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Summer 2021

A Qualitative Case Study on Principal Perceptions of Responsibilities, Preparation, and Training and Their Effect on Retention

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Recommended Citation

Crawford, Karlene, "A Qualitative Case Study on Principal Perceptions of Responsibilities, Preparation, and Training and Their Effect on Retention" (2021). *Doctor of Education Dissertations*. 59.
https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education-dissertations/59

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF
RESPONSIBILITIES, PREPARATION, AND TRAINING AND THEIR EFFECT ON
RETENTION

By
Karlene Crawford

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2021

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Karlene Crawford under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank God for giving me the patience, perseverance, and encouragement to keep going throughout this challenging process. I would like to thank my amazing daughter, Chandre, for being my inspiration to embark on this journey. My goal in life is always to be an excellent example for you and show you that it is possible to overcome barriers in your life. A special thanks to my family for always believing in me, especially my sister, Judy, for always being there when I needed you. My significant other, Eric, thank you for always supporting my endeavors and consistently being my peace. I appreciate all of you and feel blessed to have you all in my life.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. William Stone, thank you for your mentorship throughout my dissertation. Your advice, editing, and support were invaluable to the success of this research project. Words cannot express how appreciative I am that you continued to work with me throughout my numerous changes. You provided insightful feedback through my many drafts.

I also sincerely appreciate the support of my committee members, Dr. Hoover, and Dr. Morris. Dr. Hoover, you are an extraordinary role model and a true representation of the bond that exists among Cheyney University graduates. Thanks for taking me under your wing. I love my CU family! Dr. Morris, you have an exceptional gift of motivating others and bringing out the best in them. I genuinely appreciate your support, and I thank you for always being there for me! I am forever grateful to both of you.

Finally, to my Gardner Webb family, Shante, Lori, Darrell, and Courtney, thank you for always sharing your guidance and answering any of my questions! A special thanks to Gayle Whitfield. Thanks a million for always being my cheerleader and

checking on me! You are a rare gem, and I thank God for bringing you into my life.

Outside of my Gardner Webb family, I want to thank the principals who participated in this study. Without their honesty, trust, and commitment, I would not have gathered the valuable data needed to support my research.

Abstract

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF
RESPONSIBILITIES, PREPARATION, AND TRAINING AND THEIR EFFECT ON
RETENTION. Crawford, Karlene, 2021: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.
The focus of this qualitative case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the
differences in school leadership responsibilities, preparation, and training of traditional
public school principals and charter school principals and their effect on principal
retention. The study included five principals from traditional public schools and five
principals from charter schools in North Carolina. This study had four main findings: (a)
Traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities, while
charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership; (b) All principals spent
most of each workday responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder needs
or, in other words, engaging in reactive managerial tasks. However, principals generally
preferred the instructional leader role over the reactive managerial role; (c) Principal
preparation among traditional public school principals is facilitated by active guidance of
district administrators for professional growth, while principal preparation for charter
school principals is self-initiated; and (d) Many principals would consider leaving their
position if it began to negatively impact their families. All the findings in this study were
supported by the literature, though more research is needed to fully understand the
findings of this study.

Keywords: principals, charter school principals, traditional public school
principals, school leaders, principal retention, principal turnover, principal preparation

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

Being a leader of a school is an extremely challenging job with an excessive amount of responsibility. Principal turnover has become a serious issue across the country. Over the last decade, there has been a large amount of research conducted pertaining to the retention of school principals. According to Levin and Bradley (2019), "The national average tenure of principals in their schools was four years as of 2016-17" (p. 3). Principal leadership is believed to be the second most influential school-based factor that influences student performance after classroom instruction, accounting for one quarter of all school effects on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to Fuller (2012),

> About 50 percent of newly hired middle school principals and 30 percent of newly hired high school principals remained at the same school for three years. After five years, over one-half of middle school principals and nearly three-quarters of high school principals had left their initial school. (p. 1)

"Getting the right people to become school leaders is very important, but so is providing these people with the right set of skills to be effective leaders" (Christie et al., 2009, p. 4). School principal roles and expectations have expanded, and great emphasis has been placed on principals being instructional leaders in the building to increase student learning. Seventy percent of principals indicate their responsibilities have changed dramatically over the past 5 years, and 75% report the job has become too complex (Alvoid & Black, 2014). The principalship is an extremely tough job because it requires principals to juggle multiple responsibilities at one time. Their job responsibilities include

being problem solvers, instructional leaders, budget experts, disciplinarians, facility managers, and policy experts and many more daunting tasks. Given the expanding roles and challenges principals assume in school leadership and management, many working conditions such as salary and job benefits, workload, school disciplinary environment, and principal influences in school are becoming important concerns for many principals when considering the entry, mobility, and exit of the principalship (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012). When comparing leadership roles between a traditional school and a charter school, the literature reveals that both leaders face many common challenges. Among these challenges include "shaping a school's vision, fostering trust among both adults and children, managing resources efficiently, and balancing internal and external pressures" (Campbell et al., 2008, p. 3). Charter school and traditional public school leaders also have similar responsibilities; both are expected to be instructional leaders while managing challenging daily operations. While highly effective principals create significant changes each year, it takes an average of 5 years to put a mobilizing vision in place, improve teaching staff, and fully implement policies and practices that positively impact the school's performance (Horng et al., 2010).

As stated in Public Schools First NC (2020), "More than 111,000 students are enrolled in 196 charter schools in North Carolina" (p. 1). "Fourteen schools were approved to open in 2020, bringing North Carolina's state total to 210 charter schools. State funding for charter schools has increased from about $16.5 million in 1997 to more than $674 million in 2018-19" (Public Schools First NC, 2020, p. 1). Opinions vary about the methods needed to improve schools; however, most researchers agree that the principal is one of the most essential participants in the undertaking (Leithwood et al.,

2008; Marzano et al., 2005). As the charter school movement continues to increase, it is essential to understand the similarities and differences of job responsibilities with traditional and charter school leaders. A comparison between traditional public school and charter public school leadership is imperative to gain an in-depth understanding of the parallels between the leadership roles of principals in both settings.

Statement of the Problem

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to staff each classroom with an effective teacher and each school with an effective leader. Under ESSA, "School leadership is explicitly acknowledged as a valid target of educational-improvement activities across the titles" (Herman et al., 2017, p. 4). Repeated leadership turnover is negatively associated with student performance (Béteille et al., 2012). Miller (2013) found that after a principal departs from a school, the test scores continue to fall in the first 2 years of the new principal and do not return to pre-turnover levels until 4 to 5 years later. According to Mascall and Leithwood (2010), principals need to stay in their school for 5 to 7 years to create large-scale change. Fuller et al. (2015) found that the overall workload was ranked as one of the top five factors influencing principal intentions to stay at the current schools by elementary principals from all district types and secondary principals in Texas urban districts.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), among all public school principals in 2015-2016, approximately 82% remained at the same school during the following school year, 6% moved to a different school, and 10% left the principalship. Sun and Ni (2016) reported that charter school leaders tend to turn over more frequently than leaders of traditional public schools. Although there is literature

about the effective leadership of traditional public schools and charter public schools, there is a gap in the literature that compares in depth the similarities and differences of the principalship within these settings. This is a massive area of concern for the state of our education system in the United States that we must address. Suppose appropriate provisions are not made to ensure that school principals are properly prepared to assume the principalship. In that case, school leaders may continue to struggle and burn out quickly when accepting a school leader position.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to interview five charter school principals and five traditional public school principals. This study determined differences between traditional public school principal and charter school principal job duties, preparation, and training for their role as principal, and their effect on principal retention. The principals' experiences vary in years. A background questionnaire was given to each of the 10 principals to collect background information of their experience as an educator in both a traditional public school and a public charter school. By analyzing the differences in job responsibilities, preparation, and retention in these two entities, we can establish best practices in both structures to assist with developing solutions to consistent staffing and school leadership issues within school systems and assist with developing the proper supports. This study can help school districts, founders of charter schools, central office hiring staff, board members, and charter management organizations to better prepare future school leaders and retain principals.

Significance

Society expects a great deal from our public schools today, and this has placed an

enormous burden on politicians to offer more schooling options to appease parents. According to Erickson (2017), parents seek other schooling options for various reasons, including a more rigorous academic setting, a safer environment, a focus on a specialty or interest, or seeking more robust supports for their children. Due to parent lack of satisfaction with the public school system, the school choice movement evolved and was founded on the idea that families should have more options when selecting a school to find the best fit to meet their child's needs. A school option that emerged from these pressures is the considerable increase in the number of charter schools in the United States. Based on an annual charter school report to the North Carolina General Assembly, "the charter application approval rate over the past 5 years has increased from 14% of applications being approved in 2014 to 43% of applications being approved in 2019" (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Office of Charter Schools, 2019, p. 16). Regardless of the school type, charter or traditional, an effective leader is required in any school to ensure the school's success. The need for an effective and prepared school leader has grown tremendously due to the unique challenges school leaders face daily as education continues to progress each year. School districts, founders of charter schools, central office hiring staff, board members, and charter management organizations must find appropriate ways to train principals to create a pathway of success and career longevity.

Charter schools have added 39,875 students and traditional public schools have lost 27,144 students since the 2014-2015 school year (Osborne, 2019). Due to insufficient literature available that compares in depth the similarities and differences of the principalship within these settings and the exponential growth of charter schools, it would

be beneficial for all stakeholders to compare the intensifying job expectations of these two entities. It is critical to understand the skill set and preparation that are needed to perform these job duties in both entities and reduce principal turnover. North Carolina has one of the highest turnover rates in the country, with the average principal leading a school for only 2.7 to 3.5 years (BEST NC, 2017). The research questions were designed to focus on principal experiences as they reflect on their perceptions of their job duties and preparation to provide further awareness that may offer suggestions or solutions for improving the preparation of school leaders and retaining school principals.

The research questions were as follows:

1. How do the responsibilities and roles of principals from traditional public schools differ from those in charter schools?

2. What are the differences between traditional public school and charter school principals when examining principal preparation?

3. What factors influence traditional public school and charter school principal decisions to leave or remain in the profession?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined.

Charter Schools

Institutions receiving public funds that operate away from the school district structure (Kelly & Loveless, 2012).

Charter Management Organization

Nonprofit or for-profit organizations that operate a network of charter schools with a common mission or instructional design and shared central office support (Farrell

et al., 2012).

ESSA

The nation's main education law for all public schools where the purpose is to provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and to close educational gaps (ESSA, 2015).

Instructional Leaders

Leaders who apply their skills to coordinate their schools' instructional programs by setting a vision and mission, focusing on aligned and high-quality teacher professional development (PD), working to build community, and distributing leadership with teachers.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

The ISLLC Standards were first introduced in 1996 and revised in 2008 and 2015 and are a set of six guiding principles and professional standards expected of school leaders.

Job Satisfaction

The extent to which work fulfills an individual's needs.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Implements the state's public school laws and the state board of education's policies and procedures governing prekindergarten through 12th-grade public education (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020a, p. 1).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, is the name for the most recent update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB

increased the federal role in holding schools responsible for the academic progress of all students. States did not have to comply with the new requirements, but if they did not, they risked losing federal Title I money (Klein, 2015).

Principal

The executive head of a school (North Carolina General Assembly, 2019, para. 5).

Principal Preparation

This refers to those programs designed to provide an individual with the training necessary to take on the principal's role.

Principal Retention

When the school leader remains at the school, he/she is working.

Principal Turnover

This occurs when a principal does not return to the same school.

Traditional Public Schools

Institutions receiving public funds that operate within school districts and typically provide free K-12 education (Tourkin et al., 2010).

Assumptions

This study sought to examine the perceptions of traditional and charter school principals on how prepared they feel to successfully lead a school and manage all the daily responsibilities. As such, the following assumptions were considered: The sample size will be limited due to the number of participants; competition between charter schools and traditional public schools may spill over into principal perceptions and willingness to share information; school districts and charter management organizations

are interested in retaining principals; and there are specific strategies that various stakeholders can utilize when preparing school leaders.

Audience

      This study may benefit current and future charter and traditional public school principals, central office hiring staff, superintendents, founders of charter schools, and charter management organizations to discover methods to support and retain principals. Understanding the leadership responsibilities and roles of current traditional and charter school principals should enable various entities to prepare future educational leaders better. The retention of principals could save school districts, charter school founders, and charter management organizations money by reducing the cost of replacing principals. The community may also benefit from enjoying the stability of having consistent leadership, which will increase student learning.

Limitations

      In addition to being the researcher of this case study, I am also a novice charter high school principal. Identifying my personal biases early was critical to protect and maintain the fidelity of this study. Due to my employment as a charter school principal, many may view me as competition for a public school system. Unfortunately, the interactions between the traditional public schools and charter schools in the early years of the charter school movement were deeply rooted in negative views, due to society's beliefs that charter schools were taking money away from traditional public schools. However, as the charter school movement has continued to expand, school districts and charter schools are increasingly choosing to abandon negative competition in favor of collaborative partnerships (Baxter & Nelson, 2012). This factor may have prevented

principals from being authentic with their responses to questions asked.

Delimitations

I chose this course of study because of my interest in why the longevity of school principals staying in the profession is decreasing at a rapid rate. Being a new principal, I have preconceived notions about why principal turnover is occurring, but I want to listen to other principals to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes and help school districts, central office hiring staff, founders of charter schools, and charter management organizations focus on ways to retain effective principals. Another delimitation is the sample that was selected for convenience and geographically delimited to principals in North Carolina.

Chapter Summary

The school principal role has become increasingly complicated and extremely difficult for principals to manage insurmountable job expectations, as the field of education has shifted to accountability and expanding standards. Many principals find themselves ill-prepared to serve in this role as a school leader because they may not have been given the appropriate opportunities to develop the necessary skills. Learning more about the factors influencing a high rate of principal turnover in traditional public schools and charter schools will provide stakeholders with a starting point on how to increase principal retention in both settings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore principal perceptions in both charter and traditional public schools regarding their roles and responsibilities within these two entities and determine what supports are needed to establish a clearly defined plan for retaining school principals.

This study attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of the parallels between principal leadership roles in both settings. In the charter school, the principal is viewed as a chief executive officer who is accountable to its authorizer. In the traditional public school, the principal is seen as a mid-level manager responsible to the superintendent and elected board of education members. Spillane and Lee (2014) researched the shifts in educational leadership over the past 25 years. Spillane and Lee found that school administrators are left in this fluctuating environment to design new structures that support the alignment of policy, instruction, and administration duties.

Additional literature is reviewed to explore state accountability, salary, and testing, which may unintentionally increase principal turnover in charter and traditional public schools. These additional pressures may contribute to stress and burnout in the profession and determine whether people enter or exit the profession.

Principal Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the school principal was not formally recognized in education until the 1920s (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). The role began with school administrators functioning as building managers, responsible for building facilities and student discipline concerns (Cotton, 2003). Traditionally, school principals have been seen as managers of the school

(Alvoid & Black, 2014). The role of school administrators dramatically changed in the NCLB era. NCLB resulted in a national standards-based reform movement in our nation's public schools. Part A of NCLB stipulated that student academic achievement could be increased by the placement of highly qualified principals in every school building, as effective school leadership was found to be a necessary condition for successful school reform efforts (Marzano, 2003). The legislation of NCLB positioned school leadership at the center of the national school reform effort outlined by three goals: (a) creating effective schools, (b) closure of subgroup achievement gaps, and (c) a focus on the need for effective school leadership. Principals became responsible for, and consequently more knowledgeable about, assessments and instructional decisions based on school data (Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011). In 2015, President Obama signed ESSA, replacing NCLB, which allowed schools to control how they would account for student achievement and growth, including students identified as special education and limited English (Lee, 2018). ESSA requires states to staff each classroom with an effective teacher and each school with an effective leader. Therefore, determining the necessary steps to better prepare school leaders for the responsibilities they must undertake is of utmost importance to continue to improve our education system in the United States.

