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# Program Evaluation: The Effects of a District-Led Leadership Preparation Program on Aspiring School Leaders

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Program Evaluation: The Effects of a District-Led  
Leadership Preparation Program on Aspiring School Leaders

By  
Tammra Bethune Reel

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

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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Tammra Bethune Reel 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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## Abstract

Program Evaluation: The Effects of a District-Led Leadership Preparation Program on Aspiring School Leaders. Tammra Bethune Reel, 2009: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Leadership Preparation/School Administration/Educational Leadership/Administrative Roles

The researcher of the dissertation evaluated a district-led school leadership preparation program using Stufflebeam's (2003) Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model for program evaluation. The study had a management-oriented approach to program evaluation because it will enable effective decision making regarding the program's design. In addition, the program evaluation took a formative approach as program characteristics were analyzed and collaboration with program participants occurred in order to determine which aspects of the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) were most beneficial to those directly involved.

Data for the study were obtained through the processes of a researcher-created participant survey and personal interviews with program designers. Results of the study are displayed in narrative form, tables, descriptive statistics, frequency tables, and bar charts. Results of the study include how the need for the Administrative Mentoring Program was determined, how the design of the program aligned with intended objectives, strengths and weaknesses of the program, and recommendations for program enhancement based on participant perceptions.

Based on data collected from personal interviews and survey respondents, it was determined that certain enhancements need to be made to the Administrative Mentoring Program in order to more effectively meet the leadership needs of its participants. Five recommendations were made after analysis of the data collected during the study. Upon conclusion of the study, it is suggested that AMP designers enhance and continue to offer the district-led leadership preparation program for the county's aspiring school leaders.

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To God for giving me the ability to learn, to write, and to prosper. YOU raise me up!

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I dedicate this endeavor to all of you with all of my love.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Nature of Problem

### *Introduction*

Effective school leadership is the common thread that weaves throughout successful schools in the United States. School administrators serve daily as role models, conflict-resolution managers, nurturers and disciplinarians of children, counselors for and supporters of faculty members, instructional leaders, and expert decision makers. In addition, schoolhouse executives are analyzers of data for strategic planning, front-line soldiers, sustainers of school vision and culture, community and family advocates, allocators of resources, and master's of pedagogy, all the while being held accountable for every action taken. Barnett (2004) suggested that leaders are not born with all of the characteristics necessary to perform the job, rather adequate and effective training should occur to prepare and equip those aspiring to lead with what it takes to be high-quality, successful school administrators (p. 121).

### *Statement of the Problem*

Barnett (2004) asked the question, "Are today's administrators prepared to be the instructional leaders that are required to bring about improved student achievement?" (p. 122). While highlighting aspects of school management and organization, university-based

leadership preparation programs offer academic credits and degrees as opposed to analyzing leadership abilities (Mazzeo, 2003). University preparation programs for school leaders, according to Andrews and Grogan (2002), prepare those entering the field of school administration for top-down management by addressing aspects of leadership such as planning, budgeting, supervising, and organizing. Barnett (2004) reiterated this claim by stating that leadership programs at the university level spend a considerable amount of time perfecting management skills of participants and fail to provide meaningful school-based experiences which articulate leadership skills. Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) added that interviews conducted with participants of university-based leadership programs showed that aspiring leaders acquire a significant amount of effective leadership knowledge and skills due to their own beliefs and wants. Mazzeo (2003) communicated that the most effective university-based leadership programs provide very little training resulting in administrator success.

A study conducted in 2005 by two Harvard students involved surveying 56 university programs in educational leadership throughout the United States in order to determine their effectiveness in preparing school leaders (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Hess and Kelly concluded from the

study that in the university setting, much more emphasis is placed on technical knowledge (law, finance, and facilities) while less emphasis is given to accountability, culture, instruction, values, and personnel.

In 2005, North Carolina's State Board of Education responded to the need for more effective school leadership preparation by chartering an *ad hoc* committee to generate new ways of preparing school leaders. Goals of the committee included dissecting leadership standards such as recruitment, preparation, retention, evaluation, and continuing professional development. From 2005 to 2006, committee members reviewed current leadership standards, created new leadership standards, and offered a report of their findings through an executive summary entitled *School Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* which will be discussed in greater length throughout the dissertation (North Carolina Ad Hoc Committee on School Administration, 2006).

#### *Purpose of Study*

Sarason (1996) recognized that teaching in a classroom does not effectively prepare a teacher for entering the role of school administrator. He also commented that even though conversations may take place between school administrators and those teachers, knowledge of what it takes to enter the role of leadership is minimal for

teachers aspiring to become school leaders.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining optimal knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education. The intent of the study was to make a scholarly contribution to the field of school leadership preparation.

Browne-Ferrigno (2001) interpreted that leadership preparation programs were successful based upon a) each participant's level of participation, b) components of the program which heightened leadership senses, c) the presence and involvement of central office administrators, current school administrators, and topical speakers, d) each participant's experience within the realm of education, and e) the amount of socialization involved during the program. The existing leadership preparation program has been evaluated to determine to what extent each of these program characteristics is being met.

#### *Setting of Study*

The study took place in a small county located in western North Carolina, in which four high schools, four middle schools, two intermediate schools, 16 elementary schools, one alternative school, and one special purpose

school existed. Employed in the 28 schools were approximately 28 principals and 44 assistant principals.

#### *Participants of Study*

The population of the study consisted of individuals employed as teachers and working towards school administration degrees. According to an interview conducted with a district-level administrator directly involved with the leadership program, 2006-2007 participants were invited to take part in the program based on their progress in completing their administrative degrees (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

#### *Research Questions of Study*

The research attributing to the effects of leadership preparation programs led to the following research questions:

1. Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants?
2. How did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program?

### *Overview of Study Design and Procedures*

Using a program evaluation method, quality program standards have been outlined, pertinent data gathered, and those standards applied in an effort to ascertain program worth, effectiveness, and rationale (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The results of the study were shared with district-level administrators, school administrators, and program participants. Therefore, the study took a management-oriented evaluation approach which allowed stakeholders involved in the development of the leadership preparation program to more effectively serve its participants based on evaluative data and research. Prior to beginning research for the study, approval was given by the county's superintendent for the responsive program evaluation through a letter of consent (Appendix A). AMP participants were sent introductory letters, Appendix A, which explained the research and methods of data collection for the study.

In 1967, Scriven defined formative and summative approaches to program evaluation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Fitzpatrick et al. compared the two approaches when they stated that formative evaluations are utilized when a direct impact on program improvement wants to be made by the evaluator. In contrast, summative evaluations focus the

evaluator on providing information which will direct the appropriate persons concerned with program continuation. The study assumed the formative evaluation approach as the program evaluator analyzed program characteristics and collaborated with participants to determine which aspects of the program were most beneficial to those directly involved.

In order to answer the research questions of the study, a district-led school leadership preparation program was evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized enabling the study to take a mixed methods approach to determine the effects of a district-led school leadership preparation program. Quantitative data were gathered, recorded, analyzed, and reported using a researcher-created and validated survey. Qualitative data were collected, documented, examined, and communicated through use and results of the survey completed by program participants and personal interviews between researcher and the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) program designers.

A management-oriented approach to program evaluation was utilized in the study concentrating on Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP evaluation model. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (2004), Stufflebeam incorporated four decisions in his

evaluative framework analyzing program design (context evaluation), structuring (input evaluation), implementation (process evaluation), and revision (product evaluation). It was through the process of context evaluation that the program evaluator identified the needs that were being addressed and if there existed similar programs. The program evaluator determined available resources and how those resources affected the program's design through the process of input evaluation. Process evaluation allowed for the evaluator to analyze the program to determine if was being implemented as planned and what changes, if any, were necessary to improve its effectiveness. Completing the program evaluation process, with product evaluation, allowed the evaluator to analyze program results as they related to participants' needs and made recommendations for the future of the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004).

#### *Definition of Research Terms*

*School Administrator* (also known as school principal or school leader). The head of an elementary, middle, or high school who has been appointed by the local school board. Generally, a school administrator is responsible for making executive decisions which govern the school (Elementary and secondary education, 2008).

*School District*. A corporate and political entity

usually associated with a city or county having like powers, such as taxation. Within each district a school board is elected by citizens whose primary tasks are to hire and fire superintendents and develop educational policy (Elementary and secondary education, 2008).

*School Culture.* The educational values deemed important by a school's stakeholders (Rooney, 2005).

*No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). The United States federal act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) signed on January 8, 2002. A number of federal mandates preclude this act which was endorsed in an effort to enhance the performance of primary and secondary schools in the United States. The primary goal is to raise state, school district, and individual school accountability standards (U.S. Department of Public Instruction, 1980).

*Title I.* The United States Department of Education created the program as an aid for schools and school districts which serve a large percentage of students from lower-income households, typically 40% or greater (Elementary and secondary education, 2008).

*Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC). Beginning as an initiative in 1994, this program of the Council of Chief State School officers, has been serving as a guideline for the preparation of school

leaders in the United States. Twenty-four state education agencies collaborated and gathered research in order to develop the 10 standards which incorporate knowledge, dispositions, and performances that align leadership more effectively to schools and desired outcomes (North Carolina Standards Board for Public School Administration, 1992).

*Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP Evaluation Model.* A conceptual model of evaluation which addressed the four components of content, input, process, and product of a program.

*Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey.* A data-gathering tool designed by the researcher intended for validation with a similar county's program and completion by the 2006-2007 Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) participants.

*Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP).* Created, designed, and implemented in 2006, this district-led school leadership preparation program became the primary means of preparing a county's aspiring leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership.

### *Summary*

Fullan (1997) stated that, "Despite all the attention on the principal's leadership role we appear to be losing ground, if we take as our measure of progress the declining

presence of increasingly large numbers of highly effective, satisfied principals" (p. 1). If designed and implemented based on current research, leadership preparation programs have the possibility of preparing high-quality school leaders who are effective in directing children towards high levels of achievement. In the past, the job of preparing aspiring school administrators has been left to universities. Currently, university-based leadership preparation programs have come under scrutiny as being analyzed for not providing adequate instruction to prepare future school leaders and do not appear to find redesign of programs a priority.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining optimal knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education.

## Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

### *Introduction*

According to Wong (2004), the readiness and development of school leaders has been a topic of interest globally since the late 1900s. A survey among administrators in a school district in southwest Germany concluded that administrators felt they lacked adequate training for situations involving group leadership, balancing conferences, implementing projects successfully, and resolving conflict (Huber & Kiegelmann, 2002). The role of a school leader has been altered by extreme changes in economics, demographics, technological advances, global entities, and the United States' universal relationships (Levine, 2005).

### *National Significance*

Levine (2005) stressed that the United States has a significant challenge in preparing school leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While in the era of national accountability with No Child Left Behind mandates, using state assessments and balancing accountability systems are key components of school administration (Hess & Kelly, 2005). "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has led policymakers and their constituents to reexamine the concept of school-leader quality and its contribution to raising student

achievement" (Bingham & Gottfried, p. 9). In the United States, 73% of superintendents hold strong beliefs that school administrators are to be held accountable for student learning while only 45% of school principals concur (Hess & Kelly). United States federal law, No Child Left Behind, mandated that those lower-performing school districts create goals and objectives addressing school leadership preparation needs using at least 10% of Title I funds to enhance development opportunities (Mazzeo, 2003).

Mazzeo (2003) reported that a projected outlook of a national diminishing supply of school administrators revealed that 20% of administrators left the field between 2003 and 2008, not to mention the growing number of school leader retirees. In the past several years, various states across the United States, such as Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York, have begun the creation and implementation of programs in an effort to recruit and prepare more effective school administrators (Mazzeo).

