the Functional Analysis of Substance Use Behavior after they began to trust them. Consequently, therapists had them complete the Happiness Scale and The Goals of Counseling assessments before having them complete the Functional Analysis of Substance Abuse Behavior. No urine screens were collected (Barnett, 2009).

The staff encountered several barriers with completion of a high school credential. The first barrier was convincing the clients of the importance of a high school credential in education and future employment. Many clients returned to their same environment where they would engage in illegal activity such as using and selling illegal drugs for money. The clients would argue that they could earn more money with this activity than working a job following completion of high school. Additionally, the case managers had to devote a significant amount of time to transporting the clients and maintaining contact with their teachers and school administrators. The school administrators knew that the client was previously incarcerated, therefore, the case manager had to develop a level of successful
communication between the client and the school officials.

**Recommendations for Policy Makers and Administrators**

Recommendations for increasing the high school completion rate for incarcerated juveniles who reenter the community can be divided into two separate but related arenas. First, the level and scope of educational services provided in the detention center, prior to the juvenile’s release into the community, can be a turning point for many at-risk juveniles. An important and successful transition back into the community for incarcerated juveniles must include quality correctional education services.

Correctional education may often be the last opportunity to acquire academic and vocational skills for some incarcerated youth. A follow-up study conducted by Black, et al. in 1996 found juvenile offenders who were incarcerated, earned a GED certificate, and completed a vocational program were three times more likely to be employed within six months of their release than offenders who had not completed such programs. The findings from the ROCS program evaluation appear to be consistent with this study. Educational administrators must work closely with policy makers, the Juvenile Justice system, juvenile court judges, and other stakeholders to provide an educational program that is in place for juveniles prior to release from incarceration.

The second area for recommendations is focused on what happens once the juvenile has been released into the community and reenters the education system. Previously incarcerated juveniles are already at-risk of not completing high school. Looking for early warning signs to provide early intervention is the foundation for an effective dropout prevention program. Kennelly and Monrad (2007) have identified several critical elements of an effective early warning system:

- create an individual student tracking system for attendance, promotion, academic performance, and engagement/behavior as early as grade four;
- develop a range of interventions consistent with criteria for identifying potential dropouts; and
- carefully track and monitor ninth grade student attendance during the first month of high school and freshmen performances in the core academic subjects in the first quarter and semester.

Many researchers propose a combination of both school-reform and intervention approaches. These recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- small schools or small programs within schools;
- a personalized and caring environment;
- a culture of high academic expectations;
- access to counseling and support services;
- parent involvement and engagement;
- increased time in school; and
- qualified and committed personnel (Levin, Belfield, Muennning, & Rouse, 2007).

Finally, the National Dropout Prevention Center (2010) offers four overall recommendations for educators who are implementing dropout prevention and intervention programs. These four recommendations include:

1. Programs should address multiple risk factors across domains since students rarely drop out for only one reason;
2. Programs should use multiple strategies in addressing risk factors;
3. Educators should make sure the program is fully implemented and designed; and
4. Educators should plan to evaluate the program to ensure its effectiveness.

**Summary**

Overall, high school completion continues to be a challenge among educators and administrators. This becomes increasingly more difficult when working with recently incarcerated juveniles. Dropping out of high school is a long process including many interwoven components. For previously incarcerated juveniles, environmental factors and the availability of a comprehensive support system play key roles in returning to the community and ultimately obtaining a high school diploma or GED. The financial, economic, and social impacts of not completing high school are large and long-lasting.

Despite the uphill climb to increase graduation rates, there have been many model programs with proven success and recommendations. The ROCS program utilized a combination of strategies when working with previously incarcerated juveniles. With program implementation, they included strong adult-juvenile relation-
ships which were evident in the mentoring and case management program strands. The program also relied heavily on support and cooperation from other agencies and organizations including the Juvenile Justice System.

Many recommendations for schools, educators, administrators, and policy makers are available following a review of model programs such as the ROCS program. The recurring recommendations include identifying early warning signs, creating individual intervention strategies, and creating a culture of high academic expectations. For at-risk juveniles, developing a supporting and caring environment at both the school and throughout the community has proven to be a critical component of successful community reentry and, ultimately, graduation from high school.

References


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Development and Analysis of Survey Instruments to Assess Education Leadership Candidates’ Dispositions

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Abstract
As colleges of education are faced with NCATE requirements to assess dispositions in addition to knowledge and skills, preparation programs across the country are looking for ways to assess dispositions through reliable and valid measures. In this paper we describe the development of three survey instruments to assess dispositions of master’s degree Educational Leadership candidates. We began by using the disposition enumerated in the document developed as a companion piece to the 2008 national educational leadership policy standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008a) titled Performance Expectations and Indicators for Education Leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008b).

Literature Review
Dispositions Definition
To assess dispositions effectively, one needs to define the construct. Katz (1993) defined dispositions as patterns of behavior, exhibited frequently and intentionally in the absence of coercion, representing a habit of mind. In 2001, Ritchhart viewed dispositions as a collection of cognitive tendencies that capture one’s patterns of thinking, addressing the gap between abilities and actions. Perkins (1995) defined dispositions as the proclivities that lead us in one direction rather than another within the range of freedom possessed. Wilkerson and Lang (2007) defined dispositions as teachers affect—attitudes, values, and beliefs that influence the use of knowledge and skills.

Multiple operational definitions also exist. Wasonga and Murphy (2007) defined eight dispositions for co-creating leadership. Co-creating leadership refers to the process in which the leaders and the led collaborate to maximize human capacity to realize the vision of the organization. The dispositions related to co-creating leadership include collaborating, active listening, cultural anthropology, egalitarianism, patience, humbleness, trust and trustworthiness, and, resilience. Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) identified three educational leader dispositions—global theoretical perspective, imaginative vision, and sense of agency. Richardson and Onwuegbuzie (2003) measured 11 dispositions: collaboration, knowledge application, critical thinking, reflective practice, individualized instruction, professionalism, reliability, enthusiasm, high expectations, communication proficiency, and technological proficiency. Brown, King, and Herron (2008) examined the belief that all children can learn, content currency, commitment to research use, and sensitivity to others’ views.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) defines dispositions as the professional attitudes, values, and beliefs that are demonstrated through verbal and non-verbal behaviors and support student learning and development. NCATE expects institutions to assess fairness and the belief that all students can learn and also suggests use of the Interstate New Teacher and Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles as the professional standards for teacher candidates (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008). The INTASC Principles (2011) include critical disposition for each of the 10 standards. Freeman (in Diez & Raths, 2007) referred to the INTASC standards.
as having “enshrined dispositions in teacher education apparently with considerable permanence” (p. 8).

Dottin (2009) concluded that educators are just beginning to grapple with the definition. He further stated, “Dispositions, therefore, concern not only what professional educators can do (ability), but also what they are actually likely to do (actions)” (p. 85). Damon (2007) warned that for certification-related assessment, dispositions “must be based on clearly defined principles rather than the fuzzy intuitions of whoever happens to be in charge of the process at any one time” (p. 368). The plethora of definitions, then, is of concern.

Disposition Assessments
In an exploratory, qualitative study (Lindahl, 2009) examined if and how dispositions were taught and assessed in principal preparation programs. All respondents who were interviewed considered that dispositions were a key element of principal preparation. In almost all cases the dispositions identified in the ISLLC standards were used in teaching.