As a result of legislation and policy reform, today's schools must exhibit student progress toward learning and achievement as well as hold teachers accountable for what goes on in the classroom (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Today's principals must be leaders who can inform curricular change, lead faculty in data-driven decision-making, keep abreast of innovative and diversified instructional strategies, and stay knowledgeable in the use of accountability measures for both staff and students (The Wallace Foundation,

2011). The job of principal has become increasingly more complex, more difficult, and filled with intense and unreasonable pressures to solve a plethora of problems including educational, social, and personal (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). The day-to-day activities of a principal consist of duties and responsibilities from each of these categories such as attending meetings, tours of the building, unexpected disruptions due to discipline or parent involvement, personal contacts, overseeing facilities and maintenance, human resources management, and attending to the climate and culture of the school (Lunenburg, 2010). The demands of being a school leader may far exceed the capacity that most people have, which often leads to stress and burnout. Principal turnover and burnout are issues that have a negative impact on school culture and, ultimately, student achievement and must be considered when discussing the preparation of would-be principals (Versland, 2013). According to Federici and Skaalvik (2012), frequent sources of burnout are issues such as complying with organizational rules and policies; excessively high self-imposed expectations; the feeling of having too heavy of a workload; increased demands; and decreasing autonomy with role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict being the most common. A study conducted by Karakose et al. (2016) found that school principals are at risk of experiencing burnout in the workplace due to the expansion of the responsibilities of their role in terms of their expected duties. As a result, principals may experience role conflict as teachers, students, and community members place a number of role expectations on them, which ultimately may lead to a decrease in life satisfaction levels for these principals and lead them to leave the profession (Karakose et al., 2016).

The Wallace Foundation (2013) identified five key responsibilities of principals:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.

2. Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interactions prevail.

3. Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision.

4. Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost.

5. Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement.

With the myriad of responsibilities administrators are faced with on a day-to-day basis, it is not surprising to learn that "leadership is considered vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 4), and "it is the principal who will set the tone for the school" (Mason, 2007, p. 13). According to Rooney (2008), leaders in today's schools must be equipped with the skills or characteristics of (a) relationship builder; (b) listener; (c) reflector, prior to making major decisions; and (d) mentor. For years, research has provided evidence that the principal vitally impacts the positive or negative results of a school (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). "Leadership is not a position; it is a process" (Greer, 2011, p. 30). "It's difficult for leaders to be effective if they do not take the time to examine their sense of purpose and the ways it has been defined, influenced, informed and refined by their experiences" (Greer, 2011, p. 20).

Grissom and Loeb (2011) showed that organizational management tasks such as budgeting and maintaining facilities are just as important as effective instructional

leadership. Principals need to devote a significant amount of energy into both by "combining an understanding of the instructional needs of the school with an ability to target resources where they are needed, hire the best available teachers, and keep the school running smoothly" (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p. 119). Not only is the principal required to lead the way to success in student achievement, but the school leader also must be the driving force and motivation for adult learning and staff development (Duncan et al., 2011). According to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2010), school principals face complex societal issues influencing education today; and effective principals need skills to resolve these issues with judgment, an orientation toward results, and organizational ability. The quality of a school's leadership directly influences teacher decisions regarding remaining in or leaving the teaching profession (Long, 2015). Deruy (2016) reported that the most frequently cited reason for leaving the teaching profession is a lack of administrative support. Today's school principals are required to lead in a new environment marked by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges, and managerial opportunities (Louis et al., 2010). That is why it is crucial to prepare principals to be better leaders.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the proposed research study was informed by contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993) and the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). The contingency theory was used to frame the anticipated differences in the context between traditional and charter schools, providing a rationale for the assumption that there would be differences in the perceptions of school principals in both educational contexts in terms of their roles and responsibilities. Complementing the contingency

leadership theory, the social exchange theory was used in this study as the framework to understand principal retention in both charter school and traditional school settings. Both theories are discussed in this section to illustrate their relevance in the current research study.

Contingency Leadership Theory

The contingency leadership theory is based on the assumption that no single leadership style is best because different contexts and situations require specific leadership needs (Fiedler, 1993). The importance of contexts in contingency leadership means the unique circumstances within a particular organization need to be considered and understood in order to determine the appropriate leadership behaviors and practices. The contingency theory was used to frame the anticipated differences in the role and responsibilities of principals in traditional and charter schools.

The main tenet of the contingency leadership theory is that effectiveness is relative. Based on the contingency leadership theory, the concepts of consideration and initiating structures provide some foundation to understanding how leaders act effectively in different situations (Fiedler, 1993). More specifically, leaders consider their followers and provide structure for tasks to be completed successfully.

Within the specific context of understanding retention, the contingency leadership theory recognizes the importance of considering the relevant issues or characteristics within a workplace in order to understand why individuals remain or leave their jobs (Day et al., 2016). Understanding why principals choose to stay in their leadership role depends on the unique circumstances of their schools (Dolph, 2017), which underscores the assumption of the current research that these circumstances are different for charter

schools and traditional public schools. For the current study, the importance of considering contexts highlights why exploring the perceptions of principals in both charter and traditional schools regarding their roles and responsibilities are critical in understanding their jobs and their decisions involving retention.

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is based on the assumption that the social relationships of an individual are informed by the availability of resources, the scope of power, and the nature of dependence within a particular social system (Emerson, 1976). The different dynamics of resources, power, and dependence can provide insights into the decisions and behaviors of individuals. The social exchange theory was used in this study as the framework to understand principal retention in both charter school and traditional school settings.

The social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of looking into how individuals interact based on power and dependence (Emerson, 1976). More specifically, the actions of individuals are dependent on how favorable the actions of other people are to them. Hence, the social exchange theory highlights the critical role of social situations in generating norms that define appropriate and standard interactions among individuals within a system (Emerson, 1976).

When applied to the specific context of retention, the social exchange theory has been used by previous researchers to frame why individuals choose to remain in their professions or jobs (Almaaitah et al., 2017; Tran, 2020). For instance, Almaaitah et al. (2017) used the social exchange theory to emphasize the importance of a beneficially symbiotic relationship in order to understand why individuals choose to remain in their

jobs. Also utilizing the social exchange theory as the framework, Tran (2020) emphasized the importance of positive relation interactions within a system in order to facilitate behaviors that could lead to retention, such as commitment and engagement. Both of these studies highlighted the relevance of the social exchange theory in understanding and explaining retention.

Principal Matters

Principal turnover affects teachers, students, and communities. In a report published by School Leaders Network (2014), researchers reported that schools are currently losing a multitude of principals each year, requiring that less-effective, novice principals assume roles for which they are not prepared. The report stated that the job is far too complex and isolating. School leaders are not provided the ongoing support and development needed to foster and sustain effectiveness and commitment (School Leaders Network, 2014). The role of the principal is unique, and tasks completed are diverse and change from day to day. As mentioned in a report by School Leaders Network, principals will continue to be faced with new mandates, pressures, and accountability measures; but in the end, they must keep their focus and heart on the best interest of the students. When school districts have effective school administrators, they have a shared vision that aligns programs and resources at the school for setting the direction for student success (Davis et al., 2005). The need to reevaluate the principal's job responsibilities is very much needed. As the demands of education continue to change, so does the role of the principal. Grodzki (2011) examined the role identity as a school leader; this report claimed that due to the complexities of the principalship, it was difficult to clearly define the responsibilities and actual skills necessary to fulfill the position's demands. In

addition, the expectation was that the administrator would be the instructional leader and that would take precedent over all other activities (Grodzki, 2011).

ISLLC Standards

ISLLC Standards were designed to stimulate vigorous thought and dialogue about quality educational leadership among stakeholders in the area of school administration and to provide raw material to help stakeholders enhance the quality of educational leaders throughout the nation's schools. ISLLC Standards are nationally recognized school leadership standards first developed in 1996 and revised in 2008 and 2015. The 2015 version of the standards was renamed Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders provide a framework for educational leaders to guide the development of principal competencies used to prepare future leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Evaluation standards guide how practicing administrators should be evaluated as they move toward effective performance leadership. The revised 2015 ISLLC Standards/Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, are as follows:

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

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

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

and well-being.

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

One of the essential sources principals reference consistently is their state's professional standards. Efforts to improve school leadership have been a concern in the state of North Carolina. North Carolina established the Eight Standards of Executive Leadership for principals and assistant principals as a guideline for them to consider their

growth and development as executives leading schools in the 21st century. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020b), to work as a principal in North Carolina, completion of an approved program in school administration at the master's level or above is required. While there are no listed requirements about principal experience, it is assumed that you have at least 3 years of teaching experience. Educational Testing Services (2003) School Leaders Licensure Assessment was designed to encapsulate the essential role of school administrators and focus on the essential aspects of school leadership related to student success. As reported by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020c), school leaders are a critical component to the success of an educational system. As a result, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020c), established the Eight Standards of Executive Leadership Guidelines:

1. Strategic Leadership

2. Instructional Leadership

3. Cultural Leadership

4. Human Resource Leadership

5. Managerial Leadership

6. External Development Leadership

7. Micropolitical Leadership

8. Academic Achievement Leadership

Figure 1

North Carolina Executive Standards

NC Executive Standards	Summary of Standard
Standard 1 - Strategic Leadership	School executives will create conditions that result in strategically re-imaging the school's vision, mission, and goals in the 21st century. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.
Standard 2 - Instructional Leadership	School executives will set high standards for the professional practice of 21st-Century instruction and assessment that result in a no-nonsense, accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the ongoing peer review of this work, and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.
Standard 3 - Cultural Leadership	School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols, and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to "reculture" the school if needed to align with the school's goals of improving student and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning, and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.
Standard 4 - Human Resource Leadership	School executives will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place that result in the recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development, and retention of high-performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching. They also must practice fair and consistent evaluations of teachers. The school executive must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.
Standard 5 - Managerial Leadership	School executives will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem-solving, communicating expectations, and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school executive must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decisions so as to meet the 21st century needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of everyday life is critical for staff to be

	able to focus their energy on improvement.
Standard 6 - External Development Leadership	A school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but, in fact build community, the leader proactively creates with staff opportunities for parents, community, and business representatives to participate as "stockholders" in the school such that continued investments of resources and goodwill are not left to chance.
Standard 7 - Micropolitical Leadership	The school executive will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power, and influence to realize the school's vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff members' professional needs, issues, and interests to build social cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.
Standard 8 - Academic Achievement Leadership	School executives will contribute to the academic success of students. The work of the school executive will result in acceptable, measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations and using appropriate data to demonstrate growth. An executive's rating on the eighth standard is determined by a school-wide student growth value as calculated by the statewide growth model for educator effectiveness. To determine the eighth standard rating, the school-wide growth value includes data from End-of-course assessments, End-of-Grade assessments, Career and Technical Education Post-Assessments, and the Measures of Student Learning.

Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020c).

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reports that these standards were developed to serve as a guide for school leaders to improve their effectiveness. According to The Wallace Foundation (2007), effective school leadership and successful school reform efforts depend on having principals adequately trained to enhance instruction and change schools. Although standards have been created and accountability measures have been developed, there is a need to reassess how these school leaders are being prepared.

Principal Preparation Programs

The proper training of school administrators is essential if principals are to successfully navigate the education reform landscape that requires them to perform as a building manager and knowledgeable instructional leader ultimately responsible for the

success of every student in their school (Marzano et al., 2005). Though the North Carolina Principal Standards are clear on the principal competencies on the expectations of a school leader, it is not clear whether the newly hired principal is prepared to meet those expectations.

University-Based Programs

ESSA places a great deal of pressure on principal preparation programs because they are held accountable for producing higher-quality principals. Higher education institutions have a duty to ensure school administrators are well prepared for the rigors of 21st century school administration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The requirements of university-based principal preparation programs are dictated by state and national prerequisites. The most successful university principal preparation programs "are research-based, have curricular coherence, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and mentors, and are structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and area schools" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 8). Levine's (2005) qualitative study on leadership examined the utility of principal preparation programs across the country. Levine's study was a follow-up to the 1987 National Council on Excellence in Educational Administration study that found significant deficiencies in the alignment of the training conducted in principal preparation programs to the actual demands of the principal's job. Murphy et al.'s (2008) study examined 54 universities across six states; this study found that leadership preparation programs still adhered to an outdated and unproductive training paradigm focused primarily on weak curriculum and course content and fell short of the goal of adequately preparing school leaders. Limited research has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of university-based leadership preparation

programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Orr, 2006).

Principal preparation programs in the state of North Carolina are approved through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Although many states have adopted the ISLLC Standards as a guideline for effective principal performance, North Carolina has adopted the Eight Standards of Executive Leadership. BEST NC (2015) sought to study the condition of principal preparation within the state's public university system. BEST NC directly advocates for state education policies. The University of North Carolina Board of Governors in its 2015 University of North Carolina's Board of Governors Subcommittee Report on Teacher and School Leader Quality suggested that a dramatic improvement of principal preparation was needed in North Carolina and made specific recommendations to strengthen the UNC educator preparation programs. The below suggestion was recommended specifically for principal preparation programs and read as follows:

> **Improve the selection process and criteria for entry into principal preparation programs, redesign programs where necessary, and scale best practices in evidence-based models for school leadership preparation and development.** North Carolina must select and prepare high-quality leaders for our PK-12 students, and provide the regular support, development, and evaluation of school leaders that enables them to establish and maintain student success. UNC school leadership preparation programs will use research-based evidence to guide improvements in developing rigorous, highly selective processes for entry into programs for principals and other school-based leaders prepared for North Carolina public schools. The redesign and strengthening of principal preparation

programs will be rooted in the skills and knowledge required of 21st-Century

school leaders; include an emphasis on evaluating and coaching teachers; and

promote longer-term, more structured internships with proven master principals.

In implementing these changes, partnerships between school districts and

universities to determine needs and assessments, designing rich clinical programs,

and mentoring will all be essential. (University of North Carolina Board of

Governors, 2015, p. 3)

There is a lack of qualitative research describing the methods for assessing the

alignment between the course of study in principal preparation programs and effective

school leaders. However, Darling-Hammond (2010) and Louis et al. (2010) discussed the

immediate need to reconstruct the approaches taken to leadership preparation.

Suggestions include modeling principal preparation programs after other countries,

supplying federal funding to states, and redefining the principal and credentialing process

role. Research suggests several elements that are consistently incorporated into successful

principal preparation programs, including

- rigorous admission requirements,

- the use of cohorts,

- relevant and applied practical experience in the form of an extended practicum

  or internship, and

- authentic partnerships between programs and local schools and districts.

University-District Partnerships

Universities and school districts have a common interest in ensuring principal

preparation programs develop highly qualified educational leaders (Browne-Ferrigno,

2011). An example of one successful university-district partnership is the Northeast Education Leadership Academy, a collaboration with North Carolina State University and Edgecombe County Public Schools. The Northeast Education Leadership Academy and the Edgecombe County Public Schools partnership was founded at North Carolina State University in 2010 in response to the need for adequate principal preparation in North Carolina's rural school districts (Manna, 2015). The program has received over $22.5 million from donors and state and federal grants (Fusarelli et al., 2018). North Carolina State University is a large public university with over 34,000 students located in Raleigh, North Carolina. Edgecombe County Public Schools, the partnering school district, is a rural district that serves over 6,000 students in 14 schools. North Carolina State University has several partnerships with local districts for principal development.