In 1988, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) instituted a set of Goals for Education which invited particular southern states to become national leaders in educational progress (SREB, 2006). Included is goal nine which specified that "every school has leadership that results in improved student performance - and leadership

begins with an effective school principal" (SREB). Members of the SREB addressed the notion that university-based leadership preparation programs were ineffective. Information about these programs was derived through a study in which questions were asked of 22 universities. SREB inquired about the design and implementation process for leadership programs, to what extent real-world applications were utilized during instruction, whether or not field-based experiences occurred throughout the program, and what methods of evaluation were utilized to ensure participant success (SREB). Of the 22 universities studied, only seven made noticeable progress in redesigning programs to assist aspiring leaders with the leadership knowledge and skills needed to effectively impact curriculum and instruction.

In 2005, American Enterprise Institute researchers conducted a study of 31 university-based leadership preparation programs throughout the United States and concluded that little is being done to prepare future school administrators for 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership. Practicing administrators interviewed in the study reported that little instruction was received in research and data, personnel matters, curriculum and instruction, pedagogy, and technology while the majority of university training

was focused on law, organizational management, and finance (SREB, 2006).

In 2005, Arthur Levine published an analysis of the quality of educational leadership preparation programs at the university level. His study of leadership preparation programs involved analyzing the programs based on nine characteristics: purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, admissions, degrees, research, finances, and assessment. Upon conclusion of the study, it was determined that educational leadership programs in the study were most ineffective compared to all education school programs in the United States (Levine, 2005).

#### *State and Local Significance*

SREB (2006) reported that present state policies outlining the redesign of school leadership preparation programs have intended to initiate change; however, small changes in university programs are not meeting the needs of future school administrators. Redesigning university leadership programs should be based on school needs and student achievement, producing effective school leaders at the state and district levels (SREB). In 2003, 48 states in the United States held that trained school administrators had to acquire a license, be certified, and in most cases,

have served as a teacher for at least 3 years prior to serving as a school leader (Mazzeo, 2003).

In order to begin the longitudinal process of improving the effectiveness of today's school leaders, states and districts must identify regulations and policies and continuously revise such to meet the current needs of schools (Mazzeo, 2003). SREB (2006) recommended that state agencies analyze ways of working with universities to ensure the alignment of university-based leadership preparation programs with state policies. In addition, it was suggested by SREB that school districts take a proactive stance in identifying needs for future school administrators. SREB (2005) reported that also available in North Carolina is the Principals' Executive Program (PEP) which advocated identifying teachers employed in the state exhibiting leadership characteristics and encouraged them to pursue a career in school administration.

North Carolina is currently 1 of 27 states in the United States which assesses leadership standards by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, ISLLC. The standards encompass the managerial, political, and educational duties of school administrators (Mazzeo, 2003). These nine ISLLC standards, vision; learning; climate; professional ethics; collaboration and environment; school

operations; human relationships; development of self and others; information management; and continuous improvement, became guidelines for North Carolina universities' school leadership preparation programs in 1992.

The North Carolina State Board of Education added in-depth standards for school leaders on December 7, 2006. The standards evolved around the mission of North Carolina's State Board of Education to prepare all students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and suggested "A New Vision of School Leadership" (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006). The intended purpose of the school executive standards was to serve as a reflection tool for school administrators as they strive for personal development as leaders of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. In alignment with the particular study of a district-led aspiring leadership preparation program, other noted purposes of the executive standards were to

inform higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of school executive degree programs; focus the goals and objectives of districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate their school executives; guide professional development for school executives; and serve as a tool in developing coaching and mentoring programs for school executives. (North

Carolina State Board of Education, p. 2)

Outlined within the publication were seven standards for school leadership and the interrelation and connectivity of all. In the 2006 publication, North Carolina Board of Education members recognized the need for redefining qualifications for and characteristics of effective school leaders. The theoretical framework surrounding the new school executive standards (2006) as determined by the North Carolina State Board of Education was to employ proactive school administrators who demonstrate

1. the need for urgency,
2. the ability to convert schools for unremitting improvement,
3. the necessity to ensure learning for all,
4. the common belief in the importance of inspiring leaders in all staff roles within the school while recognizing and reflecting on the leader within themselves,
5. the ability to collaborate with, support, and empower people,
6. the knowledge of how to effectively generate processes and systems which will trigger the school to operate efficiently as a whole,
7. the necessity of employing a strong

administrative team who works harmoniously promoting quality in all seven standards,

8. the ability to work collaboratively with each level of the educational system in order to align systems and goals, and

9. the effectiveness of working toward a common vision while motivating and challenging staff members.

SREB employees, in 2005, created the SREB University Leadership Network which was designed to evaluate school leadership preparation programs to determine if the program goals were aligned with state accountability systems. The network outlined leadership program contingencies such as what aspiring leaders should be learning, methods for how the information is to be presented, program components based on the needs of the participants, and supporting school districts in recognizing and training potential high-quality school leaders (SREB, 2005).

Many school districts have articulated non-traditional opportunities to train aspiring school administrators based on district goals and objectives according to Lashway (2003). Mazzeo (2003) contended that since the majority of leadership recruitment and preparation takes place at the district level, each district must create and incorporate crucial interventions to aid in the development of school

administrators.

### *Brief History*

Analyzing the evolution of the many roles of school principals allows the development of a baseline for leadership program design aimed at preparing administrators for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges (Andrews & Grogan, 2001).

Andrews and Grogan provided the following timeline of school administrator conceptions.

The 1920s administrative role was primarily centered on a values-based philosophy of pedagogy which established connections between school and family. A focus on the scientific management of schools occurred during the 1930s. During the 1940s and early 1950s, the impact of World War II influenced schools to take a patriotic approach to educating students emphasizing democracy. The 1950s and 1960s brought about an era of pursuit of academic excellence concentrating on math and science with an administrative focus on management and classroom instruction. Society began to experience social problems in the 1970s such as racial discrimination, drug use, and youth pregnancy which guided school administrators to create and provide interventions in response to student needs. Economic competition in the 1980s instigated the publication of A Nation at Risk report which outlined the

need for academic excellence and workforce preparation among students. Throughout the 1990s and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, school administrator convergence placed the emphasis on high stakes accountability at both state and national levels with an accent on instructional leadership.

#### *Current Issues*

Bingham and Gottfried (2003) cited two issues surrounding the need for more highly-qualified administrators: the growing number of retiring or resigning principals and the tedious work of administration.

*Retiring or resigning school principals.* Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) stated,

in the hot-seat environment brought about by high stakes accountability programs, school systems are having increased difficulty recruiting new leaders to take the places of retiring administrators. But the real problem is that our recruitment, preparation and professional development programs for school leaders are out of sync with our scaled-up expectations. (p. 8)

The concern of administrator retirement is confirmed with the following report:

In North Carolina, the Department of Public Instruction recently reported that nearly half (45

percent) of the individuals with valid North Carolina principal licenses who were, but are not currently, employed in the public school within the last five years are 55 years or older. Another 19 percent are between 50 and 54 years of age. (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2002, p. 3)

The *ad hoc* committee on school administration in North Carolina validated the concept of the growing need for effective school administrators with concern of retiring administrators being supplanted by younger, novice school leaders. The concern is prevalent in a time when school administrators are required by North Carolina to perform vigorously at higher levels ensuring student achievement (North Carolina Ad Hoc Committee on School Administration, 2006).

*Tedious work of school administration.* During the 1920s, the concept of the conventional American school principal came after the creation of the Department of Elementary School Principals and the Department of Secondary School Principals within the National Education Association (NEA) (Andrews & Grogan, 2001). Just three years later, the Policy Forum on Educational Leadership stated that 25% of current school leaders were prepared to be adequate instructional leaders based upon the

"conventional American school principal" concept as defined by the NEA in 2001 (Barnett, 2004, p. 2). Similarly, Mazzeo (2003) stated that results from a 2001 Public Agenda report indicated 29% of current school principals were ineffective leaders.

Browne-Ferrigno (2002) commented, "Novice principals often report difficulty in balancing technical and managerial tasks while also performing as visionary leaders who meet the expectations of superintendents and school board members" (p. 5). The problem lies, reported Lashway (2003), in that new school administrators undergo an extreme amount of stress as they make the transition from university education to real-world practices. As seen often in school administrator survey results, seasoned principals communicate that leadership roles leave them feeling debilitated and burdened (Lashway).

#### *Studies Involving District-Led Leadership Preparation Programs*

In 2001, Browne-Ferrigno, implemented and studied the effects of a district-led leadership preparation program as it is related to readiness of participants to enter the field of administration (p. 5). It was determined from the study that (a) there was a direct link between learner participation and career goals, (b) leadership potential was developed through collaboration with mentors and

community members, (c) the length of time that a teacher has spent in the classroom has an impact on how the individual views the roles and responsibilities of an administrator, and (d) learning in groups allows for socialization and collegiality (Browne-Ferrigno, p. 37). Evans and Mohr (1999) validated the research through another successful leadership training program during which the participants connected with other administrators and community members and engaged in dialogue and collaborative learning.

A partnership formed between the Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island in 2001 sparked the idea of creating a leadership preparation program for aspiring school leaders based upon the district's goals and objectives (Southern Regional Education Board, 2002). The program, entitled the Providence Aspiring Principals Program (APP), was designed in an effort to enable its participants the experience to stray from the traditional university leadership preparation concept that the Southern Regional Education Board representatives coined as a "one-size-fits-all training program" (SREB, p. 2). The authors for SREB also contended that a university leadership program minimizes at best the authentic, high-quality, school-based experiences

that come with district-level input and engagement.

A priority of APP designers was to ensure implementation of authentic experiences faced by school leaders during which leadership competencies could be strengthened (SREB, 2002, p. 7). The participants of APP consisted of high-quality teachers who have excelled in the profession and shown an interest in school leadership. The APP program was designed to consist of 18 months of intense leadership training covering topics such as curriculum and instruction, accountability issues, and organizational management. In addition to topical sessions, each aspiring leader was assigned a seasoned principal mentor for consultation and guidance (SREB, p. 16). Upon conclusion of the program, aspirants reported having an increased level of self-confidence, a heightened sense of leadership knowledge and potential, and an enlarged network of colleagues. Providence superintendent, Dr. Melody Johnson, stated, "In no other profession is the quality of its leaders more significant, the demands on its leaders more urgent, the decisions of its leaders more critical to the growth of so many young minds and so much great potential" (SREB, p. 3).

Bingham and Gottfried (2003) studied leadership preparation programs and assisted with the implementation

of a county-wide leadership development program during which practicing administrators and administrator aspirants were introduced to and discussed a variety of topics. These topics, referred to as technical knowledge, included basic school management issues such as personnel, finance, transportation, safety, legal issues, and school nutrition (Bingham & Gottfried, p. 23).

### *Summary*

Research from across the globe indicates that the effective development of school leaders has significant meaning to educators across the United States as strides are made to ensure success for all students. School districts in the United States have recognized the importance of implementing programs which provided aspiring school administrators increased leadership skills and knowledge in addition to university preparation programs.

Evaluating the effects of a leadership preparation program implemented within a school district will determine if the county's aspiring leaders are becoming more knowledgeable of what educational researchers say it takes to be an effective leader. Being faced with an overwhelming quantity of retiring or resigning school leaders and the current challenging role of administrators, educators across the United States will be more knowledgeable of how

to develop aspiring school leaders upon completion of the research.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### *Introduction and Restatement of Purpose*

A district-led leadership preparation program for aspiring administrators was created and implemented in 2006 by a county nestled in the foothills of western North Carolina. At the time of the study, the school system had approximately 17,600 students making it the 23rd largest district in the state. Student attendance spanned 28 different schools including 16 elementary, two intermediate, four middle and four high schools, a school for special needs students, and an alternative school.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining optimal knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education. Information regarding data collection methods and procedures was presented in the chapter.