At present, the assessment of dispositions is largely dependent on the use of Likert scales of self-reported beliefs that are less closely linked to the standards than are their cognitive counterparts. Examples are reported by Richardson and Onwuegbuzie (2003); Brown, King, and Herron (2008); and Schulte, Edwards, and Edick (2008). Scale development is typically based on locally developed construct definitions such as those identified above, rather than the ISLCC standards directly. These studies also rely on classical statistical procedures, including descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and chi square tests. In the area of teacher assessment, the Wilkerson and Lang DAATS battery (2008) for teachers uses Rasch (1960/1980) modeling, a form of item response theory, to scale teachers’ degree of commitment with the INTASC Principles.

Assessing Educational Leader Dispositions: Three Instruments
Three instruments were developed to assess educational leadership candidate’s dispositions. All three made use of the Performance Expectations developed from the ISLCC standards and will be administered at prescribed times throughout the program and completed by individuals in different roles. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008b) effectively links knowledge, skills, and dispositions, asserting that:

The performance expectations and indicators exemplify fundamental assumptions, values and beliefs about what is expected of current education leaders… In order to maintain this emphasis in the performance expectations, underlying dispositions are listed as a reminder of importance when interpreting and operationalizing indicators. (p. 6)

The standards are organized into six Performance Expectations (PEs), each of which contains a list of dispositions, followed by several elements that include a number of indicators.

Research Question
The gap in the literature of leader dispositions assessment research is twofold. First, there is limited attention to building a scale that systematically samples from the content domain needed for accountability and accreditation (i.e., the ISLCC standards). Second, the measurement process is largely reliant on statistics that fail to address the assumptions for their use and/or do not lead to research designs that take advantage of pairing dispositions results with interval level achievement scores. The question explored here is whether leader dispositions can be scientifically measured using a standards-based instrument and modern measurement/statistical techniques.

The First Instrument: Education Leader Candidate Belief Scale (ELCBS)
Assessing Educational Leader Dispositions: The Foundation
The Educational Leader Candidate Belief Scale (ELCBS) instrument discussed herein made use of the ISLCC standards, affective measurement literature, psychometric standards, and Rasch measurement. Each is presented briefly below.

The ISLCC Standards
The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008b) effectively links knowledge, skills, and dispositions, asserting that:

The performance expectations and indicators exemplify fundamental assumptions, values and beliefs about what is expected of current education leaders… In order to maintain this emphasis in the performance expectations, underlying dispositions are listed as a reminder of importance when interpreting and operationalizing indicators. (p.6)
The standards are organized into six Performance Expectations (PEs), each of which contains a list of dispositions, followed by several elements that include a number of indicators.

**Affective Measurement Literature**

Wilkerson and Lang (2007) provide a comprehensive treatment of the affective assessment literature, including discussion of, and references for, all major assessment methods. They recommend the use of multiple measures, including a combination of self-reports (belief scales and constructed response questionnaires), observations, focus groups, and interviews with stakeholders. Thurstone (1928) agreement scales are recommended for belief scales. The Wilkerson and Lang model, Dispositions Assessments Aligned with Teacher Standards (DAATS), too, is useful in framing the assessment process. The steps are:

1. Define purpose, use, propositions, content, and other contextual factors.
2. Develop a valid sampling plan.
3. Create instruments aligned with standards and consistent with the sampling plan.
4. Design and implement data aggregation, tracking, and management systems.
5. Ensure credibility and utility of data.

**Psychometric Standards**

The American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council of Measurement in Education Standards (1999) provide the legal and psychometric standards for all testing and assessment procedures. Extensive guidance is provided for validity, reliability, and fairness. Chapter 14 is dedicated to testing in certification and licensure contexts, centering on the necessity that such assessments measure job-related functions as a matter of validity. In this case, job-related beliefs are the construct, and the ISLLC Standards provide the content domain from which items were sampled.

**Measurement Method**

The Rasch (1960/1980) model is the simplest form of item response theory, calling for careful delineation of the construct during the design stage (Wilson, 2005). Conceptually, the idea behind the Rasch model is simple. The ability (or, in this case, commitment) of individuals and the difficulty of items influence each other conjointly. The Rasch model places ability and difficulty on the same interval scale, so predictions about one from the other can be made. One answers questions like, can a child read a passage because the child is a good reader or because the passage is easy? Lexile scores are used to estimate both the reader’s ability and the passage’s difficulty. In the physical sciences, one can measure objects for different characteristics, such as weight and hardness. Similarly, an affective application of Rasch would measure the child’s level of desire to read as another construct that could explain the cause for reading ability.

With a purposive sample and a skewed distribution, inferential statistics are not appropriate. Rasch modeling is sample independent and requires neither a large sample nor a normal distribution (Bond & Fox, 2007). Rasch allows the user to create an interval level scale that can then be used for associational or intervention research designs in subsequent studies. Validity and reliability statistics are also reported (Linacre, 2003). Rasch is extensively used by most modern test publishers, such as Pearson, in the development of major high-stakes tests.

The analysis used in this study is the dichotomous Rasch model (Smith & Smith, 2004) and Winsteps software (Linacre, 2003), where In is the logarithmic function. P is a probability of answering correctly, and the Rasch parameters are $B_n$, the ability of person n, $D_i$, the difficulty of item i:

$$
\ln\left(\frac{P_{ni}}{(1-P_{mi})}\right) = B_n - D_i
$$

**Instrument Development**

The DAATS model is being followed in developing the ELCBS. Purpose was defined as both remediation of individual candidates and program improvement efforts; the content domain was defined as the ISLCC standards (Step 1). The sampling plan was based on coverage of most ISLCC indicators (Step 2). The first instrument (ELCBS) was developed using the Thurstone technique (Step 3). Technology (LiveText) will be used to manage the data (Step 4). The current study provides beginning evidence of validity and reliability (Step 5).

We created a series of 53 statements, eight to ten per Performance Expectation (PE). Each statement was classified based on our expectation of its difficulty, with the goal of ensuring variability and the expectation that the classifications would change with empirical data.
Without variability there is no measurement, only confirmatory. Existing measures, such as the one proposed by Brown, Kin, and Herron (2008), showing virtually no variability, are less likely to explain differences in performance. To avoid respondents agreeing without thought to all items, a mix of items with expected “agree” and “disagree” responses was included. Table 1 provides the number of items on the instrument by performance indicator, level of expected difficulty, and agree/disagree distribution.

Table 1
Allocation of Items on ELCBS by Difficulty and Response Mix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Expected Difficulty</th>
<th>Expected Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: Vision, Mission, and Goals</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Managing Organizational Systems and Safety</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Ethics and Integrity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: The Education System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 provides sample items, one for each PE. The scaled scores (Rasch measures) are reported for each of these sample items, showing that in some instances the expected difficulty matched the observed difficulty, whereas, for other items it did not. As calibration continues, these values are likely to shift with more respondents. The point here is that the scaling process is working. We have chosen the most difficult item as the example for PE 6, demonstrating the use of an item that pushes commitments to an extreme level.