Transforming Principal Preparation Program

The Transforming Principal Preparation Program merged funding with a prior principal preparation program, the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, in 2019, to create a single principal preparation program for North Carolina (BEST NC, 2020). As per the North Carolina Fellows Program (2020), future school leaders must apply to an approved participating North Carolina University that receives grant funding to prepare students for the role as a school principal in a high needs school. Acceptance into this program requires the district superintendent's approval; and if accepted, the student takes courses while remaining in the classroom for the first year (North Carolina Fellows Program, 2020). In the second year, the student is on a leave of absence and receives a salary equal to the student's current teaching salary (North Carolina Fellows Program, 2020). Participants can complete 4 years of service within 6 years after graduation as a

school administrator in North Carolina to avoid repayment on the loans (BEST NC, 2020). The North Carolina Fellows Program works in collaboration with the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. The Transforming Principal Preparation Program offers North Carolina school systems a pool of well-trained, highly qualified administrative candidates (BEST NC, 2020).

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools – One of the Largest School Districts in North Carolina Principal Pipeline

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, otherwise known as CMS, is located in Charlotte, North Carolina. According to (CMS, 2020a), CMS has over 170 schools and educates approximately 149,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. CMS is an urban school district with an operating budget of $1.4 billion. The per-pupil expenditure is $9,532, and the budgeted beginning teacher salary is $40,247 (CMS, 2020a). CMS is a diverse school district with 38.1% African American, .4% American Indian, 6.6% Asian, 24.1% Hispanic, 2.5% Multicultural, .1% Pacific Islander, and 28% White (CMS, 2020a). In 2011, this school district received a $7.5 million grant to strengthen its school leadership through work with The Wallace Foundation (CMS, 2020b). They continue to sustain their Principal Pipeline by partnering with Winthrop University, Queens University, University of North Carolina Charlotte, and Wingate University to produce effective leaders continuously. CMS (2020b) explained all of these programs as follows:

Winthrop University – Leaders for Tomorrow Program

Designed for current district teachers or certified employees who aspire to become executive school leaders in high needs schools within the district. Winthrop University administers this program. Potential leaders complete a 36-

credit-hour accredited Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree and are qualified to receive state certification. Courses are a combination of face-to-face and web-based instruction and are delivered by Winthrop faculty in collaboration with district leaders. The program includes 6 semesters of coursework with a full 1-year internship experience. (CMS, 2020b, para. 1)

Queens University – School Executive Leadership Academy

A partnership between the McColl School of Business and the Cato School of Education; this is a 14-month licensure program designed to prepare potential school executives with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead change in schools. The School Executive Leadership Academy participants can receive the North Carolina school administration license and may earn graduate credit hours towards a Master of School Administration, Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Organization Development, or Master of Science in Executive Coaching. (CMS, 2020b, para. 2)

University of North Carolina Charlotte – Aspiring High School Principals Program

Offers three strands, depending on the participant's status: beginning district high school principals who already hold a North Carolina school administrator license and a master's degree; qualified teachers or those in non-administrative positions who already have a master's degree but need their school administration license; teachers who need the full Master of School Administration degree. They offer a problem-based and action-learning curriculum that simulates the actual challenges faced by high school principals. (CMS, 2020b, para. 3)

Wingate University – Educational Leadership Program

Offers a 37-hour Master of Arts in Education in Educational Leadership program

and a 22-hour Add-on Licensure Program in School Administration K-12. These

programs focus on the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Future

leaders take part in standards-based projects and learning experiences that

practitioners often teach from local district central offices. (CMS, 2020b, para. 4)

"The school district discloses that these specific programs are tailored to fit their district's

needs; however, they welcome applicants from other programs" (CMS, 2020b, para. 5).

Research supports that partnerships between the university and district are

difficult to form and even harder to sustain for long periods of time (Sanzo & Wilson,

2016). However, partnerships flourish with positive experiences for all stakeholders when

a clear and common goal closes the gap between the university classroom and

community campus (Sanzo & Willson, 2016).

Professional Development

ESSA updates the definition of PD to ensure personalized, ongoing, job-

embedded activities that are available to all school staff including paraprofessionals, part

of broader school improvement plans, collaborative and data-driven, developed with

educator input and regularly evaluated by the Association for Supervision and

Curriculum Development (ESSA, 2015). Legislation in many states has linked student

achievement to teacher and principal performance evaluations (Marzano & Toth, 2013),

allowing both teachers and administrators more of a reason to seek PD that produces

results for student learning.

PD is necessary for anyone who wants to enhance their skillset and keep current

with advances in their field. As with teachers, principals tend to become more effective as they gain experience, particularly within the first 3 years (Béteille et al., 2012).

ESSA offers new opportunities for districts and states to reconsider the way they develop and support school principals (ESSA, 2015); however, for principals to be effective and continue to grow, they need access to ongoing, high-quality professional learning (National Association of Secondary School Principals and National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013). Most of our nation's school principals do not have access to professional learning that reflects what is happening in schools today (e.g., changing demographics, large-scale reform initiatives, changing technology, evolving instructional strategies) and what we know are effective practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Ikemoto et al., 2014; School Leaders Network, 2014). There is growing concern that too few principals receive high-quality, targeted preservice training (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). According to School Leaders Network (2014), "District administrators often neglect principals' development once principals are on the job, especially after the first two years" (p. 5).

Principals often participate in PD designed for teachers rather than for their specific needs; and when they do participate in principal-focused PD, it is primarily centered on the "what" of district reform, such as what is expected for district teacher evaluation policies, and not on the "how" of leading change (George W. Bush Institute, 2016; School Leaders Network, 2014). Traditional PD for principals typically involves workshop-style meetings where one-size-fits-all content is delivered to administrators who rarely receive critical feedback (Ikemoto et al., 2014). Experts at School Leaders Network (2014) encouraged districts and states to invest in leadership development

beyond recruiting and placing principals, engage principals in peer networks where principals can learn from other principals the art and practice of leading schools, and provide one-to-one coaching support to principals beyond the first 2 years.

Charter School Principal Preparation

There is limited current research on charter school principal preparation. However, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2008) reported that nationally, a significant number of charter school principals are promoted directly from the classroom without administrative experience and credentials. Campbell and Grubb (2008) attested, "Even if a school leader earns a degree at an Ivy League principal preparation program and performs at the top of the class, chances are that leader still lacks important skills needed to manage a charter school effectively" (p. 8). In 2007, the National Charter School Research Project identified 13 charter school leadership preparation programs attempting to address this skill deficit in charter school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008). According to Campbell and Grubb, charter principals tend to have less educational attainment, less administrative experience, less teaching experience, higher turnover rates, and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school principals. Furthermore, charter school principal licensure is not required in many states. While approximately 70% of charter school principals may have attended traditional principal preparation programs, these programs may not equip them for the additional role requirements and realities faced by charter school principals (Hedges et al., 2018). As stated by Campbell and Grubb, "There are simply not enough preparation programs or open slots to train the hundreds of new leaders needed every year to run charter schools" (p. 21).

Due to a high need for principals who can meet individual charter schools' needs, one of the largest charter management organizations, Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), created their own in-house principal preparation programs. An in-house program has the benefit of reducing costs, allowing district administrators to run the program, and allowing future principals who may not have otherwise considered education leadership to be an option to participate in the program (Joseph, 2010). KIPP is a network of public charter schools that opened their first two schools in 1994 and now have over 242 schools throughout the United States (KIPP's Principal Preparation and Professional Development Programs, n.d.). KIPP's Principal Preparation and Professional Development Programs (n.d.) reported the following:

> KIPP has two principal preparation programs: The Fisher Fellowship, which trains new principals to open new schools, and Successor Prep, which trains new principals to lead established schools. Both of these principal preparation programs include formal training, coaching, mentoring, and residencies at high-performing KIPP schools. (p. 6)

Many charter schools often seek out KIPP services to train their aspiring principals (KIPP's Principal Preparation and Professional Development, n.d.).

Trends and Issues Facing Public Education in North Carolina

To understand issues that face North Carolina schools, which include principal turnover, it is vital to understand the challenges North Carolina school districts experience. The Public School Forum of North Carolina (2019) noted that North Carolina is home to two vastly different economic realities. Urban centers see financial, industry, and population growth, while rural areas are generally in economic decline (Public

School Forum of North Carolina, 2019). The Public School Forum of North Carolina identified 10 public education issues facing North Carolina schools. These issues are as follows: (a) renew North Carolina's commitment to public schools for the public good, (b) target rural North Carolina's education challenges, (c) directly address persistent racial inequities in North Carolina schools, (d) seize historic opportunity to advance adequacy and equity in school funding, (e) recognize that teacher recruitment and retention starts with professional treatment, (f) strengthen charter school and private school voucher transparency and accountability, (g) eliminate stress and stigma in testing accountability policy, (h) start at the top by investing in school leaders, (i) thoughtfully and strategically invest in school safety, and (j) focus on the whole child the whole day. The following two sections focus on two issues that may directly affect principal turnover, which is eliminating the stress and stigma in testing accountability policy and starting at the top by investing in school leaders.

State Accountability/North Carolina Testing and the Principal

North Carolina has led the nation in accountability since establishing the ABCs of Public Education in 1995, administering end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments well before the federal testing mandates of NCLB (North Carolina Government, 2020). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2020d), North Carolina utilizes many tests to measure student achievement. End-of-grade tests are administered in Grades 3-8 in English language arts and mathematics and Grades 5 and 8 in science. End-of-course tests are issued at the high school level in Math 1, biology, and English 2; and Math 3 was added last year. Career and technical education state assessments are administered for career and technical courses at the middle and high

school levels. North Carolina final exams are administered for courses in Grades 4-12

English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies when an end-of-grade or

end-of-course assessment is not administered. An analysis of student work is utilized for

courses that are more focused on student performance, including Arts, Healthful Living,

World Languages, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced Placement courses.

American College Testing (ACT) The ACT and ACT WorkKeys assessments are used to

measure college and career readiness among high school students in North Carolina. All

high school juniors are required to take the ACT. All seniors with a career technical

concentration take the ACT WorkKeys career readiness assessment.

School accountability policies have become extremely stressful for school leaders

and may have unintentionally caused an increase in principal turnover. Testing comes

with huge expectations of administrators that are based on student test scores. In North

Carolina, the General Assembly has mandated that testing results determine promotion to

the third grade, principal pay, and letter grades that indicate each public school as a high-

or low-performing school. According to Mitani (2018), research on the impact of federal

NCLB legislation found that NCLB sanctions were associated with a higher level of

principal job stress and a higher turnover rate. Many believe that these testing

accountability policies are unable to measure the school principal's effectiveness. The

increased pressures of high stakes standardized testing are contributing to increased

instability in school administration (Hargreaves, 2005). In 2012, Gawlik interviewed

principals and teachers representing four public schools who reported feeling stress due

to accountability. However, in charter schools, accountability is two-fold. Not only are

charter principals accountable to the state but also to authorizers. Charter schools have

the extra burden of worrying about meeting their authorizer's requirements. In North Carolina, continually low-performing schools are required to appear before the Charter School Advisory Board and are in danger of possible termination of their charter.

Investing in School Leaders

Principal turnover is expensive. According to School Leaders Network (2014), "a conservative estimate of the cost of recruiting and onboarding a principal is about $75, 000 and many urban districts replace 15 to 25 principals each year" (p. 1).

According to BEST NC (2018),

In recent years, principal pay in North Carolina ranked last in the Southeast and near the bottom nationally. In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly transformed the state salary schedule for principals with an investment of $24M, or an average raise of approximately nine percent. The previous statewide schedule was based on each principal's years of experience, level of education, and the number of teachers in the school they led. Annual state-funded pay ranged from $52,656 to $111,984, with an average of $64,416 in 2017. The updated schedule is based on the school's size and the principal's growth status (derived from students' performance on standardized End-of-Course and End-of-Grade exams). (p. 30)

In 2016, North Carolina ranked 50th in the nation in principal pay. The average 2017-2018 salary for principals moved from just under $64,000 per year to roughly $72,000 per year, but North Carolina still ranked toward the bottom for principal pay among 12 southeastern states.

Figure 2

Average Local Salary Supplement for K-12 Principals by School District (2015-2016)
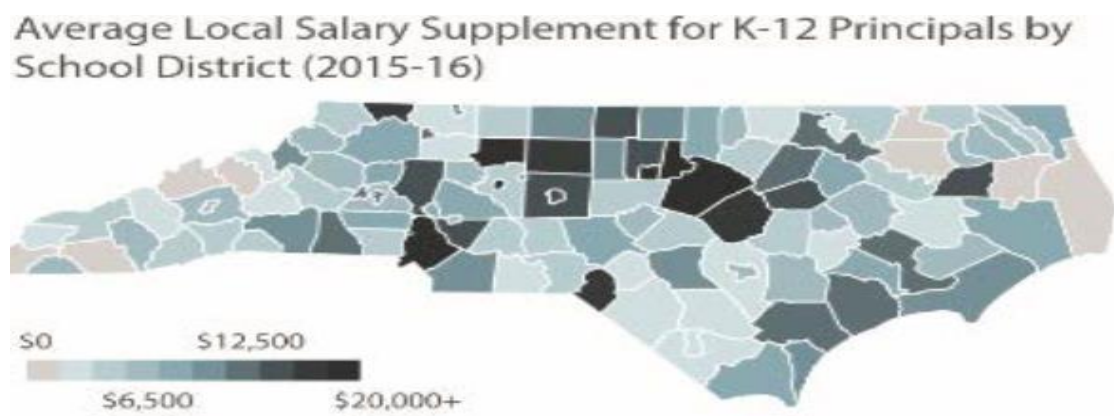
Figure 3

Average State-Funded Salary* for K-12 School-Based Administrators (2007-2016)
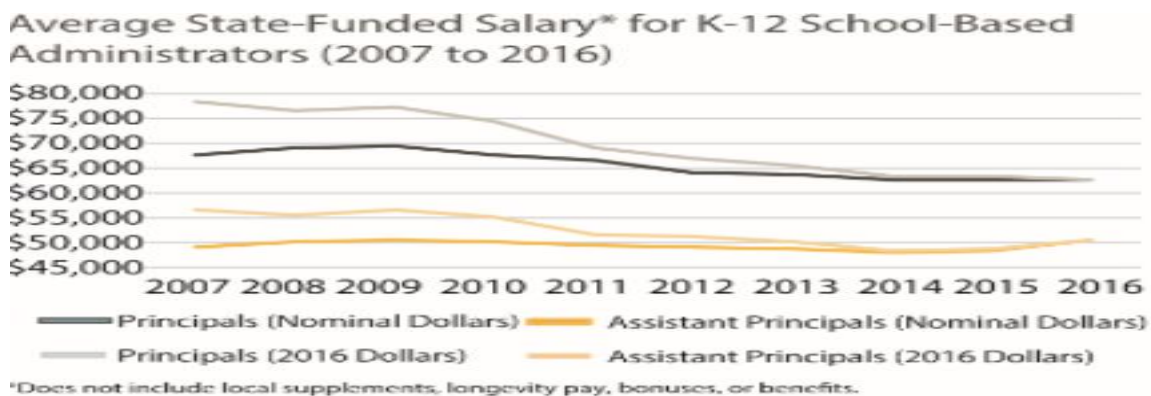
Source. BEST NC (2018).

Principal pay in North Carolina is a serious concern. New principals will receive raises, but veteran principals could see pay cuts of $10,000 or greater (BEST NC, 2018). This may also cause a massive uproar in principal turnover due to veteran principals seeking to retire early to avoid a reduced salary. Mallory (2007) contended that the costs associated with hiring a principal ill-equipped to function as an effective school leader can potentially damage the district's financial outlook as well as their communities.

Figure 4

Annual Cost to Replace a Principal in North Carolina

	Lower Expenditure	Upper Expenditure	Typical
Preparation	$20,000	$150,000	$40,000
Hiring	$5,850	$20,000	$6,000
Signing	0	$25,000	$12,500
Internship	0	$85,000	0
Mentoring	$11,000	$15,000	$12,500
Continuing Education	0	$8,000	$4,000
Total	$38,850	$303,000	$75,000
NC @ 11.5% Turnover	**$11,165,550** Lower	**$91,809,000** Upper	**$22,275,000** Typical

Source. School Leaders Network (2014, p. 4).