### *Justification of Study*

According to personal interviews, two central office leaders (the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Personnel Development) determined the need for a leadership preparation program after receiving a state report on the administrative

shortage. Analyzing the current ages of the county's principals and assistant principals was the next logical step in taking action at the Local Education Agency (LEA) level to proactively address the administrative shortage. Results indicated that approximately 65% of school administrators would retire from the county within the next 5 years, based on ages and years of educational experience.

The Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) began for the first year in 2006-2007 and is being held every other school year for aspiring school leaders within the county. Currently, no other program exists within this county which addresses the leadership preparation of aspiring school administrators.

#### *Demographics of Study*

Participants of the 2006-2007 Administrative Mentoring Program were selected by the following criteria a) those already having received a school administrative license (37 teachers within the school system), or b) those completing a master's program and receiving an administrative license no later than August 2007 (25 of 46 teachers enrolled at the time of the study). There were 30 participants voluntarily admitted into the AMP; however, 21 attended every scheduled session (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

A typical session in the district-led leadership preparation program included a topical speaker on subjects including, but not limited to, finance, public relations, parent conferences, safe schools, hiring and supporting teachers, monitoring and evaluating test data, interview skills, and legal issues. Topics for the leadership preparation program were determined by assessing why current school administrators are leaving the field, personal experiences of the program creators, and the practicality of administrative issues. In addition, the participants were surveyed about administrative topics of interest (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

#### *Research Questions*

The research attributing to the effects of leadership preparation programs led to the following research questions:

1. Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants?
2. How did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the

district-led leadership preparation program?

*Timeline of Study*

The following was the timeline for the evaluation of the district-led school leadership preparation program.

Table 1

*Timeline of Research Activities*

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Date	Activity
June 2008- November 2008	Interviewed district leaders to acquire information on the need for the AMP, demographics of the program, and program components. Researched related public documents at the federal, state, and local levels. Communicated with district leaders the intent of the program evaluation. Data were gathered from other school districts implementing similar leadership preparation programs. Program evaluation data were collected and disaggregated. A survey was developed to address research questions.
December 2008- June 2009	Validated survey with a county of similar leadership preparation program demographics. Interviewed AMP designers. Continued conducting research. Administered survey to AMP participants. Program evaluation data documented for reporting purposes.
August 2009	Results of study shared with university constituents, district and school leaders, and the broad population of school educators.

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*Type of Study and Methodology Used*

As internal evaluator of the study, formative program evaluation roles were incorporated which will enable the program's designers to make adjustments, if desired, based on data collected from research. The program evaluation method used in the study was Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP model.

In the 1960s, Stufflebeam and his associates developed the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model of program evaluation to be used in the analysis of several educational programs in the Ohio Public Schools District (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP program evaluation model was used to analyze the Administrative Mentoring Program because it allowed for an organized framework which was beneficial to the continuity of the program. Developers of the leadership preparation program were presented with descriptive data which enabled effective decision making regarding the program's design; thus, the study took a management-oriented approach to program evaluation. Based on the research, designers of district-led school leadership preparation programs will be able to plan and implement the program more effectively by having received feedback and recommendations for program enhancement.

*Context evaluation.* In order for any program to be effective, a program designer must determine the need for such a program by means of a needs analysis, which allows for outlining goals, priorities, and objectives. The context evaluation aspect of program evaluation addresses any planning decisions by forcing the program designer to ask, "What should we do?" Attempts were made to answer the first research question: Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants? In order to answer the question, the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) designers were interviewed. In addition, 2006-2007 AMP participants answered the survey question, which is the best approach to school leadership training? The survey answer choices were 4-year undergraduate degree in education, a master's in school administration, a master's in school administration and participation in a district-led leadership preparation program, advanced educational degree, or other.

*Input evaluation.* Through the use of input evaluation, it was determined how AMP creators chose to design the leadership preparation program. The research provided an answer to the question, how did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives? The question was answered

using data gathered from personal interviews of the central office administrators who created, designed, and implemented the AMP and survey results from the 2006-2007 AMP participants.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the AMP consisted of an opening dinner meeting and four sessions, each lasting 2 hours. Speakers included district employees, as well as school board members and the school attorney. Sessions occurred between November and May and were arranged by the following topics, Session One - opening dinner, introduction to key central office personnel, introduction of 2006-2007 AMP participants, introductory speech from the newly-appointed superintendent; Session Two - public relations, parent conferences, hiring and supporting teachers; Session Three - school budget and law; Session Four - monitoring and evaluating test data, interview skills; and Session Five - principal panel discussion.

Participants were involved in a literature study of *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus* by Harvey, Cottrell, and Lucia (2003). Conversations were provoked as participants were presented with a slide show outlining key elements of the book.

*Process evaluation.* The researcher determined, by the use of process evaluation, if the county's leadership

preparation program was being implemented as it was designed. The research question, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program, was answered. Personal interviews were conducted with central office administrators directly involved with the AMP's creation, design, and implementation and data received from the researcher-created, AMP participant survey.

*Product evaluation.* While determining if the leadership preparation program was beneficial to its participants, all research questions were addressed to determine the program's outcome and related effectiveness. The product evaluation was accomplished using results from interviews with central office AMP designers and results from the 2006-2007 AMP participant survey.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected, coded, and communicated using personal interviews with the AMP creators and an AMP participant survey. Data have been displayed in charts and tables indicating frequency of themes evidenced within interviews and survey results.

For both qualitative and quantitative research, six comprehensive steps are involved: clearly defining the research topic, reviewing the related literature,

determining demographics, collecting pertinent data, analyzing the collected data, and accurately reporting the results. The six components of qualitative and quantitative research were attained through the use of personal interviews and a survey. Gathering and utilizing qualitative and quantitative data enabled the study to take a mixed methods approach to research.

*Personal interviews.* Qualitative data were gathered by interviewing the AMP designers. Recommendations, based on interview responses, were made regarding the need for the AMP, the program's design, and what enhancements should be made to ensure the effectiveness of the program's continuation. The formal-structured interviews, based upon a set of predetermined questions, occurred between researcher and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Personnel Development. The interview questions consisted of both convergent, or closed responses and divergent, or open-ended responses.

The interviews occurred face-to-face with the intent of researching significant educational issues and seeking to comprehend the program designers' perceptions of the county's need for a school leadership preparation program for aspiring principals. Personal interviews with the AMP designers enabled the researcher to establish a rapport

with key program constituents, as well as become more informed of the leadership preparation program by listening to designer thoughts and processes regarding AMP. An interview script, Appendix B, was used to facilitate the interviews and included, but was not limited to, the identified need for the leadership program, program logistics, program demographics, goals and objectives of the program, and future plans for the Administrative Mentoring Program.

Descriptions of the leadership preparation program given by the AMP designers were recorded and transcribed in order to gather all significant details. Comparisons were made among interview responses allowing for an adequate description of the program's objectives and design.

*Survey.* A researcher-created survey, Appendix C, was administered to the 2006-2007 AMP participants because surveys are cost-effective and result in uncomplicated analysis. A survey allowed for the collection of data from pertinent subgroups and was used in the study to analyze perceptions of the program participants (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). The survey, intended for district-led leadership preparation program participants, produced qualitative and quantitative data. By completing this survey, AMP participants reflected on components of the

program most effectively addressing their leadership needs and identifying strengths and weaknesses of the program. Items were constructed to indicate personal demographics, educational experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the 2006-2007 AMP participants.

The Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey was validated with a similar demographical school district-led leadership preparation program. It was designed to evaluate a county's district-led leadership preparation program for aspiring school administrators. Assessing the effectiveness of a program in order to enhance its improvement and/or redesign was the objective.

The first set of questions in the survey pertained to participants' years in education, current educational roles, perspectives on receiving leadership training, educational degree completion, and opinions of program strengths and weaknesses. Examining the perspectives of leadership preparation program participants, as well as personal experiences, has given the researcher unique qualitative data which appears in narrative form.

Four of the questions presented answers in a choice, or structured-item format. Each of the choices was coded numerically for easier recording and processing. One of the questions appeared in open-response, or unstructured item

format allowing the survey participant to share thoughts freely. Coding for the question was based on educational themes elicited from participants and obvious patterns in responses. The second set of questions asked the participants to respond using a Likert scale about leadership knowledge gained through the leadership preparation program based on perceptions and individual experiences.

Survey questions were compiled from a variety of sources. The writer/researcher constructed the Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey using concepts and educational standards from the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (2007), Market Fact's (2003) Schools of Education Research Project Survey of Principals, and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (1996).

*Survey validation.* The Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey for aspiring school administrators was validated with 20 individuals who attended a similar district-led leadership program. The survey was designed to take approximately 10 to 15 minutes for completion. The selected field test group of individuals shared similar demographics and neighbor the county of study.

The county's program organizer assisted in the survey

validation. The survey was emailed to the program organizer for review and clarification. The organizer then copied, distributed, clarified items, collected, and returned validation surveys.

Completed surveys were evaluated to ensure that research questions were being answered. Validating the field test enabled the researcher to successfully administer the Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey to the 2006-2007 AMP participants.

Using Cronbach's alpha, the researcher determined the reliability of the survey. Validation of the survey served as a predictor component measuring reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a numerical coefficient of consistency which proves that a collection of items would elicit similar responses over duplicate survey administrations.

#### *Limitations and Delimitations*

Limitations are those characteristics of design or methods of research, as defined by the researcher that set boundaries on study results. In contrast, delimitations are factors of the study that limit the expanse of inquiry and cannot be controlled by the researcher.

*Limitations of study.* Response or measurement errors from the Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey could have resulted from 2006-2007 AMP participants being

poorly instructed on survey completion or unwillingness of a portion of participants to complete the survey.

Coding or recording errors may occur when transcribing data from a survey. The researcher's objective was to minimize this type of error through the validation process of gathering and recording survey data.

Surveys often limit participant responses, thus the creator developed the survey to contain a multitude of question and answer variety. Questions ranged from Likert scale responses to open-ended replies.

*Delimitations of study.* There are several factors within the study which may have affected its external validity:

1. The research was limited to a single school district and the creation of a district-led school administration preparation program for aspiring school leaders. Generalizations may fall short of assisting other school districts in the development of similar programs based on individual school district needs.

2. Program participants, in 2006-2007, were to have completed a predetermined amount of university-based leadership coursework prior to being accepted. The requirement of completed work was determined by program designers.

3. In addition, AMP designers have determined it more beneficial to offer the program every other year. The decision was based on the number of qualifying participants within the school system. Survey results are based solely on 2006-2007 AMP participation.

4. During the course of the study, one of the key central office personnel responsible for the creation and implementation of AMP, changed employers. The personal interview with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction did occur prior to his leaving the county.

#### *Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures*

Personal interviews were conducted with the central office staff directly involved with the creation and design of the AMP leadership preparation program. Interviews transpired within each designer's designated office and were recorded with granted permission from each program designer. The central office program designers have been identified by the position they hold (the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Personnel Development) as opposed to individual names.

Data collected from participant surveys were recorded and tabulated using the SPSS statistical program. Composite results consist of descriptive statistics in the form of

medians and means. A total sample size and survey return rate of 60% or greater has been determined. Visual representations of data gathered from the AMP participant surveys appear in the form of frequency tables and bar charts.