Table 2
Sample Items in the ELDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Performance Expectation</th>
<th>Expected Response</th>
<th>Expected Difficulty</th>
<th>Rasch Measure</th>
<th>Observed Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>All review of progress toward attainment of mission, vision, and goals must be based on systematic evidence.</td>
<td>1: Vision, Mission, and Goals</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>37.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>People can manipulate statistics, so data should be taken with a grain of salt.</td>
<td>2: Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>52.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Higher performing schools should get additional resources based on merit.</td>
<td>3: Managing Organizational Systems &amp; Safety</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>23.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Principals should reach out to business and community members to establish school policy.</td>
<td>4: Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>53.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>If a teacher acts unethically, you need to report it to the authorities.</td>
<td>5: Ethics and Integrity</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>37.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>If the principal believes that a state law is wrong and is morally opposed to implementing it, s/he should resign.</td>
<td>6: The Education System</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>84.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of the First Validation Study of the ELCBS

Procedures
A purposive sample of three types of respondents was identified to participate in the first study, based on their levels of experience and researchers’ knowledge of them personally. This personal knowledge was necessary for the judgmental portion of the validation analysis.

Respondents included faculty in the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) College of Education with administrative experience (n = 4), practicing principals for two local school districts (n = 8), and current students in the Master’s in Educational Leadership program at FGCU (n = 14). Of the 26 respondents, 16 (52%) were females and 11 were males (38%).

Faculty responded first, as a small pilot test. Minor edits were made based on their suggestions. All data were entered into an Excel file and then converted to a Rasch interval scale, using Winsteps software (Linacre, 2003). The psychometric development and statistical reporting were based on guidelines and recommendations from Bond and Fox (2007), Linacre (2003), Smith (2003), Smith and Smith (2004), and Wilson (2005).

Empirical Results
In Rasch measurement, because both people and items are measured conjointly and ordered on an interval scale, the results are graphed and analyzed on a single vertical “construct map.” The Winsteps output map for the ELCBS is provided in Figure 1. Educational leaders are on the left, and items are on the right. At the top are the most committed leaders and the most difficult items. At the bottom are the least committed leaders and the easiest items.

The limited gaps between items provide for confidence that the construct is well measured—one indication of construct validity. There is a relatively normal distribution of people (on the left) but a skewed distribution of scores with a large number of easy items at the bottom right. In future testing of this instrument, it would be useful to obtain scores from students (or practicing leaders) who are known to have lower levels of commitment to the ISLCC Standards to verify the sensitivity of the scale.

Descriptive statistics for the scores, called “measures” in Rasch, are provided in Table 3. Note that the range of scores is greater for items than for leaders, indicating again that there was more homogeneity in persons than in items. All respondents in this sample are at least moderately consistent in their beliefs with the expectations of the ISLCC standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Measure</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Measure</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>84.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Measure</td>
<td>63.31</td>
<td>45.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>18.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “fit” statistic is critically important in Rasch measurement. While a discussion of the statistic is beyond the scope of this article, we note in passing that this sample of leaders has no extreme misfitting scores; these leaders are well measured, leading to the conclusion that the results are valid. Fit statistics point toward possible refinement of five items, although the fit statistics are not extreme and do not interfere with validity.

The relevant reliability statistic, similar to Cronbach’s alpha, is .81, good for this small sample. Because the range of leader scores is limited, the real separation (another Rasch statistic) of 2.04 is low. Fewer easy items, additional difficult items, or more range in the respondents would most likely bring both of these statistics higher. Overall, however, there is nothing in these data to suggest that inferences about leaders and the program would be invalid or unreliable.
The scores of most respondents were logically supportable based on our knowledge of the respondents. At the bottom of the scale are two students about whom we have limited concerns. Several other students expected to be on the lower end are at the lower end, and several expected to be high are at the high end. The rest are appropriately in the middle range. Most of the administrators were located where they were expected to be, although two principals were lower than anticipated, possibly because of their district and school environments. One student with whom we have had serious reservations is in the lower group and has one of the highest misfitting scores, as predicted.
The Second Instrument: Candidate Disposition Self-Evaluation (CDSE)

The second instrument that was designed, the Candidates Disposition Self Evaluation, is based on the Educational Leadership graduate student, self-reporting of dispositions. Candidates rated their beliefs relative to the six Performance Expectations on a scale of “Strongly Believe,” “Somewhat Believe,” and “Do Not Believe” on the Candidate Disposition Self-Evaluation (CDSE). Each of the Performance Expectations contained four to six items. Candidates rated 94% of the items as “strongly believe”, 6% as “somewhat believe”, and 1% as “do not believe”. The items in which 1% of the respondents did not believe were Performance Expectation 3(b) managing organizational systems by collaboration with all stakeholders; Performance Expectation 3(c) managing organizational systems in the equitable distributions of resources; and Performance Expectation 6(b) influencing policies to ensure the success of all students. Further investigation of these “Do Not Believe” responses is needed.

Candidates were asked to identify on the CDSE three dispositions they believed were their strongest and three they believed were in need of improvement. In addition, candidates were asked to state the rationales for their selections and to present three goals and behaviors they intended to pursue to address each of their areas for improvement. The three dispositions most frequently identified as strengths and as areas for improvement and samples of candidate responses to this task are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Candidates will be expected to address the implementation and success of these strategies in their integrative essays, which they will submit as part of their learning portfolios at the end of their programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Rationale for Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leads to every student learning in my school.</td>
<td>Every student in our school has the ability to learn. Our job is to figure out how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Selected by 8 students)</td>
<td>get them there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages lifelong learning.</td>
<td>Unfortunately not everyone loves to read. However, reading helps people to succeed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Selected by 7 students)</td>
<td>all aspects of life. This can be done through graduate school or trade schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes the family and community as partners.</td>
<td>I believe that having families and communities involved in school, makes for stronger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Selected by 6 students)</td>
<td>families, communities, and schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am part of the A+ committee that looks</td>
<td>I meet with individuals on their bottom 25% and give strategies to help pull him/her up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specifically at data and sorts through it.</td>
<td>No one should give up on individual students who might have been lost. I enjoy helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud to be in the Master's program and I</td>
<td>struggling students succeed. I have two in particular that are learning from me showing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk about it frequently to our students. I</td>
<td>them that I will not give up on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe that if they see me being enthusiastic</td>
<td>I invite musically inclined parents to come in and share their knowledge and skills with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about learning, they will want to also.</td>
<td>the students. For example, a local blues band gives annual blues workshops and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make sure that at every school program, I have</td>
<td>distributes harmonicas to the students who attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community contributions such as sewing of</td>
<td>Hold conferences when necessary throughout the year and provide notice of excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costumes or donations of decorations, parent</td>
<td>work/behavior as well as that which is below par.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteers with maintaining logistics of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performers or communication between myself and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and other staff, and student helpers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Strengths Selected by Candidate