Principal Retention and Turnover

Attracting and retaining qualified principals is becoming increasingly difficult for public school districts around the nation (Hewitt et al., 2011). Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2011) found that work-related stress and autonomy in the position contributed to public school principal departures. Maslach (2003) defined burnout as a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to stressors in the workplace that result from long-term occupational stress, especially among workers who deal with other people in some capacity. Frequent sources of burnout are issues such as complying with organizational rules and policies; excessively high self-imposed expectations; the feeling

of having too heavy of a workload; increased demands; and decreasing autonomy with role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict being the most common (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). According to a study conducted by Karakose et al. (2016), school principals are at risk for experiencing burnout in the workplace due to the expansion of their roles and responsibilities in terms of their expected duties. In a report published by School Leaders Network (2014), researchers reported that currently, schools are losing a multitude of principals each year, requiring that less-effective, novice principals assume roles for which they are not prepared. The report stated that the job is far too complex and isolating. School leaders are not provided the ongoing support and development needed to foster and sustain effectiveness and commitment (School Leaders Network, 2014). A study conducted by Beam et al. (2016) noted that both novice and veteran principals indicated that balancing family and new administrative duties was complicated and placed them in an incredibly stressful situation. Not only were they required to balance both home and school, but the new principals also stated that navigating relations with other stakeholders was a challenge as well. Spillane and Lee (2014) reported that novice principals face a major reality shock due to the ultimate responsibility they inherit. Whether transitioning straight from the classroom to the principalship or rising to the principalship from another administrative position, novice leaders become overwhelmed by the extreme responsibility being a principal brings (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Stress and burnout must be given the necessary attention by all stakeholders to determine how to retain these school leaders and provide them with the support to sustain them.

North Carolina Traditional Public School Principal Retention

Low-income students and students of color disproportionally suffer from principal

turnover (Edwards et al., 2018; Loeb et al., 2010). Almost 30% of principals in high-poverty schools leave their school each year, whereas nationally, 82% remain in the same school (Goldring et al., 2007).

North Carolina has 115 school districts that are known as Local Education Agencies or LEAs. Eighty-seven of the 115 school districts are located in rural counties. Eighty of North Carolina's 100 counties are rural. A study conducted by Sutcher et al. (2016) found that from the 2015-2016 school year to the 2016-2017 school year, approximately 23% of North Carolina principals left their positions, 8% moved to another school in North Carolina, and 15% were no longer working as a principal in the state. North Carolina has one of the highest turnover rates in the country, with the average principal leading a school for only 2.7 to 3.5 years (BEST NC, 2017). North Carolina principals in urban schools had a larger probability of leaving the system or changing schools but a smaller probability of changing to a non-principal position than peers in rural areas, while principals in suburban schools were less likely to switch to non-principal positions than rural peers (Gates et al., 2006). One of North Carolina's largest urban school districts struggles with major principal retention issues. Principals were hired for more than a quarter of their schools this year, which is more than triple the national average (Connect Lead Succeed, 2019). School districts face economic impacts each time principal turnover occurs (School Leaders Network, 2014). "Principal effectiveness is associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher leaves the school within a year. Moreover, the positive impacts of principal effectiveness on these teacher outcomes are even greater in disadvantaged schools" (Grissom, 2011, p. 2552). Research has shown that high principal turnover often leads to

greater teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2012; Fuller et al., 2015), which in turn can have a negative impact on student achievement and other schooling outcomes (Fuller et al., 2015. Hughes et al. (2015) pointed out that a principal's ability to create positive working conditions and collaborative, supportive learning environments plays a critical role in attracting and retaining qualified teachers.

Charter School Principal Retention

There have been a limited number of studies conducted on charter school principal turnover. However, the few available indicate that charter schools and traditional public schools have different principal turnover patterns. One study pointed out that charter schools' "average annual turnover are significantly higher than the average traditional public school" (Sun & Ni, 2016, p. 5). This higher turnover rate for charter school principals was also confirmed by the report on the performance of New York City charter schools (New York City Charter School Center, 2012). Battle and Gruber (2010) reported that the 2008-2009 principal follow-up survey of the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey indicated that 28% of principals in charter schools left their previous schools, compared to 20% in traditional public schools. In another survey of charter school teachers and leaders conducted by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, 71% of 400 charter school leaders indicated that they expected to leave their current jobs within 5 years, and many reported struggling in their current schools (Campbell, 2010). The high rate of turnover and the fact that charter schools are often "unable to tap into a pool of ready candidates when hiring" (p. 5) pose a significant problem for the retention and hiring of effective charter principals. Charter school principals often have to secure and manage facilities, recruit students and teachers, raise

and manage funds, and coordinate curriculum and instruction, while the district central office often shares these responsibilities with traditional public school principals (Campbell & Gross, 2008). As a result, charter school principals generally experience significantly heavier workloads (Campbell, 2010; Campbell & Gross, 2008), which may influence future turnover.

Similarities and Differences Between Traditional Public Schools and Charter Schools

Research has outlined the distinctive similarities and differences between traditional public schools and charter schools. Gronberg et al. (2012) stated,

Charters represent an expansion of public school choice, offering free, publicly funded educational alternatives to traditional public schools. Charters are allowed to operate free from many of the rules and regulations that apply to traditional public schools, although they remain subject to academic and fiscal accountability to state governments. In principle, charters are also held tightly accountable by parents who are evaluating their charter choice relative to their guaranteed outside option, a seat in a traditional public school. (p. 302)

Public schools are open to all students who reside in the surrounding community, and charter schools require an approved application to attend. The government establishes public schools, while charter schools are created by private organizations and individuals. Gawlik (2012) stated, "Just as in traditional public schools, charter schools report to the intermediate school district, which then moves up the chain of command to the superintendent of instruction, the state board of education, and finally the state and federal legislature" (p. 217).

Depending on the legislation in each state, the charter school authorizer may be state or local boards of education, higher education institutions, local or intermediate school districts, or special-purpose boards (Berman, 2008). An authorizer has the power under state law to approve or close charter schools. Charter schools tend to have more flexibility than traditional public schools when hiring teachers and principals. In North Carolina, only 50% of teachers at charter schools are required to be licensed, as opposed to public school teachers who are required to meet federal guidelines from NCLB, which states teachers must be highly qualified (North Carolina Department of Instruction, 2020b). To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must (a) have a bachelor's degree, (b) have full state certification or licensure, and (c) prove that they know each subject they teach (United States Department of Education, 2004).

Given such flexibility with hiring, charter school principals, on average, have significantly less experience at their current schools, have less general administrative experience in schools, have less teaching experience, and are less likely to hold at least a master's degree (Sun & Ni, 2016). Many traditional public school districts in North Carolina have created principal pools to develop a pool of potential candidates where they have to endure a challenging interview process before even being considered to interview for an administrator position. Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools are "often independent and unable to tap into a pool of ready candidates when it comes to hiring" (Campbell, 2010, p. 5).

The interactions between the charter and traditional public schools in the early years were deeply rooted in competition. Lake (2011) stated, "Many traditional public school districts refused to even recognize that charter schools had a right to exist" (p. 1).

However, as the charter school movement has continued to expand, school districts and charter schools are increasingly choosing to abandon negative competition in favor of collaborative partnerships (Baxter & Nelson, 2012).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature. The review included principal responsibilities, ISLLC Standards, North Carolina Executive Standards, principal preparation, issues facing public education in North Carolina, state accountability, investing in school leaders, and principal retention and turnover in charter and traditional public schools. Also, similarities and differences between charter and traditional public schools were explored.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The roles and expectations of school principals have expanded enormously. Seventy percent of principals indicate their responsibilities have changed dramatically over the past 5 years, and 75% report the job has become too complex (MetLife, 2013). Bickmore and Dowell (2011) conducted a multi-case study of two charter school principals' use of time and compiled six themes from the data: (a) accountability, (b) personnel issues, (c) student-related issues, (d) management issues, (e) school promotions, and (f) instructional issues. The two charter school principals in this study spent more time on organizational management and student and human resource issues. This overwhelming workload is becoming an important concern for many principals when considering staying or leaving the profession. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), among all public school principals in 2015-2016, approximately 82% remained at the same school during the following school year, 6% moved to a different school, and 10% left the principalship. The turnover rate for principals in education is an alarming issue, and Sun and Ni (2016) reported that charter school leaders tend to turn over more frequently than leaders of traditional public schools. Principals impact student learning in a plethora of ways. Principals influence recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers (Ladd, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008; Plecki et al., 2006). Although there is literature about the effective leadership of traditional public schools and charter public schools, an in-depth study is needed to analyze the similarities and differences of principal perceptions within these two entities. If appropriate provisions are not made to prepare and retain these principals, our education system will continue to struggle and negatively impact student learning.

By listening to various principal perspectives, we can establish common best practices that are present in both entities to assist with developing solutions to assist with implementing the proper supports. School principals face demands from the community, central office, charter management organizations/owners, board members, teachers, staff, and students, creating an endless list of work tasks. As the researcher, I explored the job responsibilities of traditional public school principals and charter school principals and preparation for the job and reviewed its effects on career longevity. A review of the literature on principal turnover shows that turnover corresponds with financial burdens on the school district (School Leaders Network, 2014). It is essential to understand the massive cost associated with principal turnover and utilize those wasted funds for other educational resources to increase student learning. Therefore, the guiding questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do the responsibilities and roles of principals from traditional public schools differ from those in charter schools?

2. What are the differences between traditional public school and charter school principals when examining principal preparation?

3. What factors influence traditional public school and charter school principal decisions to leave or remain in the profession?

Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative case study research design that involved one-on-one interviews with principals throughout North Carolina. According to Patton (2002),

Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as

part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end

in itself so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future

necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting – what it means for

participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is going on for

them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular

setting…the analysis strives for depth of understanding. (p. 5)

A qualitative approach was used to elicit principal views on their responsibilities,

preparation, and quality of life, which influence whether they remain or leave the

profession. As stated by Creswell (2007), qualitative research is a means for exploring

and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human

problem. This study, based on the constructivist paradigm, used a case study approach to

explain principal views on administration work and its effects on retention. Case studies

are the preferred method of research when the characteristics focus on how and why

kinds of questions directed at exploring and understanding some phenomenon in depth

(Yin, 2018). This particular approach was adapted to this study because of the research

question, "What are charter and traditional public school principal views on

responsibilities, preparation, and training?"

Participants

For this study, seven charter school principals and seven traditional public school

principals were contacted to participate in the study. Of the 14 principals, 10 agreed to be

interviewed and completed the consent form along with the background questionnaire.

This study consisted of five charter school principals and five traditional public school

principals in North Carolina. The principals have been in their position ranging from

novice (1-3 years) to experienced (4+ years). Principals have been assigned pseudonyms

by the type of school and a number to maintain confidentiality. Principals in traditional

public schools are identified as TP1, TP2, etc.; principals in public charter schools are

identified as CP1, CP2, etc. Table 1 lists demographic information about each principal

that consists of race, gender, age, years in education, and years as a school principal that

was self-reported by the interviewee. Table 2 lists the total number of students in each

school, along with student demographics.

TP1 and TP2 serve high school students in ninth through 12th grades. TP3 and

TP4 serve middle school students in sixth through eighth grades. TP5 is an elementary

school principal who serves students in kindergarten through fifth grades. CP1 and CP2

serve high school students in ninth through 12th grades. CP3 serves middle school

students in sixth through eighth grades. CP4 serves students in kindergarten through

eighth grades. CP5 serves elementary students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Four

women and six men participated in this research. The traditional school principals had an

average of 15.8 years in education experience and 3.4 years of experience as a school

principal. The public charter school principals had an average of 11.2 years in education

experience and 3.4 years of experience as a school principal.

> Although there were only 10 participants in this study, Patton (2002) declared,
>
> There are no rules for sample size in qualitative research. Sample size depends on
>
> what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be
>
> useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time
>
> and resources. (p. 244)

Table 1

Demographic Profile for Traditional Public School and Charter School Principals

Principal	Gender	Race	Age	Years in education	Years as a principal	Highest degree
TP1	Male	African American	43	18	5	Master's
TP2	Male	Caucasian	46	22	4	Master's
TP3	Male	Caucasian	30	8	1	Doctorate
TP4	Female	African American	43	17	6	Master's
TP5	Female	African American	35	14	1	Master's
CP1	Male	Caucasian	38	17	5	Master's
CP2	Female	Caucasian	59	23	5	Master's
CP3	Male	Caucasian	34	10	4	Master's
CP4	Male	African American	44	15	2	Master's
CP5	Female	Caucasian	46	24	1	Master's

Table 2

2020-2021 Demographic Information for Traditional Public and Charter Schools

Principal	Total students	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other
TP1	1,455	31	25	39	3	2
TP2	1,249	52	22	18	1	7
TP3	1,250	46	17	33	2	2
TP4	875	9	63	25	1	2
TP5	703	5	21	60	12	2
CP1	800	69	15	5	6	5
CP2	569	56	5	6	27	6
CP3	325	82	5	9	4	0
CP4	400	0	94	3	0	3
CP5	818	10	39	9	37	5

Traditional Public School Principal Descriptions

TP1 is a 43-year-old African American male. He has worked as a teacher in a traditional public school for 8 years, served as a dean of students for 2 years in a traditional public school, worked as a traditional public school assistant principal for 1.5 years, and has been a traditional public school principal for 5 years.

TP2 is a 46-year-old Caucasian male. He has worked 15 years as a traditional public school teacher, 2.5 years as a traditional public school assistant principal, and 4 years as a traditional public school principal.

TP3 is a 30-year-old Caucasian male. He has worked 2.5 years as a traditional public school teacher, 1.5 years as a dean of students in a traditional public school, and 3 years as a traditional public school assistant principal. He is currently in his first year as a principal.

TP4 is a 43-year-old African American female. She has worked 6 years as a traditional public school teacher, 5 years as a traditional public school assistant principal, and 6 years as a traditional public school principal.

TP5 is a 35-year-old African American female. She worked as a teacher in a traditional public school for 5 years, as a reading facilitator in a traditional public school for 3 years, served 5 years as a traditional public school assistant principal, and is currently in her first year as a school principal.

Charter School Principal Descriptions

CP1 is a 38-year-old Caucasian male. He has worked 6 years as a traditional public school teacher, 1 year as a dean of students in a traditional public school, 4 years as a traditional public school assistant principal, and 5 years as a charter school principal.

CP2 is a 59-year-old Caucasian female. She has worked 5 years as a traditional public school teacher, 5 years as a charter school teacher, 7 years as an academic dean of students in a charter school, and 6 years as a charter school principal.

CP3 is a 34-year-old Caucasian male. He has worked 6 years as a charter school teacher and 4 years as a charter school principal.

CP4 is a 44-year-old African American male. He has worked as a teacher in a traditional public school for 9 years, served as an assistant principal for 5 years in a traditional public school, and has been a charter school principal for 1 year.

CP5 is a 46-year-old Caucasian female. She has worked 17 years as a traditional public school teacher, 5 years as a traditional public school assistant principal, and is in her first year as a charter school principal.

Instrument

Once permission was received from the Institutional Review Board, participants completed the consent form (Appendix A) along with a background questionnaire (Appendix B) to collect background history of the principals' experiences as educators in both a traditional public school and charter school. The interview sessions occurred with a single individual and lasted anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted via Zoom (a web-based video conferencing tool). The interview questions (Appendix C) were based on experience, job responsibilities, training, challenges, job satisfaction, preparation, and retention for the job. Interviews were recorded to provide a detailed account of the interview data collected. The structured interview process included a list of specific questions to ask each interviewee. The structured format allowed me to gather valuable data.