Simple data codes exist for initial survey questions with choice responses and appear as follows:

Question: Educational Roles

- 1 = Teacher
- 2 = Central Office Staff
- 3 = Assistant Principal
- 4 = Principal

Complex data codes have been entered for those participant responses to ordered categories, for example:

Question: Years in Education

- 1 = 0-3 years
- 2 = 4-9 years
- 3 = 10+ years

Likert scales are often used by researchers and statisticians to quantify the responses given to a certain variable. The survey questions which present Likert scale responses "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*," were used to gain significant data based on leadership preparation program participant perceptions. The Likert

scale for the research can be viewed as follows:

Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

In addition, each survey produced descriptive data which were determined based on structured and unstructured participant responses. Once the survey was completed by 2006-2007 AMP participants, data from the open-ended questions were tallied and presented in narrative form. Bar charts have been constructed for each validation survey response requiring participants to rank a particular topic using a Likert scale.

#### *Summary*

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining optimal knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education.

While large numbers of school administrators are retiring, resigning, or leaving the field due to the tedious work of school administration, districts are in need of more innovative and nontraditional resolutions for supporting its leaders. Through the utilization of Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP program evaluation model, the AMP

was analyzed allowing for an organized framework which was beneficial to continuity of the program. By focusing on the CIPP model's four evaluation components (context, input, process, and product), the relationship between the AMP's core values and focuses became evident. The exploratory study was strengthened by the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods, allowing for the development of a more enhanced infrastructure surrounding and supporting educational administrators. It is anticipated that a well-designed, district-led leadership program would better empower its participants to become effective school administrators by increasing the necessary skills and knowledge needed to prepare aspiring school leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century school administration.

## Chapter 4: Study Results

### *Introduction*

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education. The research attributing to the effects of leadership preparation programs led to the following research questions:

1. Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants?

2. How did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives?

3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program?

In order to answer the research questions of the study, a district-led school leadership preparation program was evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized enabling the study to take a mixed methods approach to determine the effects of a district-led school leadership preparation program.

*Data Collection Methods*

1. Researcher-created survey for AMP participants.
2. Personal interviews conducted between researcher and AMP designers.

Quantitative data were gathered, recorded, analyzed, and reported using a researcher-created and validated survey. Qualitative data were collected, documented, examined, and communicated through use and results of the survey completed by program participants and personal interviews between researcher and the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) designers.

Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP program evaluation model was used to analyze the AMP because it allowed for an organized framework which was beneficial to the continuity of the program. Developers of the leadership preparation program were presented with descriptive data which enabled effective decision making regarding the program's design; thus, the study took a management-oriented approach to program evaluation. Based on the research, designers of district-led school leadership preparation programs were able to plan and implement programs more effectively by receiving feedback and recommendations for program improvement.

### *Survey Validation*

Using Cronbach's alpha, the researcher determined the reliability of the survey. Validation of the survey served as a predictor component measuring reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a numerical coefficient of consistency which proves that a collection of items would elicit similar responses over duplicate survey administrations. Upon receipt of the validation surveys, the set of statistics were computed using Cronbach's alpha. For the survey questions answered using the Likert scale, the Cronbach's alpha was .841. The Cronbach's alpha was strong, thus confirming instrument reliability.

In order to derive the answers to research questions of interest, the survey used for the study was developed by the researcher. Validation of the survey required 20 individuals, participating in a similar leadership preparation program as the one being studied, to complete the survey. The results of the survey responses received from the validation group will appear in narrative form, as well as in frequency table format in Appendix D.

Of the 20 validation survey participants, 9 have been in education 3 or fewer years, 7 have served 4 to 9 years, and 4 worked in education 10 or more years. It was asked of the participants, in what capacity are you currently

serving? Within the validation group, there were a variety of educational roles being served. Those serving in the capacity of teacher were 12, 2 were employed as central office staff, 4 served as instructional facilitators, and 2 were assistant principals. Eighteen of the validation survey participants noted that they perceived the best approach to school leadership training to be a master's in school administration and participation in a district-led leadership preparation program. One participant thought that the best approach was to receive a master's in school administration. The remaining participant noted that receiving a master's in school administration, participation in a district-led leadership preparation program, and earning an advanced educational degree were all necessary for effective school leadership training. Participants noted on surveys when most recent educational degrees or certificates were earned: Two were currently enrolled, three - less than a year ago, seven - 1 to 5 years ago, five - 6 to 10 years ago, and three - 11 to 20 years ago.

Participants were asked to list any strengths and/or weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program. Program weaknesses from the validation group were noted as "not having enough time to process,"

"communication," "so much to do and so little time," "information is overwhelming with all the updates," and "some material varies among states" (Anonymous, personal communication, January, 13, 2009). Strengths of the leadership preparation program were recognized as "the structure of the cohort," "collegial support," "preparation for NC Executive Standards," "systematic processes," "accountability," "program alignment with NC leadership objectives," "work with research-based best practices," "current information," "mentoring," "planning and execution," "focus on application skills," "consistency of training," "session differentiation," and "experience is applied toward higher degree" (Anonymous, personal communication).

All validation survey responses, based on the Likert scale, were assigned an overall strength code of strong, moderate, or weak. Based on the survey Likert scale, if a response in which 75% or more (15 or more) of the participants chose a rating of four or three, the strength code was strong. Moderate strength code responses indicated a rating of two chosen by 50% (10) of the participants. Responses which fell into the weak strength code category were rated as one by 25% or less (five or less) of the participants.

Table 2

*Overall Strength Codes for Validation Survey Responses*

Survey Responses	Overall Strength Code
Data analysis/utilization	Strong
Rigorous classroom instruction	Strong
Gifted/disabled students	Weak
Conflict resolution	Strong
School finances	Moderate
Stakeholder engagement	Weak
Hiring/supporting staff	Weak
School culture/climate	Strong

Research questions were answered effectively by use of the survey and validation of the instrument ensured reliability. Thus, no changes were made to the survey between validation group and AMP research group.

*Data Analysis of the Study**Description of Administrative Mentoring Program*

*Participants.* Participants of the 2006-2007 AMP were selected by the following criteria, a) those already having received a school administrative license (37 teachers within the school system); or b) those completing a master's program and receiving an administrative license no

later than August 2007 (25 of 46 teachers enrolled at the time of the study). There were 30 participants voluntarily admitted into the AMP; however, 21 attended every scheduled session (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

Table 3

*Administrative Mentoring Program Participants' Years Served in Education*

Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
0-3 years	2	11%
4-9 years	4	22%
10+ years	12	67%
TOTAL	18	100%

A notable fact regarding the AMP participants was that 67% have been in the educational field for 10 or more years, while 33% have served in educational roles less than 10 years. According to the information provided by participants, the majority has established an educational career and would like to advance into the realm of school administration.

Table 4

*Administrative Mentoring Program Participants' Current Educational Roles*

Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
Teacher	11	61%
Central Office Staff	1	5.5%
Assistant Principal	5	28%
Principal	1	5.5%
TOTAL	18	100%

Of the 18 survey respondents, 61% currently serve in the educational capacity of school teacher. Five of the participants are employed as assistant principals, and one works in the central office. Only one of the AMP participants currently works as a school principal and was recently hired as such.

Table 5

*Administrative Mentoring Program Participants' Perceptions on Leadership Training*

Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4-year degree	1	5.5%
Master's in school administration	3	17%
Master's in school administration and participation in a district-led leadership preparation program	13	72%
Advanced educational degree	1	5.5%
TOTAL	18	100%

The majority, 72% of AMP participants, felt that obtaining a master's degree in school administration and having participated in a district-led school leadership preparation program was the best approach to school leadership training. Seventeen percent felt that a master's program alone was the best approach to school leadership training.

Table 6

*Administrative Mentoring Program Participants' Earned Educational Degrees*

Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
Currently enrolled	2	11%
Less than 1 year	1	5%
1-5 years	10	56%
6-10 years	3	17%
11-20 years	0	0%
21+ years	2	11%
TOTAL	18	100%

Ten of the eighteen survey respondents earned their most recent educational degrees or certificates 1 to 5 years ago. A small percentage, 16%, earned degrees within the past year or were currently enrolled in a university school leadership preparation program.

*Dependent and Independent Variables*

It was determined, at the beginning of the study, that the dependent variable was the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) of a given school system. The dependent variable was the event being studied and was expected to alter when independent variables began to change, thus making it dependent on other variables. The dependent

variable, the AMP, was observed and measured to determine the effects of the independent variables, or leadership needs of the AMP participants.

#### *Presentation of Data*

Data for the study has been organized around and presented by each of the three research questions. In alignment with Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP model of program evaluation, the first research question addressed context evaluation, the second question dealt with input evaluation, the third question corresponded to the process evaluation, and all three questions related to product evaluation. The research attributing to the effects of leadership preparation programs on its participants led to the following research questions.

1. Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants?

In order for any program to be effective, a program designer must determine the need for such a program by means of a needs analysis, which allows for outlining goals, priorities, and objectives (Stufflebeam, 2003). According to Stufflebeam, the context evaluation aspect of program evaluation addresses any planning decisions by forcing the program designer to ask, "What should we do?"

According to a report distributed to school districts in North Carolina by the North Carolina Principals' and Assistant Principals' Association, the state is faced with a rapidly approaching school administrator shortage (NCPAPA, 2007). It was this report, entitled School Based Administrator Shortage that spurred the Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP), according to the interview with the Director of Personnel Development (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

The Principals' Executive Program (PEP), in 1995, studied North Carolina's rate of retiring administrators. Results indicated that 51% of North Carolina's principals were age 50 or older, 45% of assistant principals were age 50 or older, and principals having 25 or more years of experience were at 51% (NCPAPA, 2007). The report also indicated that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction determined that while approximately 19,300 educators have a school administrative license, only a little over 6,000 are employed as either school-based administrators or central office administrators. In addition, the report outlined the reason for the diminishing supply of school administrators as increased pressures due to the role of school-based administrators. Based on the school administrator shortage, it was

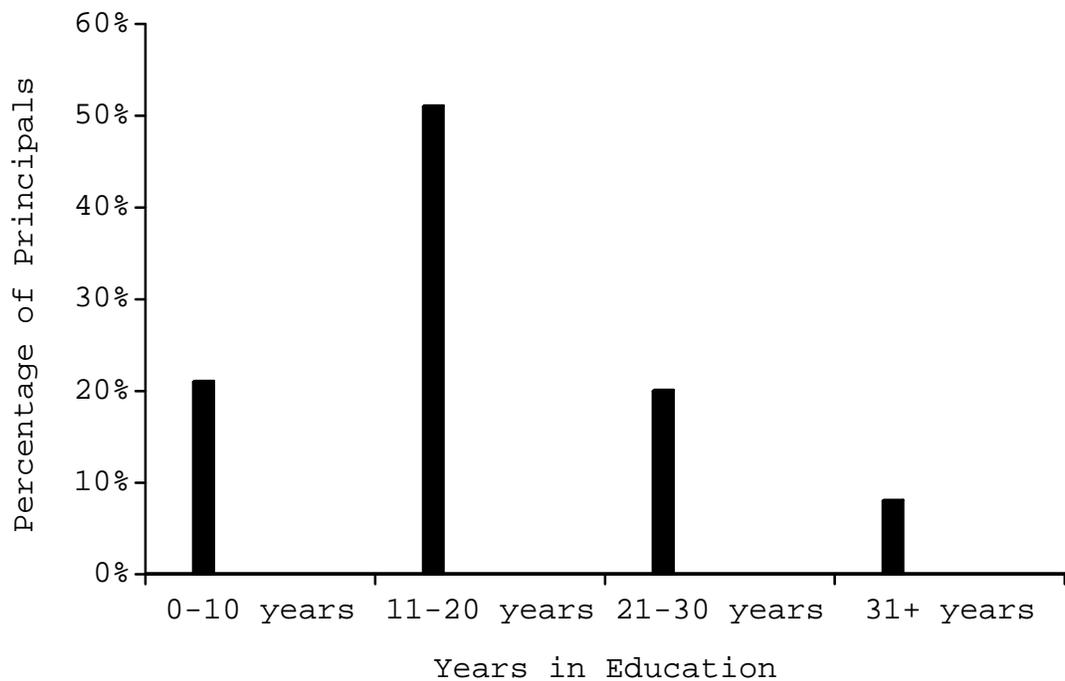
determined by the 2007 North Carolina General Assembly that some changes would be made regarding school administrator salary (NCPAPA).