Candidates will be expected to address the implementation and success of these strategies in their integrative essays, which they will submit as part of their learning portfolios at the end of their programs.
### Table 5
Areas for Improvement Selected by Candidate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Rationale for Selection</th>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equitable distribution of resources (Selected by 8 students)</td>
<td>Need to become better at distributing resources equitably</td>
<td>Shadow the principal in order to learn his rationale for school resource distribution</td>
<td>Work with the administrative team to determine if resources should always be distributed equitably and if certain groups would benefit from additional resources</td>
<td>Ask other administrators how they distribute resources and their rationales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates efficiently and effectively (Selected by 8 students)</td>
<td>SOPs can always be more efficient and operations can be more effective</td>
<td>Identify areas of improvement</td>
<td>Work with personnel to establish possible solutions for improvement</td>
<td>Review SOPs and operations regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based continuous improvement of all aspects of the school (Selected by 6 students)</td>
<td>Become more involved in this area at school</td>
<td>Get involved in a planning committee</td>
<td>Use data more aggressively for classroom planning</td>
<td>Advocate for follow-up to trainings and inservice activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Third Instrument: The Mentor Evaluation of Dispositions in Educational Leadership (MEDEL)

The third instrument, the Mentor Evaluation of Dispositions in Educational Leadership (MEDEL), is completed by the candidates’ mentors during the internship. At the end of each candidate’s internship the mentor is asked to rate the frequency of positive and negative behaviors associated with the dispositions in the Performance Expectations. For each PE five to nine behaviors that address the PE are expressed in positive and negative terms, and the mentor selects one of the following in assessing a candidate: typically positive, mixed (both positive and negative), typically negative or not observed. Displayed in Table 6 is an example of a positive behavior and a negative behavior related to Performance Expectation 1: Vision, Mission, and Goals.

### Table 6
Example Item from the Mentor Evaluation of Dispositions in Educational Leadership (MEDEL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Statement</th>
<th>Negative Statement</th>
<th>Mentor Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Searches extensively and systematically for a range of data that will shape vision, mission, and goals.</td>
<td>Data analysis is done in a haphazard manner and not connected to the vision, mission or goals.</td>
<td>TP: Typically positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Mixed positive and negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN: Typically negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND: Not observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a pilot study seventeen mentors evaluated their mentees. Eighty-seven percent reported their candidate was typically positive on the items in the instrument. One percent reported mixed and no one selected typically negative. These are all masters’ level candidates with experience in education who are completing the program, so the expectation is that they would demonstrate positive dispositions. We expect to investigate the ceiling effect (why none of the mentors reported their candidate as demonstrating a negative behavior); however, we suspect that this is a combination of high quality candidates and mentors who were worried about any consequences of providing a negative rating. For the next iteration of this instrument, we will work with the mentors to help them understand the importance of identifying negative behaviors so that they can be remediated, with no negative consequences associated with those ratings.

The other area of concern was 12% replied “not observed”. Although we expected some dispositions would not be a part of every candidate’s internship, it is possible that many of these ratings were for higher education students completing the internships. We will...
analyze this possibility in future administrations of this instrument.

**Next Steps and Conclusions**

It is our intention to administer the Candidate Disposition Self Assessment (CDSA) at the beginning of the program. Later in the program the candidate will be asked to evaluate and reflect on the areas they identified as strengths and areas in which they need improvement. The candidate will take the Educational Leadership Candidate Belief Scale (ELCBS) at a mid-point in the program. During the internship at the end of the program the mentor’s will be asked to fill out the Mentor Evaluation of Dispositions in Educational Leadership (MEDEL). Our next steps are to continue to gather and analyze data. We will pay specific attention to the validity and reliability of the inferences we draw using the belief scale and observation checklist.

We will use the results obtained through these instruments to identify candidates who may be having trouble accepting dispositions the profession believes are important for future administrators, and we will work with those students to monitor and guide their learning. In addition, we will use the results to monitor our program in Educational Leadership for area of program improvement. At this point in our data collection and analysis of the instruments, we believe that the Education Leader Candidate Belief Scale (ELCBS) has sufficient variability in candidate ratings that it will be helpful with both students and program improvement. The other two instruments will help to confirm the strength of our program and identify areas that may need improved focus in helping all candidates accept all dispositions as important.

**References**


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Abstract

As the number of universal pre-K programs for four year olds continues to grow nationally, many states have adopted policies to ensure quality pre-K programming. Professional development programs for the continuing development of pre-K program administrators are critical for developing quality programs. This study presents the preliminary findings from an examination of state-level policies and practices for targeted professional development for administrators of public pre-K programs in Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states. Study findings indicate that most states emphasize pre-K teacher professional development over that which is focused specifically for pre-K program administrators. While some states do offer pre-K administrator-focused professional development opportunities, most SREB states have yet to create legislative or policy frameworks requiring pre-K specific professional development for administrators who directly supervise pre-K educators and programs.

Problem Statement

As the number of universal pre-K programs for four year olds continues to grow nationally, many states have adopted policies to ensure quality pre-K programming. The utilization of teacher-focused professional development to drive program quality is inherent in the design of state pre-K programs; however, the extent to which administrator-focused professional development is utilized is unclear. An examination of the state-level policies and practices for administrator-focused professional development for public pre-K programs in the SREB states will help clarify the extent to which such programs exist and how they are utilized.

Research Questions

The overarching question addressed this study was: What are the administrator-focused public pre-K professional development policies, practices, and initiatives in the states in the Southern Regional Education Board? Four sub-questions were developed to frame the overarching question:

1. What types of pre-K specific professional development are available for public pre-K administrators?
2. What is the infrastructure that supports public pre-K administrator professional development?
3. What types of program delivery are offered to support pre-K specific professional development for public pre-K administrators?

4. What are the major challenges or barriers for public pre-K administrator professional development?

**Operational Definitions**

Several operational definitions were developed for purposes of this study:

1. *Pre-K collaborative program:* a program which includes a formal collaboration between a public pre-K program, a childcare program, and/or a Head Start program.
2. *Preschool:* Preschool is synonymous with pre-K. For this study, the term pre-K is utilized to refer to the year of schooling prior to entry in kindergarten.
3. *Professional development policies and practices:* the myriad of activities which are designed to support professional growth, such as “training, credit-based coursework, mentoring, and other activities” (Bergen, 2009, p. 6).
4. *Public pre-K:* a state funded pre-K program which encourages the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development of four-year-olds (and in some cases, also three-year-olds) who typically have a disability.
5. *Public pre-K administrator:* an individual who directly supervises a pre-K program and teachers.
6. *Universal pre-K:* a public pre-K program or system which offers services at no charge to a pre-determined percentage of a state’s population of pre-K age children.

**Literature Review**

A brief description of the history of early childhood education as it is tied to the United State public education system provides a context for the development of publically funded pre-K programming. The creation of Head Start in the 1960’s was the first large-scale model which began the transformation of early childhood education into a profession which demands national attention (Rose, 2009). A more recent initiative is rooted in the 2002 launch of the Good Start, Grow Smart program for early childhood education (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006). Noted as “the early childhood reform companion of No Child Left Behind” (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, p. 2), Good Start, Grow Smart aimed to establish state-mandated early learning guidelines, create educational standards for early childhood educators, and provide research-based information for educators, administrators and parents. This initiative brought public pre-K and its collaborative partners (typically Head Start and the Department of Health and Human Resources) to the forefront.

In addition to the inception of program models and legislation for early childhood education and, subsequently, pre-K education, long-term enrollment and accessibility trends indicate that the numbers of pre-K programs/initiatives for three and four year olds is on the rise (Barnett & Yarosz, 2008). For example, in 2006, 45 states funded public pre-K programs for four-year-olds (NAEYC). With the growing number of pre-K programs across a variety of settings, pre-K professional development for administrators is an issue which must be addressed.