Analysis

The Zoom interviews were recorded to provide an accurate record of the interview data and were transcribed. I reviewed the qualitative data from the individual interview transcripts and then analyzed the data for themes and patterns. I then categorized and coded the interview responses based on similar themes. In my analysis, I created a graphic organizer for each of the questions that displayed the interviewees'

responses. Next, I highlighted common words and phrases in the answers. Highlighting

keywords and phrases assisted with identifying the main beliefs of the participants.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the research process, I conducted

member checking by sending participants a copy of their transcripts (Charmaz, 2014).

Member checking is a process in which the participants review and provide feedback

about the overall interpretation of the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Participants were asked to review the transcripts to ensure their objective was captured

within the document. Participants were also offered an opportunity to correct or clarify

anything that did not capture what they were trying to communicate.

Table 3 illustrates the research questions and the data I sought to capture in this

study.

Table 3

Research Questions and Data Collection

Research questions	Data collection
1. How do the responsibilities and roles of principals from traditional public schools differ from those in charter schools?	Explored the various roles and responsibilities in each setting while looking at the school's organizational and operational structure.
2. What are the differences between traditional public school and charter school principals when examining principal preparation?	Analyzed principal perceptions on the preparedness for the role of a principal in both entities and to determine if there is a difference between principal preparation and the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to be a school leader in both settings.
3. What factors influence traditional public school and charter school principal decisions to leave or remain in the profession?	Analyzed principal perceptions of the quality of life while serving as principal. This question explored the following: Stress and burnout Heavy workload Isolation within the school as principal Organizational structures State and federal accountability

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the methods used in this study which included the research questions, participants, instrument utilized, an analysis, trustworthiness, and research process. The theoretical framework for this qualitative case study was grounded by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993) and the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perceptions of charter and traditional public school principal job responsibilities, preparation, and training and their effect on principal retention. Data collection included interviews with five charter school principals and five traditional public school principals in North Carolina. The following three research questions were used to guide this study:

1. How do the responsibilities and roles of principals from traditional public schools differ from those in charter schools?

2. What are the differences between traditional public school and charter school principals when examining principal preparation?

3. What factors influence traditional public school and charter school principal decisions to leave or remain in the profession?

Findings

This presentation of the findings is organized by research question. One major theme emerged to answer each research question. The discussion of each theme includes evidence for the finding in the form of direct quotations from the data as well as comparisons between charter school principal and traditional public school principal responses.

Research Question 1: How Do the Responsibilities and Roles of Principals from Traditional Public Schools Differ From Those in Charter Schools?

Research Question 1 examined the various roles and responsibilities in traditional public schools and charter schools while looking at the schools' organizational and

operational structures. Interview Questions 3 and 4 from the questionnaire prompted responses from participants that relate to Research Question 1:

3. What tasks do charter/traditional public school principals spend time on?

4. How would you prefer to spend your time?

One major theme emerged during data analysis to address Research Question 1. The theme was traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities, while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership. The theme was identified in responses from all 10 participants. The following subsection is a discussion of this theme. Table 4 indicates the number of participants who contributed to the codes grouped to form this theme.

Table 4

Research Question 1 Code Frequencies

Theme Code	*n* of traditional principals contributing (*N*=5)	*n* of charter principals contributing (*N*=5)
Theme 1: Traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership	5	5
Dissatisfied with amount of time available for instructional leadership	5	0
No such thing as a "typical day"	5	5
Preference for instructional leader role	5	4
Preference for reactive management role	0	1
Reactive management responsibilities often concern student discipline	5	1
Reactive management responsibilities take most of each workday	5	5
Responsibility for discipline not normally part of role	0	1 (others did not mention discipline)
Satisfied with amount of time available for instructional leadership	0	5

Theme 1: Traditional Public School Principals Have More Student Discipline

Responsibilities While Charter School Principals Engage in More Instructional

Leadership

Across all five traditional public school principals, findings indicated that

principal roles and responsibilities emphasized reactive managerial duties, particularly

responding to student disciplinary incidents. In contrast, only one charter school principal

mentioned student discipline as a responsibility, and the response indicated that this responsibility was not normally part of the charter school principal role. Traditional public school principals expressed regret that reactive management responsibilities left less time than they would have liked for instructional leadership, the role for which all five traditional public school principals expressed a preference. Charter school principals also expressed a preference for the role of instructional leader over that of manager, but charter school principals reported satisfaction with the amount of time they were able to devote to instructional leadership.

The literature did not provide strong evidence to support this theme. For instance, Gawlik (2012) found that many charter school principals encounter problems being an instructional leader because of various barriers such as budgeting and staffing. However, in terms of the theoretical framework, this theme aligns with the main principle of contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which emphasizes the role of context in understanding the different needs and requirements for leaders. The different leadership tasks primarily performed by principals in charter schools and traditional schools highlight the applicability of the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993).

Theme 1 included two subthemes: the reactive managerial role and the instructional leadership role. Within the discussion of each subtheme, responses from charter school principals and traditional public school principals are discussed separately to facilitate comparison.

Subtheme: The Reactive Managerial Role. All five traditional public school principals and all five charter school principals stated that most of each workday was spent responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder needs. This aligns

with the literature, generally indicating that principals in both traditional and charter

schools perform a significant amount of managerial tasks in their leadership (Gawlik,

2012; Torres, 2020). Reactive managerial tasks principals frequently mentioned included

responding to student disciplinary incidents, responding to teacher concerns or "teacher

issues" (e.g., CP3 and TP5), and answering emails. The distinction between the roles and

responsibilities reported by traditional public school principals and charter school

principals was that all five traditional public school principals described themselves as

spending a large part of most workdays addressing student discipline, while only one

charter school principal (CP1) reported significant engagement with student discipline.

The social exchange theory of the theoretical framework aligns with the description of

the principals for both traditional public schools and charter schools regarding their role

as reactive managers based on their own work (Emerson, 1976). This suggests that this

behavior was informed by the social situations that generated the norms that defined

appropriate and standard interactions among individuals within a system.

  Charter School Principals. All five charter school principals described the

emphasis in their duties on responding to emerging student, teacher, and parent needs as

making the workday unpredictable. This supports the literature, indicating that even

though charter schools are established institutions, there are still disruptions and

unpredictability principals need to cope with as leaders (Arapis & Brandon, 2021; Cohen,

2017). This finding also aligns with the social exchange framework, wherein the

behaviors of individuals are often influenced by the social network that helps formalize

norms. CP1 stated that the roles and responsibilities of a principal were incompatible with

structured routines because unexpected disruptions were likely to occur: "Anybody who

has spent a day as an administrator knows that on the turn of a hat, your whole day is going to get disrupted." CP3 spoke in an emphatic tone in stating that for principals, "There is no such thing as a typical day. It always changes. Lots of meetings. When in school, dealing with a lot of issues." CP5 reported the general framework of a typical day in the following written, numbered list:

1) Greeting students as they get out of their cars in the morning; 2) checking and replying to emails; 3) LOTS of paperwork (purchase requests, time off requests, newsletters, NCEES, required documents to DPI to stay within compliance, budgetary items, staying up on headcount, whatever paperwork central office pushes out that they need back ASAP); 4) checking and replying to emails; 5) admin meeting; 6) Operation Manager meeting; 7) EC Coordinator meeting (1 time a week); 8) checking and replying to emails; 9) classroom observations; 10) dismissal duty; 11) checking and replying to emails.

It was notable in CP5's response that the item "checking and replying to emails" appeared four times on the 11-item list. Also notable was that CP5's choice of the words "checking and replying" implied a reactive task. CP5's all-caps emphasis in "LOTS of paperwork," followed by a list of seven specific kinds of paperwork before the concluding catch-all, "Whatever paperwork central office pushes out that they need back ASAP," again suggested a reactive managerial duty.

CP2 described the general nature of reactive managerial responsibilities in stating, I talk to people a lot, and so a lot of it is managing people's needs. So, I spend a lot of time talking to teachers and talking to parents and talking to kids and trying to get folks to a better place.

CP3 stated that a large portion of an average day was spent "dealing with a lot of issues—parent, teacher, and student issues," indicating a focus on responding to stakeholder needs.

Only one charter school principal mentioned student discipline as a principal's responsibility, and the reference was only partially discrepant from the responses of other charter school principals. There is some support that principals of charter schools engage in study discipline activities (Foreman & Maranto, 2018; Mavrogordato & Torres, 2018); however, the current findings of this study appear to suggest that this responsibility was not as widely embraced by charter school principals. CP1 stated that during one part of the school year, instead of focusing on instructional leadership, "I was spending more time on things like discipline, or tasks that are more typically provided to an assistant principal." This response indicated that spending significant time on discipline was a deviation from expected charter school principal responsibilities and that in CP1's school, the principal would normally delegate disciplinary responsibilities to subordinate administrators.

Traditional Public School Principals. Like charter school principals, traditional public school principals indicated that their roles and responsibilities were often managerial, reactive, and unpredictable. The contingency leadership framework emphasizes the role of context in order to understand the demands and responsibilities of leaders in different settings (Fiedler, 1993). This finding suggests that regardless of the school setting, principals often assume managerial roles in their leadership. TP2 stated, "When is there a typical day? You tell me. I'd love to see one, but no, I mean, honestly, what is the same about every day for me is that alarm [to wake up in the morning]." TP2

described day-to-day responsibilities in a manner that suggested they verged on being overwhelming, stating, "I'm always trying to be everywhere all at once." TP3 stated of day-to-day responsibilities, "It's definitely been more desk time compared to the assistant principal role. So, I usually allot probably an hour and a half, I'm at my computer answering emails." TP5 also described a reactive, managerial role: "[My typical day] looks like a lot of communication from the time I walk in the door until I leave. I check my emails and respond first thing in the morning, and then I'm usually bombarded with teacher issues."

Unlike charter school principals, traditional public school principals reported that they spent a large portion of their time on the reactive managerial task of responding to student disciplinary incidents. The contingency leadership framework also supports this difference (Fiedler, 1993), suggesting that the different leadership contexts between public schools and charter schools explain why public school principals tend to be more engaged with student disciplinary responsibilities compared to charter school principals. This is also supported by the literature, indicating that traditional public school principals tend to be engaged in student disciplinary activities as part of their leadership responsibilities (DeMatthews et al., 2017). Addressing discipline was time-consuming in part because it involved responding to parent concerns, TP2 stated, "Just dealing with the parents and their concerns, because they feel like somehow, something was done incorrectly about their child with regards to discipline. So, unfortunately, I spent too much time doing that, but it's a necessary evil." TP4 stated that responding to disciplinary issues was time-consuming because it often entailed responsibility for investigating incidents to ensure the most appropriate response: "A large amount of time is spent on

discipline. Discipline issues consist of social media, bullying, fighting, disrespect to teachers, and insubordination…trying to complete a thorough investigation and follow up with the appropriate consequences." TP5 expressed that disciplinary duties often disrupted other activities: "Discipline takes a lot of my time because I do like to be involved, so the teachers know that I am going to support them. I will often stop what I am doing to assist with a discipline issue." TP2 expressed that principals wanted to be instructional leaders, but reactive managerial tasks, particularly student discipline, consumed too much of each day: "We [principals] want to be instructional leaders…[but] the reality of it is oftentimes we end up on that managerial side of things, especially with discipline."

Subtheme: The Instructional Leader Role. Among both charter school principals and traditional public school principals, all participants but one (CP2) expressed a strong preference for the instructional leader role over the reactive managerial role. This subtheme is supported by the literature, indicating that principals often have to assume the role of instructional leaders in order to influence various aspects of student learning such as the curriculum and pedagogy (Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Gawlik, 2012). Informed by the social exchange theory as part of the framework (Emerson, 1976), this subtheme also aligns with the theory's principle that the behaviors of leaders are informed by social situations that define the norms that are considered appropriate and standard interactions among individuals within a system. Charter school principals differed from traditional public school principals in stating that they were able to invest a large portion of each workday in providing instructional leadership to their teachers and that although they would have liked to spend even more time in this role,

they were satisfied on the whole with the time available for it. In contrast, traditional public school principals expressed disappointment that reactive managerial duties left them little time to provide instructional leadership to teachers.

Charter School Principals. Four of five charter school principals expressed that they preferred their instructional leadership role over their reactive managerial one, and all five charter school principals expressed that they were basically satisfied with the amount of time they were able to invest in providing instructional leadership. This is somewhat different from the literature, indicating that charter school principals often need to assume a lesser role as instructional leaders (Gawlik, 2012). Asked to state a favorite principal role, CP4 stated a preference for being

in the classroom. I share with my teachers all the time, "I'm envious of you because I would love to be back in the classroom teaching and if ever you need a bathroom break just call me because I'm coming in and I'll take over."

CP3 also preferred to spend time "in the classroom, helping students and teachers." Similarly, CP5 expressed a preference for spending time "in the classroom with the students and teachers." CP1 joined most other charter school principals in expressing a preference for instructional leadership: "If I could script it my way, that [instructional leadership] is exactly what I would be spending the majority of my time with." This is reflective of the literature, indicating the need for charter school principals to balance their managerial duties and to assume a more critical role as an instructional leader (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019).

Charter school principals reported spending a substantial portion of each school day engaging in the preferred task of instructional leadership. CP5 reported spending

significant time on "teacher observation." CP5 also spoke about providing PD to teachers to guide them in using data to improve student academic performance, saying of the satisfactory results, "I was told by so many [teachers] that they [were] never shown how to look at the data and understand it. I saw so many teachers grow last year and implement knowledge from the data within their classrooms." CP4 stated, "The instructional part is where I spend most of my time." Regarding the relationship between reactive managerial duties and instructional leadership, CP4 reported adequate freedom to prioritize instruction: "Intentionally, I go through and look at emails all day, but if it's something I can touch after school, I do, so I can really focus in on the people in the building." CP1 also reported a preference for and a daily emphasis on instructional leadership: "I love the fact that I get to spend as much time on instructional supervision in my current role," defining instructional supervision as, "the availability and the ability to spend time in our classrooms and with our teachers." All these experiences are reflective of the evolving role charter school principals must assume as instructional leaders in order to be more proactive in developing the effectiveness of teachers as educators (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019).

CP2 provided partly discrepant data in expressing a preference for reactive managerial duties, specifically in relation to meeting emerging stakeholder needs. CP2 stated,

> A lot of it [my job] is managing people's needs. So, I spend a lot of time talking to teachers and talking to parents and talking to kids and trying to get folks to a better place. I think that is how I prefer to spend my time, honestly. I really like that aspect of the job.

CP2's response was consistent with those of other participants in indicating that deskwork was not a preferred responsibility. CP2 also was consistent with other charter school principals in expressing a preference for working with people over solitary duties, stating, "I begrudge the paperwork that I have to do because I would rather work with the people." CP2's data were only partially discrepant from the present theme because the preferred task of meeting stakeholder needs had a broader focus and a potentially more reactive nature than instructional leadership.

Traditional Public School Principals. Like four of five charter school principals, all five traditional public school principals expressed a specific preference for providing instructional leadership over their other roles and responsibilities. This aligns with the literature, indicating that traditional public school principals often have to assume the role of instructional leaders in order to be proactive in providing an effective learning environment for students (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Unlike charter school principals, traditional public school principals expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time they were presently able to spend on instructional leadership responsibilities, which included classroom observations and coaching teachers. This finding indicated that traditional public school principals want to but are unable to meet the expectation described in Grodzki (2011) to prioritize instructional leadership over all other activities. These differences also align with the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which provides a rationale on why different leaders in different settings have different experiences and levels of satisfaction about their roles as leaders. TP1 stated, "I would prefer to spend my time interacting with students and coaching teachers…that would be my main thing, is preferably getting teachers prepared and equipped to educate our

students." However, TP1 reported that most of each workday was spent on "pretty much a volley of answering teacher questions that they have" about COVID-19 safety protocols. TP3 stated, "I spend most of the time trying to coordinate the happenings of the schools for the weeks ahead," but added, "I'd rather just spend it in the classroom or with specific teachers for sure." In expressing a strong preference for instructional leadership, TP2 said of the small amount of teacher coaching for which other responsibilities left time, "Those conversations that I am having with teachers around problems of practice is just by far the most rewarding, fulfilling, exhausting. But I love that." However, the preponderance of TP2's duties was reactive and managerial, as TP2 expressed after describing the following exchange with an admired mentor during undergraduate training:

> I said, "Tell me about your role as an instructional leader," and he laughed in my face, in a positive way. And he said, "I'm not on an instructional leader. I don't have time to be. I keep the school together and I manage things." And he was right.