It was then that the school system decided to create and implement a district-led school leadership preparation program, entitled Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP). There were 30 individuals admitted into the AMP; however, 21 participants attended every scheduled session.

During the personal interviews, the first question asked of both the county's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Personnel Development was, "How did you determine the need for a program such as the Administrative Mentoring Program?"

According to the county's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the goal was to provide those aspiring to be school administrators with additional leadership knowledge and skills. Attention was then directed to the county's human resources department, where it was determined which employees within the county were working towards being licensed administratively. A poll was taken from the list of individuals as to who would be interested in participating in a county-led leadership preparation program (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

The Director of Personnel Development stated that with the information given from the human resources department, an analysis was made of the county's administrative turnover rate and rate of retirement. At the time of the study, information regarding the county's principals' and assistant principals' years of experience was determined by the Director of Personnel Development and displayed in the following figures (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

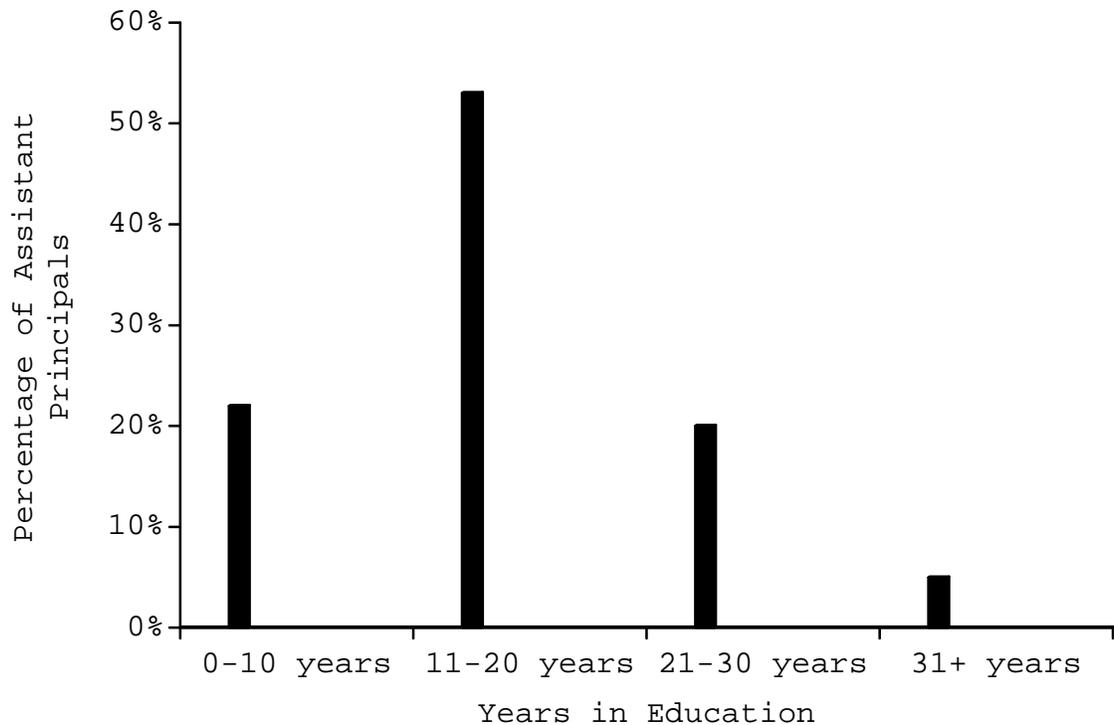


*Figure 1.* County of study's current school principals' years in education.

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Fifty-one percent of the county's current school principals were 11 to 20 years into their educational

careers, while another 28% were either nearing retirement or could retire at any time. Only 21% of the school principals were just beginning their administrative careers at 0 to 10 years.



*Figure 2.* County of study's current school assistant principals' years in education.

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The majority, 52%, of the county's assistant principals were also in the 11 to 20 year range of educational service, while 25% were approaching retirement status. The data gathered assisted in determining that an administrative shortage would occur quickly within the county (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008).

Analysis of the data revealed benefits of the

Administrative Mentoring Program participants as providing a clearer understanding of the school administration, collaboration between those aspiring to be school leaders and county administrators, and a greater sense of district policies and procedures. Knowledgeable presenters, good materials, networking, use of community resources, insight and knowledge into the school system, experiences shared by session speakers, time allowed for questioning, and a professional setting were strengths of the AMP as perceived by its participants. Strengths of the program, based on survey responses of the participants, also included the sessions addressing stakeholder engagement and school culture and climate.

2. How did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives?

Through the use of Stufflebeam's (2003) input evaluation, it was determined by what method AMP creators chose to design the leadership preparation program. The Director of Personnel Development stated the program's objective as "to work with teachers within our school system who want to go into school administration in an effort to sharpen their administrative skills and knowledge of what it is they are getting into" (Anonymous, personal

communication, June 16, 2008). According to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, the AMP was created without a specific mission statement, vision statement, or objectives; however, program objectives could be determined from the program's agendas. The program's agendas were developed by the designers based on anticipated participant leadership needs. "The program was designed to present participants with administrative issues on a practical basis as opposed to theory-based learning" (Anonymous, personal communication).

The AMP, during the 2006-2007 school year, consisted of an opening dinner meeting and four sessions, each lasting 2 hours. Speakers included district employees, as well as school board members and the school attorney. Sessions occurred between November 2006 and May 2007.

Session one of the AMP consisted of an opening dinner at a central location within the county. In attendance were the AMP participants, some county school administrators, key central office personnel, and several school board members. After dinner, the Interim Superintendent greeted everyone in attendance. Salutations were also given by a member of the school board. The Director of Personnel introduced all 2006-2007 AMP participants. The keynote speaker of the evening was the future appointed

Superintendent of the county. The session concluded with an overview of the AMP sessions presented by the program designers. Program designers provided goals of the AMP to participants which included:

to provide each participant recognition of his/her desire for becoming a future administrator, knowledge concerning the roles and responsibilities of an effective administrator, on-going mentoring and support from a network of colleagues, and encouragement of future goals as administrators within the school system. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008)

The second session was devoted to public relations and hiring and supporting teachers. During this session, AMP participants were involved in analyzing county board policy as it related to employee grievances, recruitment and selection, absenteeism, resignation, retention, career status and renewal, licensure, and evaluations and action plans. A PowerPoint presentation was utilized and referral handouts were given to participants.

Session three embodied the topics of school budget and law. Covered in the session were laws as established by the state of North Carolina, as well as the school system Board of Education policy manual.

Session four topics were monitoring and evaluating test data and interview skills. Participants were involved in discussions surrounding the North Carolina's ABCs Accountability Report of 2006. The report referenced North Carolina student academic achievement levels, school growth models, formulas for reaching certain measures of accountability and growth, and how those results are utilized for school improvement. Interviewing skills were discussed based on participants' questions.

Session five involved a panel discussion among AMP participants and a school board member, the interim superintendent, the human resource administrator, a principal, and a parent. The guiding question for the discussion was, "What are we looking for in a school administrator?" During this discussion, ideas were shared on time management, classroom observations, continued self-development, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and communicating with the school community. In fact, so much discussion took place that questions and answers were recorded with input from school district administrators and given to AMP participants for future reference.

During the course of the AMP, participants were involved in a literature study of *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus* by Harvey et al. (2003). Conversations were

provoked as participants were presented with a PowerPoint show outlining key elements of the book. These elements consisted of developing a mission statement, learning how to hire the most qualified employees, analyzing customer service practices, creating ways to keep employees motivated, and developing conflict resolution skills.

Participants having completed the AMP were asked to complete the researcher-created survey. The survey was emailed to 2006-2007 AMP participants with a 40% return rate. After a week, the survey was emailed again with a response rate of 20%. The total survey response rate was 60%, or 18 of the 30 AMP participants. Any survey clarification needed was handled by telephone or email. Upon completion of the survey, results were entered into and tabulated using SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. AMP session topics were entered as dependent variables, whereas a variety of leadership needs, addressed by the survey, were recorded as independent variables. Survey questions one through four in set one are referred to as nominal data, while questions one through eight (set two) are ordinal, based on a Likert scale. Likert scale survey questions asked participants to perceptively rate how effectively the AMP better provided them knowledge of certain leadership skills. The

statistical program, SPSS, allowed for the presentation of the following figures, as well as descriptive statistics in the form of medians and means.

Each survey response based on the Likert scale was assigned an overall strength code of strong, moderate, or weak. Based on the survey Likert scale, if a response in which 75% or more (15 or more) of the participants chose a rating of four or three, the strength code was strong. Moderate strength code responses indicated a rating of two chosen by 50% (10) of the participants. Responses which fell into the weak strength code category were rated as one by 25% or less (five or less) of the participants.

Likert scales are often used by researchers and statisticians to quantify the responses given to a certain variable. The survey questions which present Likert scale responses "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*," were used to gain significant data based on leadership preparation program participant perceptions. The Likert scale for the research can be viewed as follows:

Strongly Agree

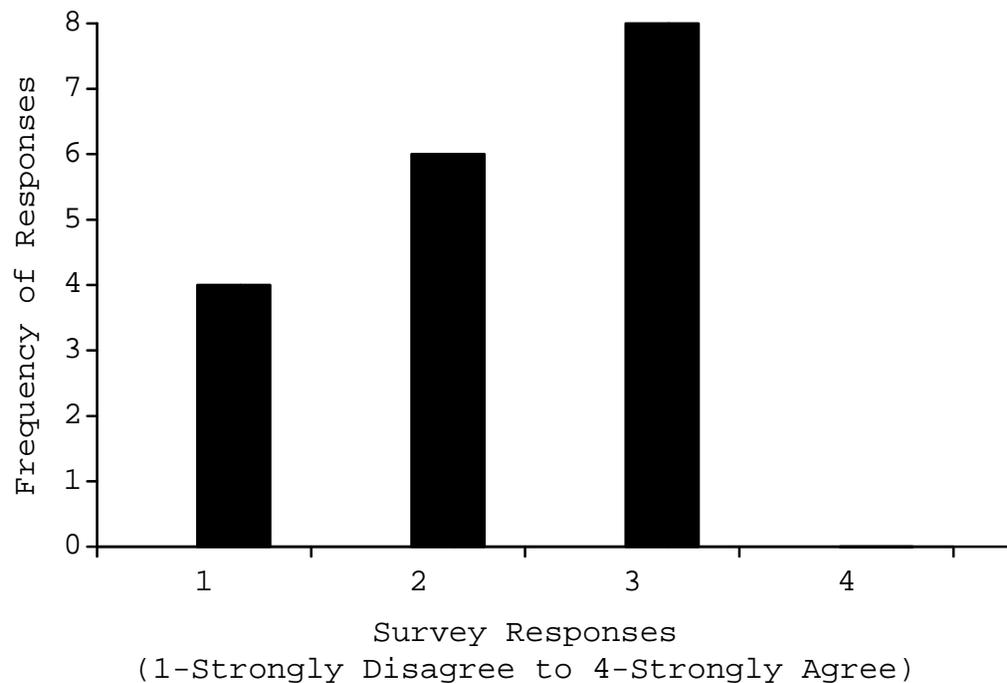
Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