Administrator support for public pre-K programs is increasingly crucial as each year more and more public school principals, Head Start administrators, and childcare directors work with public pre-K programs. To accommodate this increase in the number of public school principals who work with pre-K programs, professional development practices should be in place for them to address pre-K pedagogy and best practices (National Association for Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2010). Regardless of the setting, the importance of those associated with the field of early childhood education assuming “an active, self-directed, daily hand in their own learning—using self-inquiry to create important questions to be addressed and answered through professional development” (Helterbran & Fennimore, 2004, p. 270) is crucial for student success.

Individuals who work with young children will assert that knowing children on an individual basis is a necessity; consequently, the importance of understanding the needs, strengths, interests, and developmental levels of professional development participants is also critical (Sheerer, 1997). Central to the success of state pre-K programs is the ability of educators to appropriately and consistently facilitate student progress through all developmental domains.

To support this task, extensive professional development programs have been created in many states which offer public pre-K. These programs are often comprehensive and lead to increased educational attainment for teachers. However, the presence and intensity of professional development infrastructures to support those who directly supervise and administer
public pre-K programs are unclear in comparison to the supports in place for public pre-K teachers.

As the number of public pre-K programs continues to expand each year, classrooms are emerging in Head Start, childcare, faith-based, private, higher education, and military base programs, as well as in elementary schools. Elementary principals, in particular, must expand their vision and current knowledge of child development in order to support high quality pre-K programming (NAESP, 2010). Principals, many of whom have little experience with pre-K programming, must consider the unique needs and perspectives of pre-K children (NAESP, 2010). To increase shared meaning for elementary principals, NAESP published the resource guide Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities in 2005. This publication was developed with the intent of helping principals develop a stronger understanding of pre-K programs. Noting the influence of principals across a variety of settings, NAESP outlines how principals can support and strengthen pre-K programming within public schools and community feeder programs (2005).

The success of teacher professional development has been linked to mentoring and support by pre-K administrators (Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003). Research on the effectiveness of professional development has examined how all those involved in the educational process, not just educators, but groups such as administrators and families, are affected as a result of the intervention (Guskey, 1994). The literature supports the conclusion that positive effects occur when professional development is limited in the number of intervention sites, as limiting the number of sites increases the likelihood that supports for administrators will be in place (National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center [NCCIC], n.d.).

Correlated with these assertions, NAESP (2005) suggests that a professional development infrastructure should be provided for principals to help them better understand the linkages between pre-K and other grades. To build a system of ongoing support for principals and other pre-K administrators, NAESP has identified several indicators of quality which should be addressed:

1. Supportive interactions between teachers and children
2. Safe, supportive and engaging learning environments
3. Focus on the whole child
4. Meaningful learning for the individual child
5. A culture of authentic assessment and continuous learning
6. Connections to families and community organizations
7. Effective program administration

Methods
A qualitative approach which utilized semi-structured interviews and web-based searches was utilized for this study. To determine the current public pre-K administrator-focused professional development policies and practices for the SREB states, individuals holding state-level pre-K leadership positions were identified. A key state-level pre-K administrator from each of the sixteen SREB states was identified. The targeted respondents were individuals who served in executive positions for state public pre-K programs. The initial list of respondents was taken from a list of members who belong to the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). Additional information was collected through an analysis of individual state public pre-K program websites. The website analysis assisted with identifying key personnel for interviewing and also provided information about programming, legislation, standards, and professional development. This group served as the subjects for semi-structured interviews.

Individual state pre-K websites were analyzed to gain information about current pre-K administrator professional development programs and initiatives. While a large amount of information was available about state efforts relative to pre-K teacher professional development initiatives and policies, there was little information which specifically addressed pre-K administrator professional development. A decision was then made to conduct semi-structured interviews at least one with state-level pre-K leaders from each of the sixteen SREB states. All sixteen state-level pre-K leaders were sent an informational letter sharing the purpose of the study and inviting them to participate. The semi-structured interview format was utilized to provide respondents the opportunity to explain information about how their state's public pre-K program supports pre-K administrators.

The semi-structured interview process was guided by a researcher developed protocol. The protocol included questions focused on the policies, practices and initiatives in place to support pre-K administrator-
focused professional development. The overarching research question and the four specific research questions provided the framework for development of the protocol. Content validity for the interview protocol was established through peer review by a state-level pre-K administrator prior to conducting the first semi-structured interview. No major modifications were made in the interview protocol as a result of this review. A copy of the interview protocol is included in Attachment A.

Respondents

The state-level pre-K leaders targeted for this study serve in roles such as state commissioner for pre-K education, executive director for school readiness and early learning, and state pre-K coordinator. Initially, four of the sixteen individuals who were sent a letter responded indicating they would be willing to participate. A follow-up letter, sent ten days after the initial letter, resulted in four additional subjects indicating that they would be willing to participate. Further research also revealed that one of the sixteen states in the SREB does not currently have a public pre-K system. A third attempt to reach those who had not replied was made three weeks after the initial contact. Also, the decision to investigate contact information from state pre-K websites revealed names of other state-level pre-K leaders who might be willing to participate in the study. Administrators from 10 SREB states were interviewed. The interviews were not recorded; however, the researcher took notes during each interview. Interviews lasted approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. Subjects also provided information about specific links to examine on the state pre-K program websites.

Interview Summaries

A state by state summary of each interview is provided below.

**Alabama**. No official delivery mechanism is in place in Alabama to support pre-K administrator-focused professional development. However, an administrator track is available each year at the state’s annual early childhood conference. A training program is held each summer for principals, Head Start managers, and other administrators “to go over guidelines and quality indicators for pre-K” (Alabama pre-K leader, personal communication, September 27, 2010). The respondent also noted how stronger collaboration with the Department of Children’s Affairs and the Alabama Department of Education would likely build additional support for pre-K administrators.

**Delaware**. Delaware offers a program which serves children ages birth through five years. Included in this program is a cadre of just over 800 four-year-olds who are primarily located in childcare and other private facilities throughout the state. The infrastructure to support pre-K educators and administrators in Delaware is built around a five-tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) which provides program improvement support in the form of professional development and materials. Also, the Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood’s website serves as the professional development hub for early childhood educators and administrators. “We want teachers to improve and we want directors to support teachers as they also learn to encourage teachers on how to implement the curriculum” (Delaware pre-K leader, personal communication, October 22, 2010). Though limited funding for early childhood education is a noted barrier for Delaware, an emphasis on “sustainability and growing new leaders to ensure a tier of quality” (Delaware pre-K leader, personal communication, October 22, 2010) is supported in the state.

**Florida**. Approximately 89% of the children enrolled in Florida’s Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program attend private programs such as childcare, faith-based, home-based, or Head Start programs. The infrastructure to support pre-K administrators is reflected in the Florida Director’s Credential and VPK Credential which are required for pre-K administrators. The VPK Director’s Credential is awarded through completion of a basic course required to assist administrators with forms, submission of reports, and basic regulations. The Florida Department of Education and Florida Center for Emergent Language and Literacy provide online training for Florida VPK literacy instructors who work with classroom teachers. The Florida VPK Education Standards Training is also available to anyone. Administrators are encouraged, but not required, to participate.