> TP4 also expressed a desire to spend more time on instructional leadership than current demands on time allowed: "I wish I could spend more time coaching teachers. But it is difficult because you get pulled in so many directions." TP5 stated, "I spend a lot of time answering emails, discipline, meetings, and planning for upcoming weeks." Of how TP5 would prefer to spend time, TP5 stated, "I wish I could be in the classrooms more with the students and teachers."

Theme 1 Summary and Comparison. A study conducted by Karakose et al. (2016) found that school principals are at risk of experiencing burnout in the workplace

due to the expansion of their roles and responsibilities. The role of the principal is unique, and tasks completed are diverse and change from day to day. Lunenburg (2010) found that the day-to-day activities of a principal consist of duties and responsibilities such as attending meetings, tours of the building, unexpected disruptions due to discipline or parent involvement, personal contacts, overseeing facilities and maintenance, human resources management, and attending to the climate and culture of the school. As mentioned in a report by School Leaders Network (2014), principals are continually faced with new mandates, pressures, and accountability measures as well as an overarching requirement to keep their focus and heart on the best interests of the students. Grodzki (2011) found that due to the complexities of the principalship, it was difficult to clearly define the responsibilities and actual skills necessary to fulfill the position's demands. In addition, the expectation was that the administrator would be the instructional leader and that this role would take precedent over all other activities (Grodzki, 2011). Findings in the present study indicated that principal responsibilities in traditional public schools and charter schools had significant overlap, mainly in reactive managerial tasks such as answering emails and addressing student, teacher, and parent needs as they emerged. However, two significant discrepancies between the roles and responsibilities of traditional public school principals and charter school principals were apparent.

Across all five traditional public school principals, findings indicated that principal roles and responsibilities emphasized managerial duties and that those duties were typically reactive in nature. The most frequently cited reactive management responsibilities were student discipline and responding to teacher concerns. Traditional

public school principals expressed regret that reactive management responsibilities left less time than they would have liked for instructional leadership, the role for which all five traditional public school principals expressed a preference. This finding indicated that traditional public school principals want but are not able to meet the expectation described in Grodzki (2011) to prioritize instructional leadership over all other activities.

In contrast, only one charter school principal mentioned student discipline as a responsibility, and the response indicated that this responsibility was not normally part of the charter school principal role. Although charter school principals joined traditional public school principals in expressing regret that reactive management responsibilities did not leave more time for instructional leadership, they described instructional leadership responsibilities like classroom observations as the tasks on which they spent a large portion or even the majority of their time. Like traditional public school principals, most charter school principals expressed a preference for the role of instructional leader over that of manager; but unlike traditional public school principals, charter school principals reported satisfaction with the amount of time they were able to devote to instructional leadership.

Research Question 2: What Are the Differences Between Traditional Public School and Charter School Principals When Examining Principal Preparation?

Research Question 2 was focused on principal perceptions of the preparation they received for the role of a principal in traditional public schools and charter schools to determine if there is a difference. Interview Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 from the questionnaire elicited responses from participants that relate to Research Question 2:

8. How did your university educational leadership program prepare you for your

position as a principal?

9. What professional development opportunities did you participate in that improved your leadership skills after being hired as a principal?

10. How does your school district or Charter Management Organization (CMO) support you as a school principal?

11. How does the school district or CMO support ongoing professional growth?

One major theme emerged during data analysis to address Research Question 2. The theme was that principal preparation among traditional public school principals is facilitated by the active guidance of district administrators for professional growth, while principal preparation for charter school principals is self-initiated. The following subsection is a discussion of the theme. Table 5 indicates the number of participants who contributed to the codes grouped to form this theme.

Table 5

Research Question 2 Code Frequencies

Theme Code	*n* of traditional principals contributing (*N*=5)	*n* of charter principals contributing (*N*=5)
Theme 2: Traditional public school district administrators actively guide principals' professional growth while charter school principals identify their own opportunities	5	5
District/board regularly organizes and offers PD	5	0
Earned degree from accredited school	5	5
Overseeing administrators offer informal guidance	4	0
PD support limited to passive funding approval	0	5
Principals must find own PD opportunities	0	5
Provided with mentorship program	2	0
Received or sought safety training	5	1
Satisfied with PD opportunities	5	4

Theme 2: Principal Preparation in Traditional Public Schools is Facilitated by District Administrators Active Guidance for Professional Growth, While Principal Preparation in Charter Schools is Self-Initiated

All five traditional public school principals reported that their districts regularly offered them PD growth opportunities and support, which informed their preparation as principals. The traditional public school principals expressed appreciation for and satisfaction with the opportunities they received. This sentiment is consistent with the literature, indicating that administrative support is important in the preparation of individuals to become principals (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020). Although most charter school principals also expressed appreciation for the PD they obtained, they indicated that the opportunities were not offered to them, but rather they had to take the initiative

themselves to identify the opportunities and apply for funding from their board or superintendent. The following subsections are discussions of the responses from each group of principals.

Traditional Public School Principals. All five traditional public school principals reported that their districts consistently offered them significant, structured professional growth and development opportunities, including conferences, mentoring programs, and classes. TP4 offered examples of PD opportunities offered through the district in stating, "I received numerous professional developments as a principal that included instructional strategies, observations, coaching teachers, culture diversity, data, and equity." TP5 also referred to a variety of PD opportunities provided by the school district, saying, "I have attended a number of professional development opportunities through my district. My district relies heavily on data and safety, so there is always PD on both of these topics that you can attend." Notable in TP5's response was the reference to the continual availability of the PD ("there is always PD"). TP3 was a first-year principal but spoke favorably of PD previously received through the district as an assistant principal: "I have not participated in any principal PD yet, but the AP professional development that my district offered included some of those practices that have helped me in this role so far."

Traditional public school principals described their districts not only as offering a variety of continually available professional growth opportunities but as being proactive in doing so. TP2 referred to the proactive practice at the district level of seeking ways to engage principals in professional growth opportunities: "They [district-level administrators] are always looking to get us involved in leadership opportunities. I mean,

for example, this morning they had me talking during our district-wide meeting. They are always there to support." TP2 also described the district-level practice of continually driving principals to explore new areas for professional growth: "We do not always want professional development, but I also think that it is important that we get pushed sometimes out of our comfort zone, and that's what they're [district administrators] doing." TP5 described the district as proactively sustaining principal engagement in professional growth: "Our school district keeps us very involved in district initiatives, so there are always opportunities to attend various trainings in state or out of state." TP4 referred to the ongoing nature of district administrator proactive efforts to engage principals in PD, stating, "Our school district is always providing various opportunities for us to grow, whether it is attending professional development, presenting to other principals, or assisting novice principals."

Two traditional public school principals also received structured professional growth support from their school districts in the form of formal mentorship programs. TP1 received coaching from an experienced administrator: "I do have a retired principal as a coach. He is good. He is like, 'you got everything all together. Instead of meeting every week, I think we just need to meet every other week.'" TP3 stated, "I do have a mentor that I have been in close contact with, and she supports me."

Four of five TPs also described themselves as relying heavily on district administrators for guidance and support, stating that at least one such administrator was always available to offer counsel. TP2 stated, "The superintendent calls me, the deputy superintendent, calls me. And just through those things that I think a lot of districts do not have, I have never, ever not felt 100% supported by our county." TP1 emphasized the

perpetual availability of professional guidance from district-level administrators: "You can get a hold of people at the district level any time. Even the deputy superintendent is easy to reach, so I would count that as a support, being able to have them answer questions right away." TP5 also referred to district administrators as perpetually available to offer professional guidance and support: "I feel like my zone superintendent is supportive and provides me with anything I need. I know I can call on him at any time for assistance."

These findings highlight the results of previous literature, indicating that administrative support is important in the preparation of individuals to become principals (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020). The framework of social exchange theory also supports the mutually beneficial relationship between administrators and prospective principals in order to understand why certain behaviors are facilitated (Emerson, 1976). Using this theory, the suggestion is that administrators provide support, and prospective principals view this opportunity as significant in their preparation pathways toward principalship.

Charter School Principals. Although four of five charter school principals expressed appreciation for the professional growth support they received, they indicated that they needed to take the initiative in identifying and pursuing their own opportunities for professional growth. The support charter school principals received from their boards or superintendents was passive, rather than the proactive support in identifying and offering PD support that traditional public school principals received. This is consistent with the literature, indicating that charter school principals tend to have less educational attainment, less administrative experience, less teaching experience, higher turnover rates, and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school

principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018).

For charter school principals, board or superintendent support consisted of approving funding the PD opportunities the charter school principal identified and arranged. Charter school principals indicated that they had the responsibility for identifying their own PD opportunities and that funding approval from boards or superintendents was expected but not guaranteed. CP1 described this situation by stating, "If I see something that is worthwhile and I present it to my superintendent, more often than not, she's going to provide support for me, whether it's going to a conference, or if it's recently, a virtual conference." Other participants also emphasized the support they received took the form of funding approval rather than identification and arrangement of PD opportunities. CP2 stated, "If I say I really need to get more knowledge about this [PD topic], they're [charter organization] happy to help and support that." CP3 reported a similar experience of passive budgetary oversight in stating, "Any type of training, they will support. The chief administrator meets with us weekly and provides feedback." CP4 stated that identifying professional growth opportunities was one of his responsibilities: "They [the founders] said they wanted a great principal and a principal that was going to grow with the school and help others grow in the school, so they allocated their budget line just for that." CP5 described approval for PD as easily obtained: "As long as the professional development is within the strategic plan and budget, they do not have an issue with it."

For charter school principals, professional growth opportunities were typically identified, proposed, vetted, and organized within the school's administrative team, a process that all five traditional public school principals described as occurring at the

district rather than the school level. CP1 provided an example of how charter school administrators conceived, selected, and directed their own professional growth opportunities in the following response:

> Our own professional growth focus this year is having discussions about racism and how to be stronger anti-racists. That was really driven by my assistant principal, who is an African American male, and when everything was happening at the end of the [2019-2020] school year [e.g., the police murder of George Floyd], having some very critical, difficult conversations as a team.… We said, yes, this is what we are going to dedicate ourselves to this year, and that is what we started to do. That is just one example on the forefront now of, we feel like this is something that we want to focus our own professional growth on, and it is widely accepted by our own leadership.

CP4 described some of the professional growth opportunities he pursued on his own initiative, stating,

> I partnered with [a recognized national authority on school leadership. She has a principal organization called [name redacted]. It is a progressive group in which you define details of your school vision, your school mission, your core values, how those things are carried out, and how those things are communicated. That was an absolute blessing because it really did raise my awareness of how to knit the fabric of a school's culture, how to give feedback to teachers based on how I rank them. I have participated in a couple of state conferences.

CP2 reported that on her own initiative, she sought and obtained PD in the legal requirements for student safety precautions: "I have gone to a couple of workshops at

conferences that have been focused on legal aspects, and that has been helpful. Because

having to do with school safety, or discipline, making sure you are doing the right thing."

Only one of five charter school principals indicated dissatisfaction with the lack

of guidance and active support in identifying and organizing PD opportunities. CP5

described a disparity between the PD she provided and the PD she received in stating,

"There are not many [PD] opportunities being shared with me. I feel I provide more

professional growth opportunities for the teachers than are provided to me." CP5 said of

the lack of guidance overall, "This is my biggest complaint right now…I truly do not feel

the support like I had in the traditional school setting. I find myself reaching out to my

past principal for support and guidance."

The contingency leadership framework (Fiedler, 1993) supports the difference

between the two groups of principals. The differences in contexts and resources available

can inform the differences in preparation pathways for principalship. The framework of

social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) also supports the unbalanced relationship

between administrators and prospective principals in terms of the provision of support for

principal preparation, hence the charter school principals in this study credited

themselves as the true initiators of their own success in becoming principals despite the

lack of support from district administrators.

Theme 2 Summary and Comparison. According to Rowland (2015), states and

districts have focused on teachers rather than principals when making policy and allotting

funds and resources for PD and support. In response, ESSA has offered new

opportunities for districts and states to reconsider the way they develop and support

school principals (ESSA, 2015). The proper training of school administrators is essential

if principals are to successfully navigate the education reform landscape that requires them to perform as a building manager and knowledgeable instructional leader ultimately responsible for the success of every student in their school (Marzano et al., 2005). The focus of Research Question 2 in the present study was on the administrator preparation of factors of university education leadership programs, PD opportunities received as a principal, and support received from district or charter organizations. More specifically, the focus of the research question was on any differences between charter school principals and traditional public school principals in relation to the preparation they received.

According to the literature review, charter school principals tend to have less educational attainment, less administrative experience, less teaching experience, higher turnover rates, and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). All 10 principals interviewed in the present study completed a university educational leadership program and reported that they were pleased with the instruction they received. This finding disconfirmed those in the previous literature, indicating that charter school principals had less educational preparation (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018).

Findings in this study added to the previous literature that charter school principals reported receiving significantly lower levels of guidance and support from their charter organization for their professional growth than traditional public school principals reported receiving from their districts. Traditional public school principals reported that district-level administrators worked proactively and continually to identify, evaluate, organize, and provide professional growth opportunities for them, including

formal mentorship programs; PD courses; and informal, as-needed guidance from senior administrators. In contrast, charter school principals reported that the support their charter organizations provided for their professional growth was limited to oversight and funding approval. All five charter school principals reported that they and their administrative teams researched, selected, and organized their PD themselves.

At the aggregate level, the findings included insights that were not available to individual participants. First, traditional public school principals consistently reported more varied professional growth opportunities offered more consistently, if not continually, over time. In contrast, the focus and nature of the professional growth opportunities charter school principals identified and pursued on their own initiative varied widely. CP2, for example, reported taking PD courses on legal requirements related to student safety and discipline. All five traditional public school principals indicated that their district provided them with PD on the topic of safety, but none of the remaining four charter school principals indicated that they recognized the need for and obtained safety training. Leadership training varied among charter school principals from the experience of CP3, who said, "I have not had a lot of professional development," to the experience of CP4, who sought out and developed an ongoing professional relationship with a nationally recognized authority in school leadership to obtain guidance and also joined a formal organization of school principals to exchange ideas and advice. Charter school principals did not report any occasions when their charter organizations recommended or required any specific PD course or type of PD. This situation gave charter school principals significant autonomy, but it reduced accountability and oversight to funding approval decisions based on broad strategic plans.

Research Question 3: What Factors Influence Traditional Public School and Charter School Principal Decisions to Leave or Remain in the Profession?

Research Question 3 was focused on principal perceptions of their quality of life while serving as principals and effects on principal retention. Specific areas of inquiry included stress and burnout, heavy workload, isolation within the school as principal, organizational structures, and state and federal accountability. Interview Questions 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 from the questionnaire elicited responses from participants related to Research Question 3:

12. What is your general feeling about the role of accountability in education? Can you give me an example of how you see accountability impacting your work in a positive or negative way?

13. What factors influence you to stay, leave, or contemplate leaving the profession or your current position?

14. Are there any personal factors that play a role?

15. To what extent has principal retention been a problem in your district/organization?

16. What are the circumstances that would exemplify the reasons for principal turnover in your district/organization?

One theme emerged during data analysis to answer Research Question 3. The theme was negative job impacts on family are likely to increase turnover. The subthemes were the perception that accountability through high stakes testing is a necessary component of their jobs and that passion for their jobs is the reason for their decision to stay in their jobs as principals. The following subsection is a discussion of this theme and

the subthemes. Table 6 indicates the number of participants who contributed to the codes

grouped to form this theme.