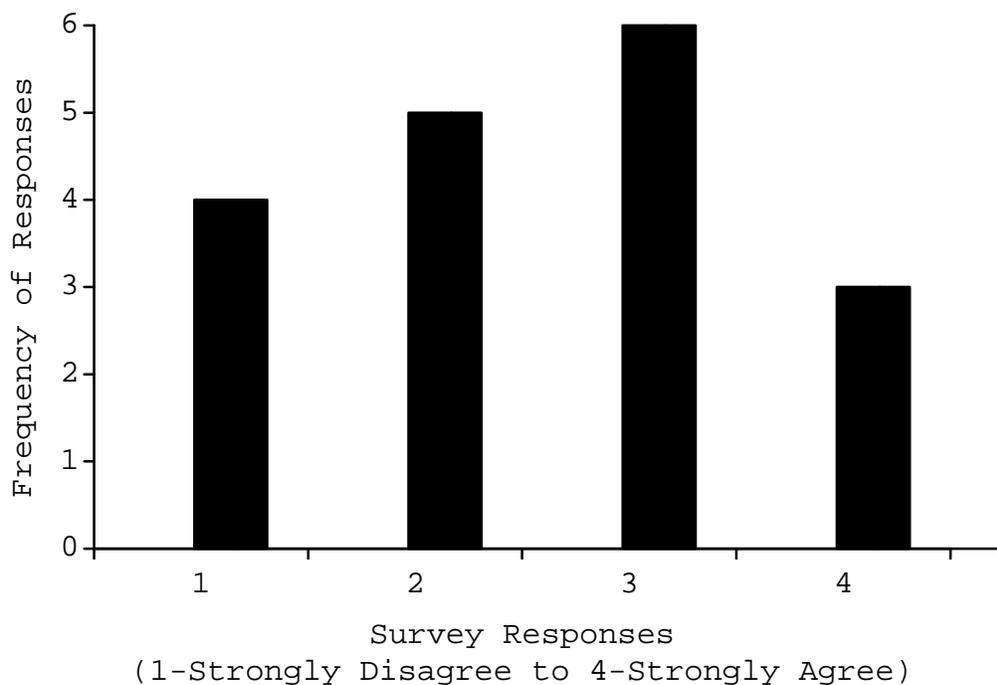
1



*Figure 3.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the leadership preparation program, LPP, enabled me to better analyze assessment data to identify gaps in student achievement and growth.

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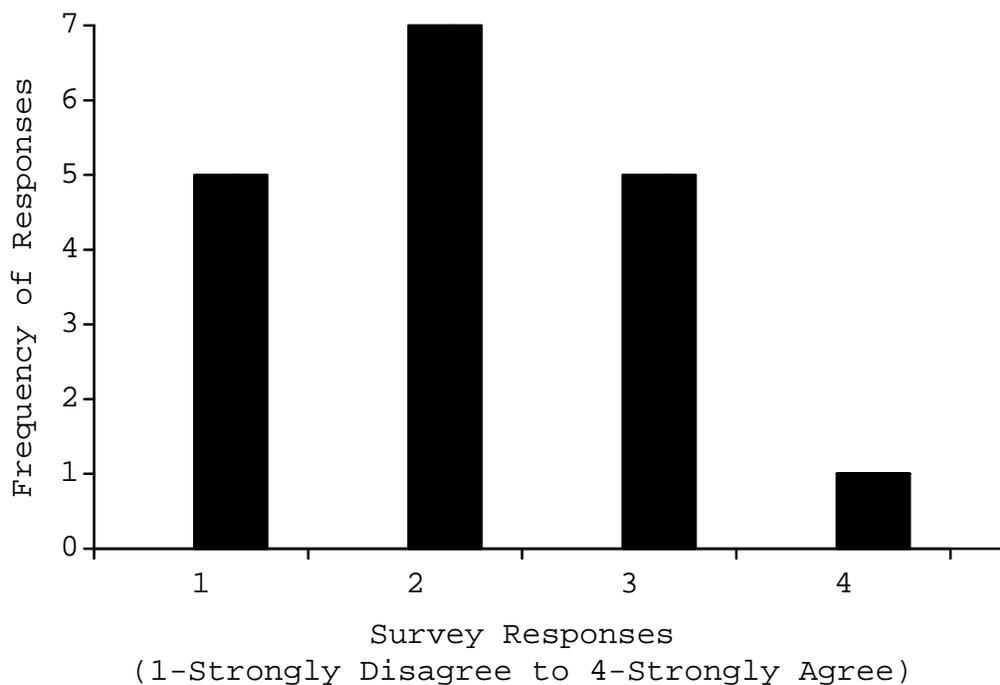
For the 18 surveys returned by 2006-2007 AMP participants, there appeared a median of 2 and a mean of 2.22 for the first Likert scale question. The majority of AMP participants, 14, rated the topic of analyzing assessment data for purposes of identifying student achievement and growth as a two or three, based on the Likert scale. Due to the fact that four of the participants rated the topic as a one, strongly disagreeing that it was effective, made the overall strength code equivalent to weak.



*Figure 4.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to better collaborate with teachers on implementing rigorous classroom instruction based on data.

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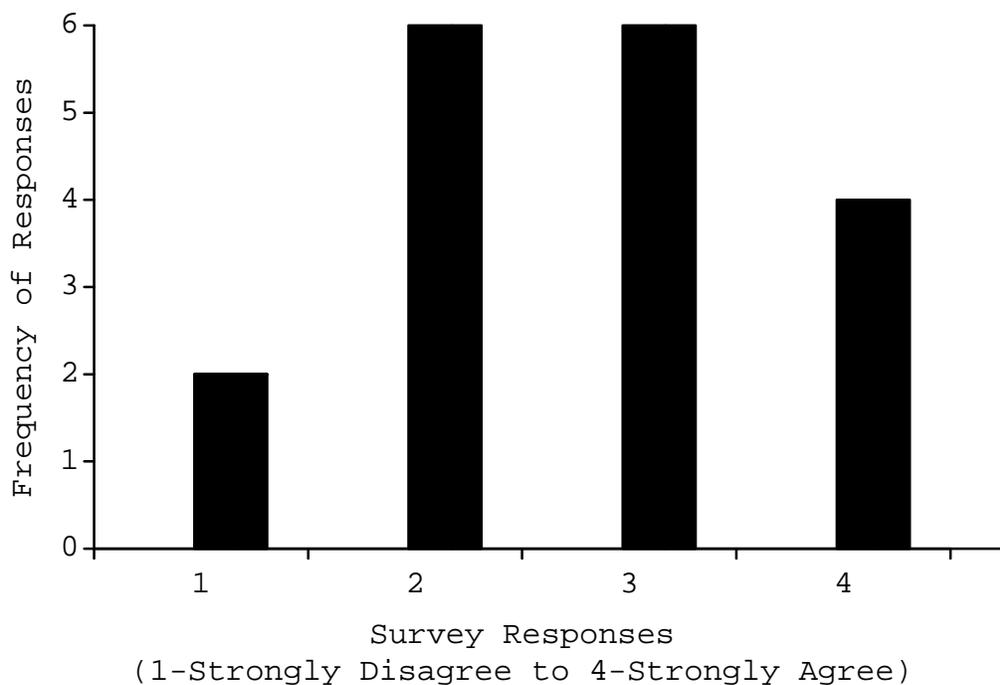
Analysis of the returned surveys (18) brought about a median of 2.5 and a mean of 2.44 for the survey question on collaboration with teachers to enhance classroom instruction. An overall strength code for the topic of better collaboration with teachers on rigorous classroom instruction based on data was weak, since four AMP participants gave a Likert scale rating of one. Eleven of the participants gave the topic a rating of two or three while three participants thought it effective, rating it a four.



*Figure 5.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to better understand how differently students learn and how to create strategic learning opportunities for gifted students and disabled students.

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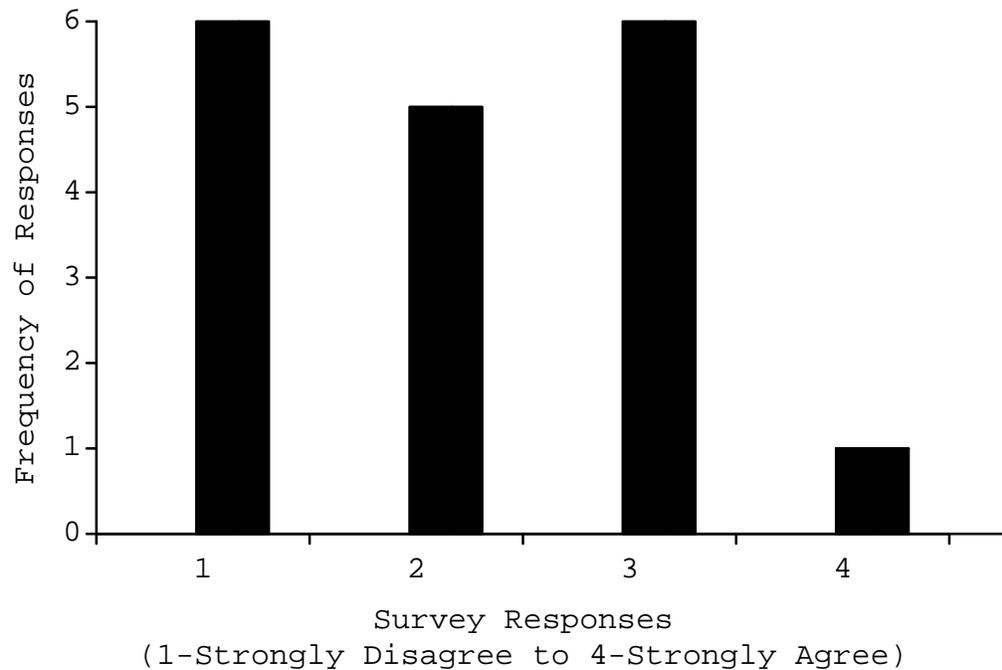
Since five AMP participants rated the topic of understanding how differently students learn a one, the overall strength code is weak. Seven participants gave this topic a rating of two, disagreeing that the topic was effective. A median of 2 and mean of 2.11, based on 18 responses, occurred from the survey question pertaining to how students' learning differs based on levels of ability.



*Figure 6.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP provided me the opportunity to apply and increase my conflict resolution skills to better communicate with fellow workers, parents, and students.

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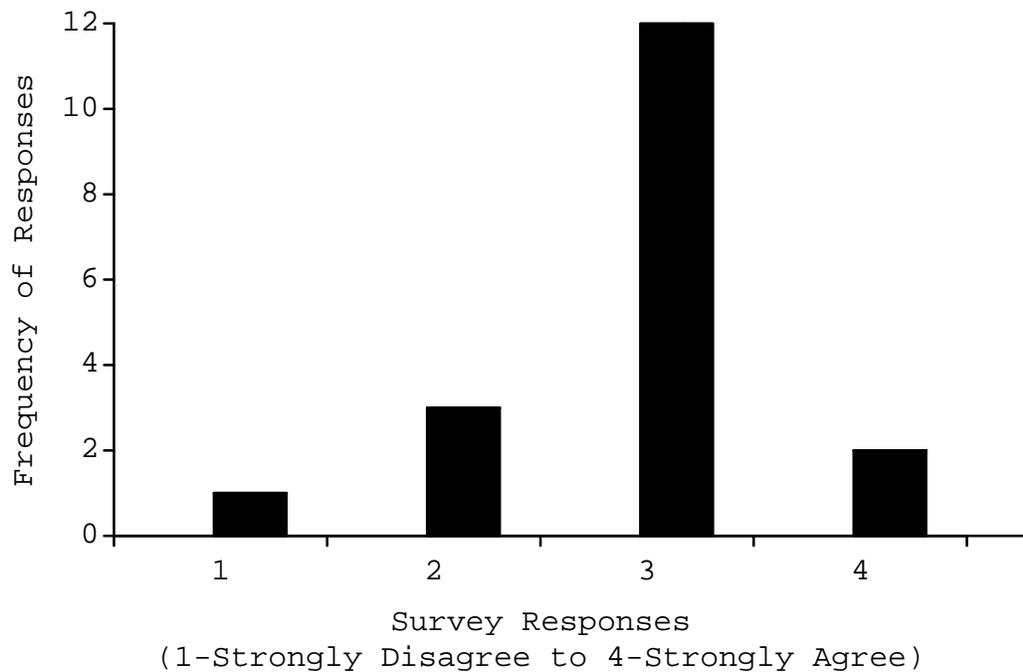
The survey question referring to conflict resolution skills had a median of 3 and a mean of 2.67 from the 18 survey responses. Six AMP participants rated the topic of communicating with stakeholders to resolve conflict a three; however, two participants rated the topic as one, making the overall strength code weak.