The respondent noted that a clear understanding of early childhood pedagogy is “critical to having a strong structure. Some programs want worksheets and other developmentally inappropriate materials to be used in preschool. We have to show them the standards and
how to integrate them in appropriate ways” (Florida pre-K leader, September 24, 2010). The respondent also noted that public principals who have pre-K programs in their buildings, while few in number compared to the percentage of pre-K classrooms outside of school buildings, “may not understand what pre-K children need to do, and the principals often aren’t supported” (Florida pre-K leader, personal communication, September 24, 2010). To assist in developing pre-K administrators’ understanding of best practices for young children, each of Florida’s 31 educational districts has a VPK coalition coordinator who works with principals and childcare directors to ensure the Director’s Credential and VPK Credential requirements are met.

**Georgia.** In 2009, Georgia ranked as the number three state in the nation for providing public pre-K access to four year olds (Barnett, et al., 2009). The state served its one millionth pre-K student during the 2009–2010 school year. Georgia’s public pre-K system is called Bright from the Start and, while it was first funded in 1993, the state became the first in the nation to offer universal access to all four-year-olds in 1995. The program is funded by the state’s lottery system (Barnett, et al.).

As their state pre-K system continues to grow, the program is faced with ensuring all educators and administrators are provided high-quality professional development to support classroom instruction. While not mandated specifically in legislation, professional development for pre-K administrators is included in the state’s pre-K professional development system. Principals and administrators of public, private, military, and charter schools often participate in the training required of the educators they directly supervise. The professional development for educators and administrators in Georgia is “consistent, required, expected, and necessary for quality improvements” (Georgia pre-K leader, personal communication, September 8, 2010).

One of the methods through which educators and administrators receive ongoing professional development in Georgia includes collaboration between the state pre-K program and early childhood faculty at Georgia State University. Due to budget constraints, Georgia’s pre-K program has also developed webcasts and other web-based resources as a mechanism for providing pre-K educator professional development. Pre-K administrators are also encouraged to engage in these web-based professional development opportunities.

**Kentucky.** The Kentucky Pre-K program is offered to four year olds who are considered at risk (150% of poverty level) and to all three and four year olds with identified special needs. The program, which originated in 1990, met eight of the National Institute for Early Education Research’s (NIEER) ten benchmarks for quality pre-K programming during the 2008–2009 school year (Barnett, et al., 2009).

The respondent noted that while there is “nothing in statute requiring pre-K specific administrator professional development” (Kentucky pre-K leader, September 7, 2010), there are mechanisms in place to include pre-K administrators in educator-focused trainings. For example, the Kentucky Initiative for Social and Emotional Development is a four-module team-based training program which includes a supervisor on each team. Other trainings offered for pre-K administrators have included a curricular framework overview, as well as an annual orientation webinar for new pre-K supervisors. “Fall and spring leadership meetings are also offered for district pre-K coordinators and special education directors. The meetings are used to inform these audiences of changes in policy and other programmatic aspects” (Kentucky pre-K leader, personal communication, September 7 2010).

Another initiative offered by Kentucky’s Department of Education stems directly from the state’s five Regional Education Training Centers (RTCs). The RTC website includes information about training for Kentucky’s Response to Intervention system of intervention, pre-K developmentally appropriate practices, best practices, assessment, curriculum and instruction. The RTCs require an annual professional development plan and a schedule to include various offerings for supervisors. Instructional leadership credit is available for those who participate.

The respondent also noted that the Kentucky Education Professional Development Standards Board has established standards necessary to be a supervisor, but the standards are not early childhood specific. Principals and others must be aware of the requirements of this board. A challenge for all professional development initiatives has been funding. According to the respondent, “We’ve had a 3% budget cut overall thus far and expect a 4% cut next year. We have had cuts in our program due to the budget, so we know this will have an impact on what [professional development] is offered across the board” (Kentucky pre-K leader, personal communication, September 7, 2010).
**Louisiana.** Louisiana does not require pre-K administrator-specific professional development for those who supervise pre-K programs. The respondent noted that educator professional development in each district is provided by an early childhood supervisor, and that pre-K administrators are allowed to attend these events.

The Louisiana State Department of Education does meet with pre-K administrators two times each year, but the respondent did not consider these sessions as “true” professional development, but instead offered “administrative guidelines and how to operate your program types of sessions” (Louisiana pre-K leader, personal communication, September 9, 2010). The respondent did note that a session using test results was offered recently for pre-K administrators. The respondent noted how “our own staff has gone out and done workshops on intentional teaching” (Louisiana pre-K leader, personal communication, September 9, 2010). In addition, a conference on developmentally appropriate practices in pre-K for principals is being planned.

When asked about the challenges for pre-K administrator-focused professional development, the respondent noted how “early childhood training for supervisors is limited. There is, however, a yearly state conference with a supervisor’s track. Nationally known speakers are often used for this conference” (Louisiana pre-K leader, personal communication, September 9, 2010). To assist with budget constraints for professional development, the respondent noted the use of webinars to provide training which could be attended by pre-K administrators and special education coordinators.

**Maryland.** Maryland has 24 school systems and all have public pre-K programs. The majority of classrooms are in elementary schools, with very few in outside programs. The Pre-K program in Maryland is called Maryland Pre-K for All, and is affiliated with the Maryland Model for School Readiness.

To frame the issue of pre-K administrator-focused professional development, the respondent noted that Maryland has a governance issue because the local systems have direct oversight of programs. An example of a challenge was what happened eight years ago when 8 of the 24 systems wanted to adopt a specific language and literacy based curriculum. They could not do this because the pre-K curriculum has to be comprehensive and programs cannot just choose to do one specific part of any curriculum—they have to adopt the entire curriculum (Maryland pre-K leader, personal communication, September 16, 2010).

The respondent expressed a need for technical assistance for supervisors. Regular guidance is provided via memos and an administrator meeting is held twice each year. These meetings are primarily informational, making it is challenging for them to absorb everything. A barrier to pre-K administrator-focused professional development is funding. There is no direct reimbursement for schools and school systems indicate there is not enough money for training. “We haven’t held back with our program for children though” (Maryland pre-K leader, personal communication, September 16, 2010).

**North Carolina.** North Carolina’s newly-formed Office of Early Learning serves programs from grades pre-K through three (http://www.ncprek.nc.gov/MoreFour/index.asp). The Office of Early Learning was formed in 2010, and includes the More at Four Pre-K program. North Carolina’s More at Four Pre-K program served over 31,000 pre-K children during the 2008–2009 school year (Barnett, et al., 2009). Meeting all ten benchmarks for quality established by the National Institute for Early Education Research, North Carolina pre-K offers services to at risk four-year-olds in a variety of settings (Barnett, et al.). “We’re a very rural, poor state, so a big challenge for us is finding highly qualified staff and administrators” (North Carolina pre-K leader, personal communication, October 29, 2010).