Table 6

Research Question 3 Code Frequencies

Theme Code	*n* of traditional principals contributing (*N*=5)	*n* of charter principals contributing (*N*=5)
Theme 3: Negative job impacts on family are likely to increase turnover	5	5
Accountability through high stakes testing is necessary	3	4
Passion for job as a reason for staying	2	4
Considered quitting but decided against	2	0
Intention to remain in profession until retirement	5	5
Left previous job because of impact on family	0	1
Would leave position if it negatively impacted family	2	3

Theme 3: Negative Job Impacts on Family Are Likely to Increase Turnover

All 10 participants reported that they firmly intended to remain in their current

position until retirement. Only two of 10 participants, both of whom were traditional

public school principals, admitted that they had ever considered quitting their current

position. However, two of five traditional public school principals and three of five

charter school principals reported that they would leave their position if it began to

negatively impact their families. These findings reflect the literature, indicating that

principals can be particularly influenced to leave their roles if their job negatively affects

their family relations (DeMatthews et al., 2019). The social exchange framework also supports this sentiment, given that the cost and benefit analysis of their role as principals holds an influential role in their decisions to stay or leave. Almaaitah et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of a beneficially symbiotic relationship in order to understand why individuals choose to remain in their jobs. However, most participants were unable to specify in what ways their jobs might negatively impact their families because they had not yet observed such an impact, as evidenced by their retention in their positions.

Charter School Principals. Charter school principals spoke in vehement terms when they stated that they did not have any turnover intention and planned to remain in their current profession until retirement. CP2 indicated that she would never leave her position voluntarily and would only quit the profession if forced to do so by physical incapacity: "I hope to stay in this job until I retire. The only thing that would drive me away is when I just am going to reach a point where I cannot do it anymore physically because I am exhausted." CP5 indicated that education was a personal calling: "Leaving the profession has not been a thought for me. I am dedicated to education, at least until retirement." CP4 described grit as a family trait: "My dad was an old army guy, drill sergeant, and then chief warrant officer. So, I'm knit from fabric where once you engage something, we come to work, we bring everything to work."

Although all charter school principals reported that they intended to remain in their current profession until retirement, three of them stated that they would leave if their job had a negative impact on their family. CP5 stated, "My children are the only thing that would influence me to leave the profession." CP3 implied that family was both the reason for remaining in the current principalship and the only potential reason for

turnover: "It would be a huge decision to leave and uproot my family, but if it were interfering negatively with my family, I would do it [leave the profession]." CP1 stated, "I am invested in my school, but my family is first and I would leave if it [my job] was causing a problem." CP1 added positive impacts on his children as one of the primary reasons for his intention to remain in his current position despite its many stressors:

> The most stressful components of my job would fall in when everything that happens in the school is under my watch, and probably some of my most challenging or stressful situations have been something that maybe I myself did not do, but I have to handle the aftermath or address the concerns that come with that. That is a tough spot. That is a tough situation to be in, but that is what leadership is. What keeps me in my role is, I believe that I have a very high quality of life. I have two children of my own, a first grader and a third grader. They attend the elementary school. I am fully vested into the community, as a principal, as a dad.

Charter school principals did not report negative impacts on their families from their jobs; and in their responses, most of them did not specify what specific kinds of negative impact they perceived their work as potentially having. CP5 was the only exception. CP5 reported leaving a previous job because the commuting time required too much time that could otherwise have been spent with children to be sacrificed, indicating that work-life balance in the form of time with her children was an important consideration. CP5 stated this reason for the job she left: "Once I had kids of my own and realized how much time I was losing each day in the car when I could be with them, I began looking for something closer to home."

As discussed earlier, the literature places importance on the role of their families in the decision of principals about their jobs (DeMatthews et al., 2019). The social exchange framework also supports this sentiment, with principals engaging in cost and benefit analysis in order to inform their decisions to stay or leave. Almaaitah et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of a beneficially symbiotic relationship in order to understand why individuals choose to remain in their jobs.

Traditional Public School Principals. Like charter school principals, traditional public school principals reported that they did not intend to leave their profession before retirement. TP2's response suggested that the stressors associated with the work were exhilarating rather than exhausting:

I have never contemplated leaving the profession or my current principal position. I have really lived the charmed professional life. Even during that first year, when I felt like I was drowning at the end of the day, I am like, "I cannot believe that I'm getting paid for this."

TP3 reported a strong commitment to the profession based on the fulfilling nature of the work: "I love my job, and I have not thought about leaving at all." TP4 also referred to the fulfilling nature of the profession in stating, "Even though it is very stressful and overwhelming at times, I would not leave. It is a rewarding position." TP5 indicated that the stressors of the position caused thoughts of leaving, but that his commitment to the job remained firm: "I have thought about leaving, but I will never leave the profession." These sentiments are highly reflective of the importance of internal satisfaction or fulfillment in the retention of principals (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020).

As with three of the charter school principals, the two of five traditional public

school principals who admitted the possibility that they might leave the profession voluntarily before retirement described negative impacts on family as the potential trigger for that decision. These findings are supported by the literature, which identified family problems as a strong factor in the decision of principals to leave their jobs (DeMatthews et al., 2019; Oplatka, 2017). TP1 stated, "I love my job, and I do not ever plan on leaving, but if it became too much for my family, I would leave in a heartbeat because my family is more important to me." TP3 described fatherhood as the only commitment that might supersede his principalship: "If I do not think it is sustainable to be a good father, I would have to leave. So, I will have to navigate how to still be effective in the role and be a leader of a school, but also not sacrifice home life and raising a kid."

Subtheme: Accountability Through Testing is Necessary Part of the Job.
Among charter school principals, four of five view accountability through testing as a necessary part of their job. Three of five traditional public school teachers also expressed the same sentiment. This likely means that even though high stakes testing can be stressful to principals, pressure from accountability is not a deciding factor for staying or leaving their jobs. This subtheme is supported by the literature, indicating that principals generally view accountability through high stakes testing as an integral part of their jobs as principals (Watkins et al., 2020). The similarity between the two groups also can be supported by the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), suggesting that the practice and norm of accountability through testing for both school settings is already ingrained in the social exchange dynamics.

Charter School Principals. Among charter school principals, four of five viewed accountability through testing as a necessary part of their job. For instance, one

participant said, "Not a big fan of testing. But there is no way to assess students without having them sit down for actual testing." Another charter school principal shared,

> I feel the overall general feeling about the role of accountability in education is important. For me, as a leader that's your report card. On how well you're doing in certain areas, how academically, how well you're doing in areas of staff development, staff turnover, staff recruiting, those things are significantly important, and I feel that they're an aspect of your job. Again, I said, as your report card.

As discussed earlier, accountability through high stakes testing is also a core component of principals in charter schools (Glazer et al., 2019), which could explain why principals have become used to the concept of high stakes testing and accountability. As reflected in the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) as the framework, the practice and norm of accountability through testing appear to be widely accepted among charter school principals. This means the cost and benefit analysis of charter school principals made them perceive accountability as beneficial for their jobs and professions.

    Traditional Public School Principals. Three of five traditional public school teachers also expressed the same sentiment as the charter school principals regarding accountability as a necessary part of their jobs. For instance, one participant shared the following view:

> Accountability is a necessary evil. But I do feel that there should be, which they talked about. I just need to see a plan and it get put into action. That is the testing, there's a lot of testing. A whole lot of testing, especially at the middle school.

Another participant echoed the same sentiment about accountability and high stakes

testing:

> I can't talk about it at all in a negative way. I'm seeing the world kind of through rose-colored glasses, if you will. My experience as an admin, as an AP, and a principal, I mean, 100% that support has always been there.

As discussed earlier, these perceptions are generally supported by the literature, indicating that principals generally view accountability through high stakes testing as an integral part of their jobs (Watkins et al., 2020). Even though there have been reservations and frustrations about high stakes testing, principals have accepted this responsibility as a major part of their jobs. As reflected in the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) as the framework, the practice and norm of accountability through testing have been accepted as part of their jobs. This means that traditional public school principals also view accountability within the lens of a practical benefit for their job as principals.

Subtheme: Principals Stay Because of Passion for Their Jobs. Among charter school principals, four of five stayed as principals in the profession because of their passion for their jobs. Only two of five among the traditional public schools stayed because of their passion for their jobs as principals. This subtheme is supported by the literature, indicating that principals generally stay because of their passion and love for their profession (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020); however, it appears that this factor contributes more to charter school principal decisions to stay compared to traditional public school principals. The difference between the two groups can also be supported by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which provides a rationale on why different leaders in different settings have different experiences and levels of satisfaction

about their roles as leaders based on their unique circumstances.

    Charter School Principals. Among charter school principals, four of five stayed as principals in the profession because of their passion for their jobs. One participant expressed the following:

> Going back to I've always wanted to be an educator, and it's all I've ever done. Being transparent, I have never been in a situation where I've thought, "Oh jeez, I need to look at potentially a different career path, or a different career field." That's never crossed my mind.

Another participant also expressed satisfaction and fulfillment with being a principal:

> I would say the staying part is just, again, the overall...I have a file that I call my smile file where anything that I've been fortunate enough to be able to help a child experience or a parent experience, I collect all those things, and I go back to that smile file weekly. Just to find those moments where someone took the opportunity to say, "Thank you, I appreciate it." Those are the things that put the gas in the tank to make me push through looking through lesson plans on a Sunday night, make me to push through a parent putting a negative message on our ClassDojo page, make me to push through a teacher who is being obstinate about some things. Those are the things that make me push through.

    As discussed earlier, these perceptions are generally supported by the literature, indicating that retention is often intrinsic in nature (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020). As reflected in the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) as the framework, the assumed cost and benefit analysis of principals regarding whether to remain in their jobs is informed by their passion for being educators.

Traditional Public School Principals. Only two of five among the traditional public school principals stayed because of their passion for their jobs as principals. This is somewhat discrepant from the general findings from the literature citing the importance of intrinsic factors in the retention of principals (Swen, 2020). One participant said, "So salary will always be a factor. Is the monetary value matching the work that I'm putting in and the stress that I'm having to go through?" Another participant shared, "But for the most part if the supports are there and the salary is there, and there's some incentives for achieving, then people are going to stay around." These sentiments are consistent with the literature that highlights the role of salary and incentives as a reason for staying in their roles as principals (Tekleselassie & Choi, 2019).

Principals often value intrinsic factors such as fulfillment and passion for their jobs for continuing to remain in their roles (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020). As reflected in the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) as the framework, the assumed cost and benefit analysis of principals regarding whether to remain in their jobs is informed by their passion for being educators. The difference between the value attributed to passion for being educators between charter school and traditional public school principals can also be supported by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which provides a rationale on why different leaders in different settings have different experiences and expectations about their roles as leaders based on their unique circumstances.

Theme 3 Summary. In a report published by School Leaders Network (2014), researchers reported that currently, schools are losing a multitude of principals each year, requiring that less-effective, novice principals assume roles for which they are not prepared. Research has shown that high principal turnover often leads to greater teacher

turnover (Béteille et al., 2012; Fuller et al., 2015), which in turn can have a negative impact on student achievement and other schooling outcomes (Fuller et al., 2015). Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2011) found that work-related stress and autonomy in the position contributed to public school principal departures.

In the present study, all 10 principals stated that the job can be stressful but that they would never leave the profession. The personal factor that five of 10 participants (three charter school principals and two traditional public school principals) described as potentially influencing them to leave their positions was a negative impact on their family. However, no participants reported that they had observed negative impacts on their families from their jobs.

The subthemes were the perception that accountability through high stakes testing is a necessary component of their jobs and that passion for their jobs is the reason for their decision to stay in their jobs as principals. The role of accountability is supported by the literature, indicating that principals generally view accountability through high stakes testing as an integral part of their jobs as principals (Watkins et al., 2020). The similarity between the two groups can also be supported by the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), suggesting that the practice and norm of accountability through testing have been established in both social contexts. In terms of passion for education as a motivating factor for staying, there is support from the literature, indicating that principals generally stay because of their passion and love for their profession (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020). However, it appears that this factor contributes more to charter school principal decisions to stay compared to traditional public school principals. The difference between the two groups can also be supported by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which

highlights the situational component of leadership experiences based on their unique circumstances.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 was a presentation of the results of the data analysis in narrative form. Differences between traditional public school and charter school principals in the areas of responsibilities, preparation, and training and their effect on principal retention were examined. With the growing number of charter schools in the United States, the need to analyze the principal's role in both traditional public schools and charter schools is a necessity. Additional findings included participant views on personal factors that would influence their decision to leave or remain in the profession. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings, limitations, recommendations for future research, and conclusions drawn from the results of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perceptions of charter and traditional public school principal job responsibilities, preparation, and training and their effect on principal retention. Repeated leadership turnover is negatively associated with student performance (Béteille et al., 2012). Miller (2013) found that after a principal departs from a school, the test scores continue to fall in the first 2 years of the new principal and do not return to pre-turnover levels until 4 to 5 years later. As reported by Mascall and Leithwood (2010), principals need to stay in their school for 5 to 7 years to create large-scale change. The need for an effective and prepared school leader has grown tremendously due to the unique challenges school leaders face daily as education continues to progress each year. School districts, founders of charter schools, central office hiring staff, board members, and charter management organizations must find appropriate ways to train principals to create a pathway of success and career longevity. Data collection in this study included interviews with five charter school principals and five traditional public school principals in North Carolina.

Summary of the Results

Research Question 1 asked, "How do the responsibilities and roles of principals from traditional public schools differ from those in charter schools?" Research Question 1 examined the various roles and responsibilities in traditional public schools and charter schools while looking at the school's organizational and operational structure. One major theme emerged during data analysis to address Research Question 1.

The theme was traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities, while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership. This theme is consistent with the literature, indicating that a combination of managerial

and instructional aspects is involved in principal leadership (Boyce & Bowers, 2018;

Gawlik, 2012). The theme was identified in responses from all 10 participants. All five

traditional public school principals and all five charter school principals stated that most

of each workday was spent responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder

needs. Reactive managerial tasks principals frequently mentioned included responding to

student disciplinary incidents, responding to teacher concerns or teacher issues, and

answering emails. The distinction between the roles and responsibilities reported by

traditional public school principals and charter school principals was that all five

traditional public school principals described themselves as spending a large part of most

workdays addressing student discipline, while only one charter school principal reported

significant engagement with student discipline. The difference between charter school

principals and traditional public school principal roles and responsibilities can be framed

by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which emphasizes the role of

context in understanding the different needs and requirements for leaders.

Research Question 2 asked, "What are the differences between traditional public

school and charter school principals when examining principal preparation?" Research

Question 2 was focused on principal perceptions of the preparation they received for the

role of a principal in traditional public schools and charter schools to determine if there is

a difference. Two major themes emerged during data analysis to address Research

Question 2.

The themes were that principal preparation among traditional public school

principals is facilitated by the active guidance of district administrators for professional

growth, while principal preparation for charter school principals is self-initiated. All five

traditional public school principals reported that their districts regularly offered them PD growth opportunities and support, which contributed to their preparation to become principals. The traditional public school principals expressed appreciation for and satisfaction with the opportunities they received. This is supported by the literature with regard to administrative support as an important factor in the preparation of individuals to become principals (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020). Although most charter school principals also expressed appreciation for the PD they obtained, they indicated that the opportunities were not offered to them, but rather they had to take the initiative themselves to identify the opportunities and apply for funding from their board or superintendent. This was also supported by the literature, indicating that charter school principals tend to be less prepared because of a lack of experience and support (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). Informed by the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) as the framework, the importance of administrative support in principal preparation is based on a mutually beneficial relationship between administrators and the pool of potential principals. This symbiotic relationship is more aligned with traditional public school principals, who receive administrative support for principal preparation (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020).