*Figure 7.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to work with school budget information, allowing for the maximization of finances to ensure teaching and learning for all.

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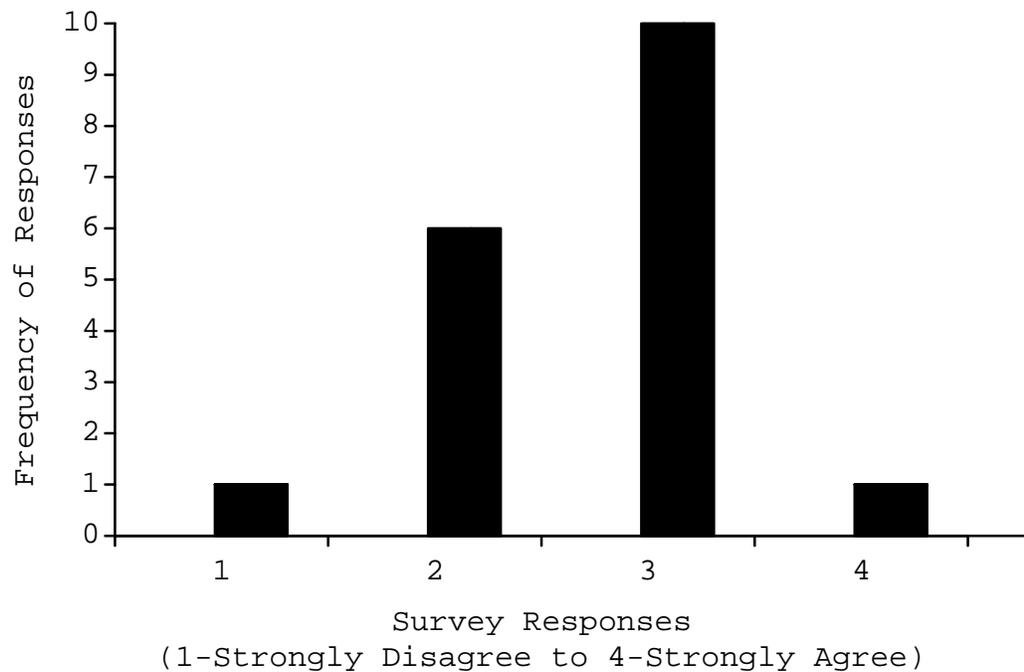
Inquiry into school budget and maximization of finances brought about a median of 2 and a mean of 2.11 from the 18 survey respondents and an overall strength code of moderate to weak. Six AMP participants rated the topic as one while five participants gave it a rating of two.



*Figure 8.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP increased my knowledge of how to be actively engaged with all stakeholders (i.e. community, parents, staff members, and students).

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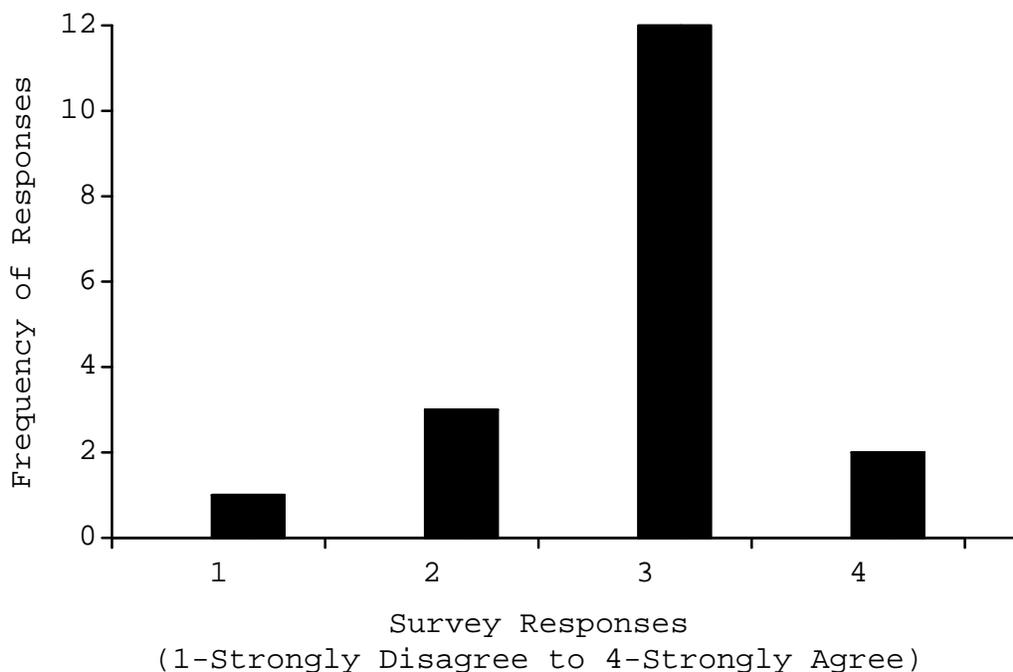
For the 18 surveys returned by 2006-2007 AMP participants, there appeared a median of 3 and a mean of 2.83 for the survey question regarding stakeholder engagement. The topic of stakeholder engagement was one of the highest ranked topics by AMP participants with an overall strength code of strong to moderate. Twelve of the eighteen survey respondents gave the topic a rating of three.



*Figure 9.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to increase the leadership skills needed to hire and support highly-qualified staff members.

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Analysis of the returned surveys (18) brought about a median of 3 and a mean of 2.61 for the survey question on hiring and supporting highly-qualified staff members. Ten of the survey respondents assigned the topic of highly-qualified staff members as a three. Conclusively, this topic received an overall strength code of weak.



*Figure 10.* Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to engage in dialogue about creating and maintaining an effective school culture and climate, involving the implementation of a school mission and vision.

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A median of 3 and a mean of 2.83, based on 18 responses, occurred from the survey question pertaining to creating and maintaining an effective school culture and climate. The topic of school culture and climate was one of the highest ranked categories by AMP participants. Twelve of the eighteen survey respondents gave the topic a ranking of three. The overall strength code for school culture and climate was strong to moderate.

The following table displays overall strength codes for the Likert scale survey responses. Each survey topic in

question is presented with the corresponding overall strength code based on 2006-2007 AMP participant perceptions of the district-led leadership preparation program.

Table 7

*Overall Strength Codes for Survey Questions Based on 2006-2007 Administrative Mentoring Program Participant Responses*

Survey Responses	Overall Strength Code
1 Data analysis/utilization	Weak
2 Rigorous classroom instruction	Weak
3 Gifted/disabled students	Weak
4 Conflict resolution	Weak
5 School finances	Moderate/Weak
6 Stakeholder engagement	Strong/Moderate
7 Hiring/supporting staff	Weak
8 School culture/climate	Strong/Moderate

3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program?

The survey results and interviews among researcher and program designers answered the question regarding program strengths and weaknesses. According to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, the biggest

strength of the AMP was that it allowed for dialogue among participants, as well as session leaders (personal communication, June 16, 2008). The Director of Personnel Development expanded by adding that AMP participants provided the opportunity to collaborate with significant members of the community, school system, and each other:

In addition, participants were presented with administrative material that they would not generally be as interested in as classroom teachers, such as ABC Accountability Reports, administrative classroom observations, school district policy, testing data and analysis, monitoring and evaluating educational programs, and participation in a book study from an administrative stand point. (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008)

Weaknesses of the AMP were acknowledged by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction as the need to offer more sessions given the time frame that was allotted for the program (personal communication, June 16, 2008). It was suggested that all sessions be based upon participant interest and a service component, such as job shadowing, added (Anonymous, personal communication, June 16, 2008). Both interviewees commented on the need to receive AMP participant feedback given the newness of the

program.

AMP participants were asked, on the survey, to list any strengths and/or weaknesses of their district's school leadership preparation program. Knowledgeable presenters, good materials, networking, use of community resources, insight and knowledge into the school system, experiences shared by session speakers, time allowed for questioning, and a professional setting were the strengths of the AMP as perceived by its participants. Strengths of the program, based on survey responses of the participants, also included the sessions addressing stakeholder engagement and school culture and climate.

Weaknesses, as indicated by participants, included the lack of "hands-on" training, the need for a stronger curricular program, inadequate time for in-depth networking, no support for interviewing or gaining administrative positions within the county were made, there were no variations between session topics and what had been completed through a Master's program, follow-up was not offered, and the decision of the county to not offer the Administrative Mentoring Program every year.

### *Summary*

School districts that take a proactive stance in identifying needs for future school administrators have

recognized the need for effective school leadership. District-led leadership preparation programs have been recognized as effective ways of investing in and better preparing qualified school leadership aspirants across the country. It is anticipated that a well-designed, district-led leadership program would better empower its participants to become effective school administrators by increasing the necessary skills and knowledge needed to prepare aspiring school leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century school administration. Based on data collected during the study from personal interviews and survey respondents, recommendations for program enhancement and continuity will be made in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

### *Introduction*

Barnett (2004) asked the question, "Are today's administrators prepared to be the instructional leaders that are required to bring about improved student achievement?" (p. 122). Bingham and Gottfried (2003) cited two issues surrounding the need for more highly-qualified administrators, the growing number of retiring or resigning principals and the tedious work of administration. Being faced with the increasing concern over locating more highly-qualified school leaders, some school districts have created and implemented programs which will provide aspiring school leaders more leadership skills. The research attributing to the effects of district-led leadership preparation programs led to the following research questions:

1. Which components of the district-led leadership preparation program addressed the leadership needs of the participants?

2. How did the topical sessions of the district-led leadership preparation program align with the intended program objectives?

3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the district-led leadership preparation program?

There existed two purposes of the study:

1. to evaluate a district-led leadership preparation program to determine participants' perceptions of gaining optimal knowledge of vital leadership skills as outlined by central office administrators and the North Carolina State Board of Education, and

2. to make a scholarly contribution to the field of school leadership preparation by presenting findings and results of the study to school districts in an effort to assist in enhancing or redesigning district-led leadership preparation programs to meet the leadership needs of participants.

#### *Data Collection Methods*

1. Researcher-created survey for AMP participants.
2. Personal interviews conducted between researcher and AMP designers.