The North Carolina Department of Education has been working on the development of support for pre-K administrators since 2001, when it teamed with University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute to conduct a survey which examined who had oversight of early childhood programs in North Carolina schools. The findings revealed that less than 20% of those administrators surveyed had any specialized training in early childhood education or had ever even taken a course which specifically focused on early childhood education. When asked about the extent of pre-K educator background knowledge, the state pre-K leader noted how “this is a very persistent problem nationally and in North Carolina. My experience as a teacher who worked with administrators who did not understand pre-K helped form my opinions also about this” (North Carolina pre-K leader, personal communication, October 29, 2010).
One of the major initiatives of the North Carolina Office of Early Learning is the development of a resource manual for principals and administrators who supervise teachers of young children. Developed in partnership with the University of North Carolina, the manual was launched in October 2010, is available online, and provides general and supplemental material for pre-K administrators regarding topics such as programming, quality, developmentally appropriate practices, assessment, and standards (Lambert, et al., 2010).

The Office of Early Learning in North Carolina is also working with higher education partners in the state to develop support for pre-K administrators. The Northeast Leadership Academy in North Carolina provides training to help ensure pre-K administrators have some basic knowledge of child development and other pertinent topics (North Carolina pre-K leader, personal communication, October 29, 2010). Three leadership academies are being planned to provide support for pre-K administrators.

The respondent also noted how the various backgrounds and experiences of pre-K administrators also play a role with the integration of administrator-focused pre-K professional development:

It’s one thing to sit down, talk in a meeting and discuss pre-K, but unless you are very diligent in this it goes away. Also, there is some level of resistance at times. Not so much as there used to be, but we have a lot of administrators who simply don’t know what they don’t know. Some districts just aren’t as on board with pre-K as others (North Carolina pre-K leader, personal communication, October 29, 2010).

Though the North Carolina Office of Early Learning has various initiatives being implemented and under development, “we have done a lot of work but there is still so much to be done [to support pre-K administrators]” (North Carolina pre-K leader, personal communication, October 29, 2010).

Tennessee. Tennessee began its Voluntary Pre-K Program for four year olds during the 2005–2006 school year (Barnett, et al., 2009). Meeting nine of the ten NIEER indicators for quality, Tennessee Pre-K continues to expand its impact by contracting with Head Start agencies, childcare agencies, institutions of higher education, and public housing authorities to provide pre-K services (Barnett, et al.). The Tennessee Department of Education further solidified its commitment to young children by forming the Office of School Readiness and Early Learning in 2010. Working with ages birth through eight, public pre-K programming falls under the auspices of this office. The Tennessee Department of Education has “worked diligently to help support principals who house pre-K programs in Tennessee,” (Tennessee pre-K leader, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

The respondent noted how Head Start and childcare collaborative partners already have professional development supports in place for Head Start directors, administrative staff, and childcare directors. Principals, however, do not have the needed support to effectively understand and embrace pre-K programs. The respondent’s research and experience has led her to understand that elementary principals typically tend to take one of three positions when pre-K programs are in their buildings:

1. They stay out of the pre-K classroom and program unless absolutely necessary.
2. They do enter the classroom but question the motives of a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Because of No Child Left Behind mandates for kindergarten and up, there is sometimes a tendency to “push down” the first grade into kindergarten, and kindergarten into pre-K.
3. They accept the pre-K program as part of the school and attempt to learn more about the methods and curricula.

The respondent noted that for a few years, Tennessee sponsored a statewide early childhood summit to support principals and other pre-K supervisors/ coordinators. This summit included a hodgepodge of information pre-K supervisors and principals needed to know. The money has run out though, so we haven’t been able to continue this summit. (Tennessee pre-K leader, personal communication, September 28, 2010)

In 2005 Tennessee Pre-K also initiated professional development workshops to help pre-K principals and administrators better understand topics such as children’s social and emotional development, program improvement assessment through the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tools. The respondent noted...
that “these workshops were very eye opening. Some principals and administrators embraced the materials, while others did not” (Tennessee pre-K leader, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

An additional layer of the support being planned for Tennessee Pre-K administrators is the Tennessee Academy of School Leaders, a professional development program for supervisors and leaders for all grades. Academy developers plan to offer an ongoing, year-long pre-K focused strand of this program for elementary principals. The respondent noted that Tennessee did receive Race to the Top grant money. These funds will enable the Tennessee Department of Education to create an Electronic Learning Center for Pk-12 training modules. These modules will include podcasts for pre-K educators.

To further support elementary principals who have pre-K classrooms in their buildings, the Tennessee Department of Education’s Office of School Readiness and Early Learning is currently exploring the development of online modules based on the National Association for Elementary School Principals’ (2005) publication: What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do: Early Childhood Education.

The respondent summarized some of the challenges Tennessee is experiencing regarding pre-K administrator-focused professional development with the assertion that “we are just beginning to get our feet wet. It takes staff, time, money and resources to effectively integrate a supportive professional development system for pre-K administrators” (Tennessee pre-K leader, personal communication, September 28, 2010).

West Virginia. West Virginia’s Universal Pre-K System was mandated in 2002 to offer free, voluntary pre-K services to all four year olds and all three year olds with special needs by the conclusion of the 2012–2013 school year (Barnett, et al., 2009). The state’s pre-K program met seven of NIEER’s ten benchmarks for quality during the 2008–2009 school year (Barnett, et al.). The West Virginia Department of Education’s (WVDE) Office of School Readiness has built an infrastructure to support pre-K administrators. Workshops are available on the West Virginia Department of Education homepage for pre-K administrators to learn more about common topics such as policy, curriculum, assessment, and standards.

Since 2008, the state pre-K program has offered pre-K administrator workshops through approximately 150 various sessions around the state. To increase staff and cost efficiency, the WVDE has begun hosting a pre-K administrator leadership symposium in each of the state’s eight Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). These one-day events are focused on the identified needs of the pre-K administrators. Staff from the WVDE’s Office of School Readiness are on each RESA’s agenda to assist with the delivery of workshop content. Some of the topics covered at these RESA symposia include program improvement and accountability, integration of the state’s Early Learning Standards, child assessment and reporting, professional development systems to support integration of the Early Learning Standards, and collaborative team building.

An additional support for West Virginia pre-K administrators is the WV Pre-K website, which offers several workshop toolkits specifically focused toward building principals, Head Start supervisors, and childcare directors. The state also offers an annual early childhood conference with workshops for administrators. However, “these sessions are typically geared toward Head Start and childcare administrators though” (West Virginia pre-K leader, personal communication, September 20, 2010).

The respondent also noted the unique challenge facing elementary building principals who house pre-K programs in their buildings:

The pre-K specific professional development goals and supports for building principals are often different than that of the Head Start or childcare administrator. Principals wear many hats and typically do not have the same early childhood background as a Head Start or childcare administrator. Therefore, the development of a comprehensive professional development system based on our newly-revised Early Learning Standards has supports in place not only for educators, but for families and administrators as well. Administrator walk-throughs have been developed to help principals and other pre-K administrators recognize the various types of quality experiences they should be seeing during different times throughout a typical day in a pre-K classroom (West Virginia pre-K leader, personal communication, September 20, 2010).
As evidenced above, each of the state-level pre-K leaders interviewed for this study offered information specific to their state’s pre-K programming. A synthesis of the interview findings is provided in Attachment B. Mississippi is the only state in the Southern Regional Education Board with no public pre-K program. State funding of $2 million was provided in 2008 to create Mississippi Building Blocks, a school readiness program for four-year-olds which is focused toward childcare programs (Barnett, et al., 2009).