Research Question 3 asked, "what factors influence traditional public school and charter school principal decisions to leave or remain in the profession?" Research Question 3 was focused on principal perceptions of their quality of life while serving as principals and effects on principal retention. One theme emerged during data analysis to answer Research Question 3. The theme was negative job impacts on family are likely to increase turnover. All 10 participants reported that they firmly intended to remain in their current position until retirement. Only two of 10 participants, both of whom were

traditional public school principals, admitted that they had ever considered quitting their current position. However, two of five traditional public school principals and three of five charter school principals reported that they would leave their position if it began to negatively impact their families. Most participants were unable to specify in what ways their jobs might negatively impact their families because they had not yet observed such an impact, as evidenced by their retention in their positions.

The subthemes were the perception that accountability through high stakes testing is a necessary component of their jobs and that passion for their jobs is the reason for their decision to stay in their jobs as principals. The role of accountability is supported by the literature, indicating that principals generally view accountability through high stakes testing as an integral part of their jobs as principals (Watkins et al., 2020). The similarity between the two groups can also be supported by the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), suggesting that the practice and norm of accountability through testing have been established in both social contexts. In terms of passion for education as a motivating factor for staying, there is support from the literature, indicating that principals generally stay because of their passion and love for their profession (Swen, 2020; Yan, 2020); however, it appears that this factor contributes more to charter school principal decisions to stay compared to traditional public school principals. The difference between the two groups can also be supported by the contingency leadership theory (Fiedler, 1993), which highlights the situational component of leadership experiences based on their unique circumstances. In summary, this study had four main findings.

1. Traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities, while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership.

2. All principals spent most of each workday responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder needs or, in other words, engaging in reactive managerial tasks. However, principals generally preferred the instructional leader role over the reactive managerial role.

3. Principal preparation among traditional public school principals is facilitated by the active guidance of district administrators for professional growth, while principal preparation for charter school principals is self-initiated.

4. Many principals would consider leaving their position if it began to negatively impact their families.

Discussion of the Results

The first finding in this study, that traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership, is partially at odds with the literature. For instance, Gawlik (2012) found that many charter school principals encounter problems being an instructional leader because of various barriers such as budgeting and staffing. It is possible that while charter school principals may be able to spend more time doing the instructional leadership tasks they enjoy, other factors such as poorer preparation for their roles and fewer opportunities for PD experienced by charter school principals may outweigh that benefit (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). While this study found that traditional public school principals have more student discipline

responsibilities while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership, almost all the principals in the current study said they preferred instructional leadership to reactive responsibilities, such as student discipline. This is consistent with the literature, indicating that principals often have to assume the role of instructional leaders in order to influence various aspects of student learning such as the curriculum and pedagogy (Boyce & Bowers, 2018).

The second finding in this study was that principals spent most of each workday responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder needs. This is consistent with the literature, indicating that principals in both traditional and charter schools perform a significant number of managerial tasks in their leadership (Gawlik, 2012; Torres, 2020). Grissom and Loeb (2011) showed that organizational management tasks such as budgeting and maintaining facilities are just as important as effective instructional leadership. Principals need to devote a significant amount of energy into both by "combining an understanding of the instructional needs of the school with an ability to target resources where they are needed, hire the best available teachers, and keep the school running smoothly" (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p. 119). Not only is the principal required to lead the way to success in student achievement, but the school leader also must be the driving force and motivation for adult learning and staff development (Duncan et al., 2011).

There is support for the third finding in the literature: Principal preparation among traditional public school principals is facilitated by the active guidance of district administrators for professional growth, while principal preparation for charter school principals is self-initiated. Nationally, a significant number of charter school principals

are promoted directly from the classroom without administrative experience and credentials (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2008). It is of critical importance for principals to receive PD, especially if they come from a background that lacks administrative experience. As with teachers, principals tend to become more effective as they gain experience, particularly within the first 3 years (Béteille et al., 2012). While the literature does not directly compare the PD offered to traditional public school principals and charter school principals, charter school principals tend to have higher turnover rates and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). The lack of support for the preparation pathways for principals in charter schools is reflected in their lack of administrative experience, less teaching experience, and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). This is critical because administrative support through access to learning and experiential opportunities is important in the preparation of individuals to become principals (Hayes & Mahfouz, 2020).

The fourth finding, that many principals would consider leaving their position if it began to negatively impact their families, is in line with the literature (Beam et al., 2016; DeMatthews et al., 2019). A study conducted by Beam et al. (2016) noted that both novice and veteran principals indicated that balancing family and new administrative duties was complicated and placed them in an incredibly stressful situation. Not only were they required to balance both home and school, but the new principals also stated that navigating relations with other stakeholders was a challenge as well. Spillane and Lee (2014) reported that novice principals face a major reality shock due to the ultimate

responsibility they inherit. Whether transitioning straight from the classroom to the principalship or rising to the principalship from another administrative position, novice leaders become overwhelmed by the extreme responsibility being a principal brings (Spillane & Lee, 2014). While not all principals in the current study indicated they would consider leaving their jobs if it began to negatively affect their families, many did.

Implications of the Study

This study has several implications for practice. The study findings imply that traditional public school principals may be spending an unnecessarily large amount of their time on student discipline responsibilities, seeing as the charter school principals in the study indicated they were able to engage in more instructional leadership. This is an important implication, as almost all participants agreed that they would prefer to spend their time engaging in more instructional leadership tasks. Minimizing the time traditional public school principals spend on student discipline may improve principal retention by giving them more time to engage in work that is meaningful to them. Another implication of this study is that district administrators could be doing more to guide charter school principal professional growth. Traditional public school principals reported that their district administrators actively encouraged and required them to engage in PD. Charter school principals did not receive the same encouragement or requirements. If charter school principals were to receive the same PD opportunities, it may improve their retention, though this has not been confirmed by the literature. Finally, an implication of this study is that principal retention can be improved by reducing the burden on the families of principals. This may mean reducing the number of hours principals need to work outside of normal working hours and providing them with

adequate paid time off, sick leave, and paid family leave. In terms of principal

preparation, another implication of the results of this study is that more district support is

needed in the charter school setting. There are not enough pathways for principalship

among chart school educators based on the lack of support extended by district

administrators who have the resources to provide this assistance.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study found that traditional public school principals have more student

discipline responsibilities, while charter school principals engage in more instructional

leadership. Additionally, almost all the principals in the current study said they preferred

instructional leadership to reactive responsibilities, such as student discipline. Therefore,

a reader may conclude that turnover would be lower among charter school principals than

traditional public school principals since they can spend more of their time doing the

tasks they enjoy. However, the few available studies examining charter school principal

and traditional public school principal retention rates indicate that the opposite is true

(Sun & Ni, 2016). It is possible that while charter school principals may be able to spend

more time doing the instructional leadership tasks they enjoy, other factors such as poorer

preparation for their roles and fewer opportunities for PD experienced by charter school

principals may outweigh that benefit (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018).

However, further study is needed to clarify why higher turnover exists among charter

school principals, and if that turnover is partly mitigated by the additional time charter

school principals get to spend on instructional leadership tasks compared to traditional

public school principals. Further research is also needed to clarify why traditional public

school principals may be spending more time on tasks related to student discipline than charter school principals.

More research is needed to understand traditional public school principal and charter school principal relative access to PD opportunities. Some studies indicated that charter school principals may need more PD than traditional public school principals and that all principals struggle to access PD (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). However, more research is needed to determine if charter school principals have less access to PD and, if that is the case, what barriers exist to that access. This research would be a valuable addition to the literature, as charter school principals tend to have higher turnover rates and fewer experiences at their current school than traditional public school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018). This higher turnover rate could be partly due to the fewer PD experiences described by charter school principals in this study.

Finally, more research is needed to understand factors of charter school principal and traditional public school principal jobs that may negatively affect their families. While not all principals in the current study indicated they would consider leaving their job if it began to negatively affect their families, many did. This is an important finding of the current study and one that is supported by the literature (Beam et al., 2016). However, the principals in the current study also had a hard time envisioning how their jobs could begin to negatively affect their families. Since all principals in the current study indicated they were happy with their positions and not inclined to leave, these individuals were also not well placed to discuss factors of their work that led to turnover; however, the participants in the study, mostly charter school principals, highlighted their

passion for being an educator as a reason for staying in their job positions. Most of the principals expressed fulfillment with their jobs, which could explain why they are choosing to stay despite the challenges of being a principal. To determine what aspects of principal work negatively impacted the families of principals, a study should explore these factors with principals who recently left their positions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perceptions of charter and traditional public school principal job responsibilities, preparation, and training and their effect on principal retention. Repeated leadership turnover is negatively associated with student performance (Béteille et al., 2012). This study had four main findings.

1. Traditional public school principals have more student discipline responsibilities, while charter school principals engage in more instructional leadership.

2. All principals spent most of each workday responding in a managerial capacity to emerging stakeholder needs or, in other words, engaging in reactive managerial tasks. However, principals generally preferred the instructional leader role over the reactive managerial role.

3. Principal preparation among traditional public school principals is facilitated by the active guidance of district administrators for professional growth, while principal preparation for charter school principals is self-initiated.

4. Many principals would consider leaving their position if it began to negatively impact their families.

All the findings in this study were supported by the literature in terms of the roles of principals as both managers and instructional leaders (Davis & Boudreaux, 2019; Gawlik, 2012), lack of administrative support for principal preparation among charter school principals (Campbell & Grubb, 2008; Hedges et al., 2018), and the importance of intrinsic motivation for staying in their jobs (Swen, 2020); however, more research is needed to fully understand the findings of this study. Further study is needed to (a) clarify why higher turnover exists among charter school principals and if that turnover is partly mitigated by the additional time charter school principals get to spend on instructional leadership tasks compared to traditional public school principals, (b) clarify why traditional public school principals may be spending more time on tasks related to student discipline than charter school principals, (c) understand the traditional public school principal and charter school principal relative access to PD opportunities, and (d) understand factors of charter school principal and traditional public school principal jobs that may negatively affect their families.

This study has several implications for practices. The study findings imply that traditional public school principals may be spending an unnecessarily large amount of their time on student discipline responsibilities, seeing as the charter school principals in the study indicated they were able to engage in more instructional leadership. Finally, an implication of this study is that principal retention can be improved by reducing the burden on the families of principals.

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Appendix A

Gardner-Webb University IRB
Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: A Qualitative Study on Charter and Traditional School Principal Views on Administration Work and Its Effects on Principal Retention

Researcher: Karlene Crawford. Ed. D Candidate**.** In addition to being the researcher of this study, I am also a novice charter high school principal and have 4 years of experience in a North Carolina traditional public school as an assistant principal.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research study is to examine the perceptions of traditional public school and charter school principals regarding roles and responsibilities in these two entities and develop possible solutions to consistent school leadership issues within these systems with retaining principals. By analyzing the similarities and differences of job responsibilities in these two entities; we can also begin to establish common best practices that are present in both structures to assist with developing the proper supports for future and current principals.

Procedure
What you will do in the study:
As a participant in this study, you will complete a background questionnaire and participate in an in-person interview or a Zoom, a video conferencing platform interview. You will be digitally recorded if you choose an in-person interview and video recorded if you choose a Zoom interview. You may skip any question that causes discomfort. You have the right to stop the interview at any time, without penalty.

Time Required
It is anticipated that the study will require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time to complete the background questionnaire and participate in the interview.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data that has been collected be destroyed.

Confidentiality
Data Linked with Identifying Information
The information that you provide in the study will be handled with confidentiality. Data collected from the background questionnaire and interview will be safeguarded by not including identifying information in the final analysis, including place of employment, credentials, and vitae. Real credentials will only be used for demographic purposes. Although these may be used to create context, details will be obscured to ensure that participants cannot be reverse identified from any interpretive reports. The data for this research will be accessible for five years following the study. All transcripts and

recordings will thereafter be disposed of, thereby, minimizing any future risks related to confidentiality.
.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits associated with participation in this study. This study seeks to be of beneficial interest to future principals when embarking on a possible career as a principal and for current principals to share their perceptions to assist others with understanding the workload of charter and traditional public school principals. The Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants.

Payment

You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Right to Withdraw from the Study

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your digital recording or video recording will be destroyed.

How to Withdraw from the Study

- If you want to withdraw from the study, please ask me to stop the interview. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

- If you would like to withdraw after your materials have been submitted, please contact me, using my cell number (954-294-2104) or by email, karlenecrawford@aol.com

If you have questions about the study, contact:

Karlene Crawford
Ed.D Candidate
Graduate School of Education, Gardner-Webb University
Researcher telephone number: 954-294-2104
Researcher email address: karlenecrawford@aol.com

Dr. William Stone, Chair & Advisor
Graduate School of Education, Gardner-Webb University
Faculty Advisor telephone number: (828)292-3980
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If the research design of the study necessitates that its full scope is not explained prior to participation, it will be explained to you after completion of the study. If you have concerns about your rights or how you are being treated, or if you have questions, want more information, or have suggestions, please contact the IRB Institutional Administrator listed below.

Dr. Sydney K. Brown
IRB Institutional Administrator
Gardner-Webb University
Telephone: 704-406-3019
Email: skbrown@gardner-webb.edu

<u>Voluntary Consent by Participant</u>
I have read the information in this consent form and fully understand the contents of this document. I have had a chance to ask any questions concerning this study and they have been answered for me. I agree to participate in this study.

_____ Date: _____
Participant Printed Name

_____ Date: _____
Participant Signature

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix B

Background Questionnaire

Ethnicity/Race: _____

Age: _____ Gender: ☐Female ☐Male

Highest Degree Earned:

☐Bachelor's ☐Master's ☐Doctorate

Demographics of school:

_____

_____

Total number of students in school: _____

Total number of years in education: _____

Public school teacher: _____

Charter school teacher: _____

Public school assistant principal: _____

Charter school assistant principal: _____

Public school principal: _____

Charter school principal: _____

Other positions: (title and years in position): _____

Hours you currently work in a typical week: _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Time of Interview: Interviewee:

Date: Years in current position:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I am Karlene Crawford, an Ed.D. Candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at Gardner Webb University. I am conducting research on Charter and Traditional School Principal Views on Administration Work and Its Effects on Principal Retention.

Introductory Comments to School Leaders

The purpose of the interview session is to understand your role and responsibilities, preparation, and quality of life as a charter or traditional public school principal. I am going to ask about your work and would like for you to specifically think about your beliefs and experiences as a school leader when you are answering the questions. With your permission, I will be recording your responses for analysis. Your interview will be confidential as individual names and contacts will be kept secured. Are there any questions about the interview process prior to starting?

Experience/Roles and Responsibilities

1. Why did you become a principal?

2. What does a typical day look like for you?

3. What tasks do charter/traditional public school principals spend time on?

4. How would you prefer to spend your time?

5. What are some of the successes or accomplishments you are most proud of?

6. What are some of the challenges that you face?

Principal Preparation

7. Describe how your career led to a school leadership position.

8. How did your university educational leadership program prepare you for your position as a principal?

9. What professional development opportunities did you participate in that improved your leadership skills after being hired as a principal?

10. How does your school district or Charter Management Organization (CMO) support you as a school principal?

11. How does the school district or CMO support ongoing professional growth?

Principal Retention/Turnover

12. What is your general feeling about the role of accountability in education? Can you give me an example of how you see accountability impacting your work in a positive or negative way?

13. What factors influence you to stay, leave, or contemplate leaving the profession or your current position?

14. Are there any personal factors that play a role?

15. To what extent has principal retention been a problem in your district/organization?

16. What are the circumstances that would exemplify the reasons for principal turnover in your district/organization?

17. What factors contribute to the school districts/CMOs ability to attract and retain principals?

18. What strategies can school districts or CMOs implement in order to retain principals?

19. What processes are currently in place that you would recommend keeping to retain principals?