#### *Implications of the Findings and Recommendations*

The North Carolina State Board of Education added in-depth standards for school leaders on December 7, 2006. The standards evolved around the mission of North Carolina's State Board of Education to prepare all students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and suggested "A New Vision of School Leadership" (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006). The intended purpose of the school executive

standards was to serve as a reflection tool for school administrators as they strive for personal development as leaders of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. In alignment with the particular study of a district-led aspiring leadership preparation program, other noted purposes of the executive standards were to

inform higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of school executive degree programs; focus the goals and objectives of districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate their school executives; guide professional development for school executives; and serve as a tool in developing coaching and mentoring programs for school executives. (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006)

Outlined within the publication were seven standards for school leadership and the interrelation and connectivity of all. In the 2006 publication, North Carolina Board of Education members recognized the need for redefining qualifications for and characteristics of effective school leaders. The theoretical framework surrounding the new school executive standards as determined by the North Carolina State Board of Education was to employ proactive school administrators who demonstrate

1. the need for urgency,
2. the ability to convert schools for unremitting improvement,
3. the necessity to ensure learning for all,
4. the common belief in the importance of inspiring leaders in all staff roles within the school while recognizing and reflecting on the leader within themselves,
5. the ability to collaborate with, support, and empower people,
6. the knowledge of how to effectively generate processes and systems which will trigger the school to operate efficiently as a whole,
7. the necessity of employing a strong administrative team who works harmoniously promoting quality in all seven standards,
8. the ability to work collaboratively with each level of the educational system in order to align systems and goals,
9. the effectiveness of working toward a common vision while motivating and challenging staff members.

Browne-Ferrigno (2001) interpreted that leadership preparation programs were successful based upon a) each participant's level of participation, b) components of the program which heightened leadership senses, c) the presence

and involvement of central office administrators, current school administrators, and topical speakers, d) each participant's experience within the realm of education, and e) the amount of socialization involved during the program. The existing leadership preparation program has been evaluated to determine to what extent each of these program characteristics is being met.

Based on data collected from personal interviews and survey respondents, it was determined that certain enhancements need to be made to the Administrative Mentoring Program in order to more effectively meet the leadership needs of its participants.

The following recommendations are offered as a result of Administrative Mentoring Program participant perceptions and data gathered from surveys.

*Recommendation #1.* Creating an internship component allowing participants to practice hands-on, applicable leadership skills within a school setting, is recommended for the district-led leadership preparation program. Involving program participants in projects that would benefit the school system would enable participants to demonstrate individual leadership abilities. The internship experience would afford leadership aspirants the opportunity to work collaboratively with experienced school

principals while receiving constructive feedback on administrative issues. Incorporated into the internship may be leadership components such as data analysis, decision-making processes, and instructional leadership, all of which are vital components of school leadership. The idea of an internship component was mentioned by 11 of the 18 survey respondents.

*Recommendation #2.* The program is recommended to offer a variety of sessions based upon participant interests and leadership needs. Data collected from the survey indicated the majority of participants perceiving the receipt of a master's degree in school administration and participation in a district-led school leadership preparation program as being the best approach to school leadership training.

*Recommendation #3.* The recommendation of preparing aspiring leaders in an effort to advance participants into district leadership positions was indicated by 15 of the 18 Administrative Mentoring Program survey respondents. Program designers should collaborate with key district leaders to determine if changes should be made within the program to encourage and advance an increased number of program participants into school leadership positions.

*Recommendation #4.* Program participants perceive that program designers should continue to offer the program

yearly, inviting new school leadership aspirants from within the county. The majority, 72% of AMP participants, felt that obtaining a master's degree in school administration and having participated in a district-led school leadership preparation program was the best approach to school leadership training.

*Recommendation #5.* Offering administrative mentors for participants having completed the program is another recommendation. Twelve of the eighteen survey respondents expressed disappointment in the lack of a follow-up component to the program.

While determining if the leadership preparation program was beneficial to its participants, all research questions were addressed to determine the program's outcome and related effectiveness, corresponding with Stufflebeam's (2003) product evaluation. From the data gathered, the Administrative Mentoring Program designers should continue to offer the program to aspiring school leaders within the district. AMP participants perceived themselves as better enabled school leaders by gaining knowledge of school leadership practices within the county and networking with other school and county administrators.

#### *Limitations*

Response or measurement errors from the Leadership

Preparation Program Research Survey were minimized as 2006-2007 AMP participants were guided through survey completion. In an effort to reduce the occurrence of these limitations, the surveys were emailed to participants.

Coding or recording errors were addressed during the survey validation process. The researcher minimized this type of error through the field test process of gathering and recording qualitative and quantitative data.

Surveys often limit participant responses, thus the creator developed the survey to contain a multitude of question and answer variety. Questions ranged from Likert scale responses to open-ended replies.

### *Conclusions*

Analysis of the data revealed the benefits of the Administrative Mentoring Program participants as providing a clearer understanding of the school administration, collaboration between those aspiring to be school leaders and county administrators, and a greater sense of district policies and procedures.

In contrast, AMP participants would have preferred some type of follow-up mentoring program, a greater emphasis on application of skills or internship opportunities, and consideration for school administration employment within the system based on AMP completion. In

addition, some AMP participants were disappointed to see the AMP not being offered every school year for school leadership aspirants.

*Recommendations for Further Studies*

1. Explore the differences between district-led leadership preparation programs that may contribute to different outcomes for participants.
2. Create a district-led leadership preparation program through action research.
3. Research university school leadership preparation programs to determine the perception of what is lacking from 21<sup>st</sup> century school leadership training.

*Summary*

If designed and implemented based on participant needs, leadership preparation programs have the possibility of preparing high-quality school leaders. In the past, the job of preparing aspiring school administrators has been left to universities. Currently, university-based leadership preparation programs have come under scrutiny as being analyzed for not providing adequate instruction to prepare future school leaders. School districts in the United States have recognized the importance of implementing programs which provided aspiring school administrators increased leadership skills and knowledge in

addition to university preparation programs. While large numbers of school administrators are retiring, resigning, or leaving the field due to the tedious work of school administration, districts are in need of more innovative and nontraditional resolutions for supporting its leaders. It has been determined through research and the study that a well-designed, district-led leadership program would better empower its participants to become more effective school administrators by increasing the necessary skills and knowledge needed to prepare aspiring school leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century school administration.

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Appendix A  
Letters of Consent

## Letter of Consent

Dear Superintendent,

The purpose of this correspondence is to ask your consent for those county employees who participated in the 2005-2006 Administrative Mentoring Program (AMP) to be involved in a responsive program evaluation.

It is my intent to complete my doctoral dissertation through Gardner-Webb University. The focus of my work will be on evaluating our district-led school leadership preparation program using Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model for program evaluation. Data for this study will be obtained through the processes of a researcher-created participant survey and personal interviews with the program designers.

Participation in this study is voluntary and data received will be presented to constituents of AMP for future reference. All participant responses will be kept confidential.

Any questions or concerns regarding this research should be directed to Tammra Reel, researcher, at (704) 478-6064. Inquiries regarding the nature of this research, your district's rights as a subject, or any other aspect of this research as it relates to participants can be directed to the researcher or Gardner-Webb University. The chairperson of this research committee is Dr. Jane King who may be contacted by phone at (704) 406-2015.

If you agree for me to conduct a responsive evaluation regarding the effectiveness of AMP within your school system, please sign below. Thank you in advance for assisting me with this professional endeavor.

Sincerely,

Tammra Reel  
Doctoral Student, Gardner-Webb University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Introductory Letter

Dear Aspiring School Leader,  
I am currently working on my doctoral studies through Gardner-Webb University. My dissertation is a responsive evaluation regarding the leadership preparation program within your district.

I am in the process of collecting data from staff members in your district who are interested in becoming school administrators. I am interested in how you perceive your leadership program and whether or not it has been beneficial in your administrative endeavors. The goal of this study is to assist program developers in enhancing individual sessions so that the participants receive high-quality professional development.

I have created a survey for leadership preparation program participants that will inquire directly about your experiences, perceptions, and opinions. I encourage you to answer the questions honestly and give valuable feedback concerning your experiences with the program. All responses will be kept completely confidential.

I appreciate your time and effort to assist me. Thank you for your support of my research.

Sincerely,

Tammra Reel  
Doctoral Student - Gardner-Webb University

Appendix B

Interview Questions for 2006-2007 AMP Designers

## Interview Questions for 2006-2007 AMP Designers

- 1) How did you determine the need for a program such as AMP?
- 2) What are the program's goals and objectives?
- 3) How were session topics and presenters decided upon?
- 4) Resources for the program were determined how and by whom?
- 5) Describe the demographics of cohort one (2006-2007) and how those individuals were chosen to participate.
- 6) What do you consider to be the program's strengths after the first year of implementation? Weaknesses?
- 7) What are the future plans for AMP?
- 8) What do you feel made AMP successful?
- 9) What other program(s) within this county address the needs of aspiring school administrators?
- 10) Is there anything else regarding your leadership preparation program that you would like to tell me about?

Appendix C

Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey

Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey

*The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the leadership preparation program and it is designed to assess the effectiveness of the program to suggest changes for its improvement or redesign.*

**Please check the following as it applies to you.**

1) How many years have you been in education?

\_\_\_\_\_ 0-3 years \_\_\_\_\_ 4-9 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10+ years

2) In what capacity are you currently serving?

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Central Office Staff

\_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please list \_\_\_\_\_)

3) Which is the BEST approach to school leadership training?

\_\_\_\_\_ Four year undergraduate degree in education

\_\_\_\_\_ A master's in school administration

\_\_\_\_\_ A master's in school administration and participation in a district-led leadership preparation program

\_\_\_\_\_ Advanced educational degree (i.e. Ed.S, Ed.D)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please list \_\_\_\_\_)

4) When did you earn your most recent educational degree/certificate?

\_\_\_\_\_ Currently enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year ago  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years ago \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years ago  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years ago \_\_\_\_\_ 21+ years ago

5) List any strengths and/or weaknesses of your district's school leadership preparation program.

Strengths

Weaknesses

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**Please rate the following using the Likert scale.**

1) The Leadership Preparation Program (LPP) enabled me to better analyze assessment data to identify gaps in student achievement and growth.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

1

2) The LPP enabled me to better collaborate with teachers on implementing rigorous classroom instruction based on data.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

1

3) The LPP enabled me to better understand how differently students learn and how to create strategic learning opportunities for gifted students and disabled students.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

1

4) The LPP provided me the opportunity to apply and increase my conflict resolution skills to better communicate with fellow workers, parents, and students.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

1

5) The LPP enabled me to work with school budget information, allowing for the maximization of finances to ensure teaching and learning for all.

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

4

3

2

1



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Survey questions were compiled from a variety of sources. The researcher constructed the Leadership Preparation Program Research Survey using concepts and educational standards from the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, Market Fact's (2003) Schools of Educational Research Project Survey of Principals, and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (1996).

Appendix D  
Validation Survey Frequency Tables

The following frequency display tables display data gathered from the validation survey statements requiring participants to respond using the Likert scale.

*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to better analyze assessment data to identify gaps in student achievement and growth.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	9	45%
3	6	30%
2	5	25%
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to better collaborate with teachers on implementing rigorous classroom instruction based on data.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	8	40%
3	10	50%
2	1	5%
1 Strongly Disagree	1	5%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to better understand how differently students learn and how to create strategic learning opportunities for gifted students and disabled students.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	4	20%
3	10	50%
2	4	20%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	10%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP provided me the opportunity to apply and increase my conflict resolution skills to better communicate with fellow workers, parents, and students.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	5	25%
3	12	60%
2	3	15%
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to work with school budget information, allowing for the maximization of finances to ensure teaching and learning for all.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	1	5%
3	2	10%
2	11	55%
1 Strongly Disagree	6	30%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP increased my knowledge of how to be actively engaged with all stakeholders (i.e. community, parents, staff members, and students).*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	2	10%
3	9	45%
2	9	45%
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP  
enabled me to increase the leadership skills needed to hire  
and support highly-qualified staff members.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	2	10%
3	11	55%
2	5	25%
1 Strongly Disagree	2	10%
TOTAL	20	100%

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*Frequency of responses for survey statement, the LPP enabled me to engage in dialogue about creating and maintaining an effective school culture and climate, involving the implementation of a school mission and vision.*

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Responses	Frequency	Valid Percent
4 Strongly Agree	9	45%
3	8	40%
2	3	15%
1 Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	20	100%

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