Summary and Conclusions
The semi-structured interviews provided the researcher with information about the individual state pre-K programs and the supports in place for pre-K administrators. The interviews also served, in some cases, as a method for gaining access to additional information about resources available. For example, state pre-K program websites and links to pre-K standards were shared by many of the respondents. The respondents were generally quick to discuss the successes and challenges of their state’s pre-K program, while the focus of pre-K administrator-focused professional development policies and practices was typically grouped with initiatives focused on teacher professional development.

Various practices currently being utilized or planned for the delivery of pre-K administrator-focused professional development were identified during the study. Maximizing the use of technology for pre-K administrator-focused professional development was noted by several respondents, largely due to the cost-effectiveness and access provided by this strategy. While some state pre-K programs collaborate with colleges or universities to design and deliver pre-K administrator-focused professional development, other states are utilizing regional education agencies for training and support. Framing the professional development for this audience based on the consideration of the unique aspects of pre-K programs located in elementary schools is also another component which has influenced the current delivery systems.

Several challenges for the development and integration of pre-K administrator-focused professional development were identified as a result of this study. Many of the study respondents identified limited funding and budgetary restrictions as a major barrier to providing professional development for this audience. Also, a lack of interagency collaboration was identified as a challenge by some respondents. A lack of state legislative mandates, as well as the voluntary nature of pre-K administrator-focused professional development programs, are also barriers.

Several additional challenges which have impeded the development and growth of pre-K administrator-focused professional development programs were identified by respondents. One of the areas identified was the misalignment and sometimes conflicting nature of state and local governance policies for pre-K programs. For example, some of the state leaders identified for this study noted how, despite statewide initiatives, control at the local level dictated the content, breadth, and depth of professional development content for educators and administrators. A final challenge noted by the respondents in this study was a lack of capacity to implement professional development for pre-K administrators. Major efforts in place for pre-K educators often consume the physical and capital resources of state pre-K programs, leaving few individuals in place to actually ensure the successful development, integration, and management of programs focused for pre-K administrators.

Pre-K administrator-focused professional development can serve as an effective mechanism for learning about best practices for pre-K programs. Pre-K programs are on the rise nationally, and the individuals who serve in administrative roles for these programs must be supported with ongoing guidance and professional development. Pre-K administrators who have little or no background in early childhood education need support from a state infrastructure to create stronger acceptance, understanding, and alignment with developmentally appropriate best practices for pre-K programs.

Several states in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) offer professional development opportunities for public pre-K administrators, although the majority of states do not include public pre-K administrator professional development in legislation. Including pre-K administrators as participants in the existing educator-focused professional development systems seems to be common more than the exception. To strengthen support for pre-K administrator-focused professional development, states should also consider utilizing the indicators for quality programming identified by NAESP (2005) to increase pre-K administrators’ knowledge and acceptance of pre-K programs.
References
Albrecht, K., & Engel, B. (2007). Moving away from a quick-fix mentality to systematic professional development. Young Children, 6(10), 18-25.
Attachment A: Interview Protocol

State-Level Public Pre-K Administrator Interview Protocol
for Policy Analysis Study
Semi-structured Interview Questions

Overall Survey Purpose/Objective/Question:
What are the policies and practices for public pre-K administrator-focused professional development in the SREB states?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. What policies, practices, or initiatives are in place in your state for administrator-focused pre-K professional development?  
   *Could you provide copies or indicate how to gain access to these?* |
| 2. What do these requirements specify?  
   *Please share the scope and depth of these requirements.* |
| 3. How many hours of professional development must public pre-K administrators attend yearly? |
| 4. How many hours of **pre-K specific** professional development must public pre-K administrators attend yearly? |
| 5. What are the topics of professional development which are offered for public pre-K administrators?  
   *Are topics standards-based, and if so, which standards?* |
| 6. How are these topics decided upon? |
| 7. Who provides professional development for public pre-K administrators? |
| 8. What challenges or barriers to public pre-K administrator professional development exist? |
| 9. Who funds public pre-K professional development initiatives? |
| 10. Does public pre-K administrator-focused professional development include other entities (such as Head Start, childcare, higher ed., etc.)? If so, how? |
| 11. What is the role of technology as part of the delivery of professional development? |
| 12. How is professional development evaluated? If evaluated, are there ways to access the evaluations? |
| 13. What are some other comments you’d like to make regarding public pre-K administrator-focused professional development in your state? |
## Attachment B: Synthesis of Interview Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Policies/Practices/Initiatives</th>
<th>Program Delivery</th>
<th>Barriers/Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>• Administrator professional development track at PD conference</td>
<td>• Annual early childhood conference</td>
<td>• Focus on pre-K teacher PD is top priority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Basic guidelines training</td>
<td>• Face to face summer trainings</td>
<td>• Additional collaboration needed between state agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>• Director-focused professional development offered through Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) tiers</td>
<td>• Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood website</td>
<td>• Budget constraints</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustaining a knowledgeable director workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>• Program coordinators work with administrators to ensure state pre-K Credential and Director's Credential if applicable</td>
<td>• Face to face credentialing trainings</td>
<td>• Clear understanding of early childhood pedagogy is needed for all administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administrators could attend state pre-K education standards training</td>
<td>• Online literacy facilitator trainings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>• Administrators invited to attend educator-focused PD</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Budget constraints</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration with higher education for training</td>
<td>• Webcasts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Other web-based resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>• Administrators invited to attend educator-focused PD</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Budget constraints and cuts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orientation seminar for new pre-K supervisors</td>
<td>• Regional Training Center website</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fall and Spring pre-K leadership meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Regional Training Center website’s PD options for pre-K administrators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>• Administrators invited to attend educator-focused PD</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Bi-yearly meetings are not “true” PD because they only focus on operations and regulations rather than Pre-K content</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bi-yearly meetings required for program operation guidance</td>
<td>• Annual early childhood conference</td>
<td>• Budget constraints</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshops on intentional teaching and developmentally appropriate practices for principals</td>
<td>• Webinars</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yearly early childhood conference with a supervisor’s track</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>• Regular guidance through memorandums</td>
<td>• Memorandums</td>
<td>• Ensuring a developmentally appropriate curriculum due to governance issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bi-yearly meetings for program administrators</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Budget constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>• Ongoing professional development through resource manual</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Ensuring that all pre-K administrators have at least a basic knowledge of child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership Academy to support pre-K administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensuring that all pre-K administrators support pre-K and can adequately recognize and evaluate high-quality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher education collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration across agencies to ensure all have necessary information</td>
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<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td>Policies/Practices/Initiatives</td>
<td>Program Delivery</td>
<td>Barriers/Challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>• Administrator-focused PD to better understand common pre-K topics</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Helping elementary principals better understand pre-K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tennessee Academy of School Leaders’ pre-K focused year-long PD program being planned</td>
<td>• Web-based resources</td>
<td>• Resources (staff, time, money) needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Electronic Learning Center to support Pk-12 learning modules</td>
<td>• Online modules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Administrators invited to participate in educator-focused PD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Web-based resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online modules</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>• Regional Education Service Agency Symposia (yearly)</td>
<td>• Face to face</td>
<td>• Creating shared meaning for all pre-K leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Web-based tool kits</td>
<td>• Web-based resources</td>
<td>• Getting principals and other leaders to attend sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Administrators’ walkthrough</td>
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